

and California handing out communiques saying that they are going to kill enemies of the Iranian revolution, especially Americans.

Forer returned to Iran again Dec. 5 where he, along with Clarence Dillingham, met with the Revolutionary Council, including extensive discussion with Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh. They also had several more long meetings with the embassy terrorists. At that time, Forer organized a trip to Iran for Rev. William Sloane Coffin of Clergy and Laity Concerned, Rev. William Howard of the World Council of Churches, and Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit, all of whom have been supporters of the Iranian revolution since at least 1977.

Then, on Jan. 17 Forer, at the request of the embassy terrorists, began organizing yet another trip to Iran, this time to include a delegation of 50 people. The delegation was chosen at the careful instruction of the Iranians to include representatives of the complete array of U.S. radical and extremist groups, among them the Direct Action Coalition which is the terrorist wing of the anti-nuclear movement, the terrorist American Indian Movement, the Brown Berets, Clergy and Laity Concerned who are leaders of the anti-draft movement, and various black radical groups. (There have been several independent trips made by black radical groups who are attempting to hook up with the Palestine Liberation Organization.) While in Iran this delegation is meeting with the Embassy terrorists; receiving training and marching orders. Importantly, Nahidian is also now in Iran.

Yet, every step of the way, Forer's activities have had the complete approval and endorsement of the State Department.

### **Terrorist activation**

Since the CIS conference, there has been a total reactivation of the Iranian student movement with both public and private meetings being addressed by Falk, Ricks, Cockcroft and others. Along with this the Iran issue has spurred the creation of a potential, mass anti-draft, anti-war movement in the U.S. which has already held dozens of demonstrations and marches. There are also reliable reports that hit squads from the Japanese Red Army and the Baader-Meinhof gang will attempt to enter the U.S. soon.

The return of Forer's delegation is slated to step up the process considerably. Forer is bringing back not only his own delegation of 50, but an additional 50 Iranians, and plans to hold a series of nationwide conferences to "educate" Americans on Iran. These conferences are designed to unite the anti-nuclear movement, the anti-draft movement, etc., and will be timed to coincide with the holding of a Bertrand Russell-type alternative tribunal to investigate U.S. crimes in Iran. The U.S. "crime" to be focused on is aid for Iran's economic development.

# **Iran civil war weeks away: 'long and bloody'**

by Robert Dreyfuss

"The civil war in Iran is going to be a long and bitter and bloody one. Several hundreds of thousands of people are going to be killed. As soon as Ayatollah Khomeini dies, the government there is going to collapse. I would give the situation six to eight weeks at most."

That was the evaluation last week of a former top Iranian military official. From sources in Western Europe and the United States, this reading has been confirmed independently by *Executive Intelligence Review*. Several contending armies are already assembling for the coming battle. This is the story behind the story in Iran, and it will very rapidly come to overshadow the crisis around the U.S. hostages held in Teheran.

According to Iranian sources, the Ayatollah Khomeini is very ill following his heart attack last month, and it is now expected that he will be dead within days or weeks. Since the beginning of the Iranian revolution, Khomeini symbolized the unity of the movement against the Shah, and his death will precipitate a fragmentation of Iranian politics. The fragile government of President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, which draws virtually all of its legitimacy from Khomeini's aura of infallibility, would crumble.

Ahmad Khomeini, the radical son of the ayatollah, has been reported to have told *Le Figaro* magazine of France that his father is already "in another world" and that he "doesn't pay attention anymore to what is happening around him." The ayatollah can no longer move and he is confined to a wheelchair. *Le Figaro* reported that Ahmad Khomeini, anticipating the chaos that will follow the ayatollah's departure, has purchased three luxury villas in Paris, Versailles, and the Cote d'Azur for exile purposes. A member of the ruling Revolutionary

Council, seeking a deal, has secretly traveled to Europe to meet with the opposition to the Islamic Republic, reportedly telling them that for \$20 to \$30 million, they could finance a "spontaneous popular upsurge" against Bani-Sadr.

In the following report, the *EIR* reviews the available data concerning the line-up in Iran on the eve of civil war.

### **Bani-Sadr— and what army?**

Despite repeated assertions from supporters of President Bani-Sadr that he does indeed have strong backing from the Iranian population, in truth, Bani-Sadr is a President with absolutely no political machine to support him. Although the so-called Islamic Societies are mobilized to back him, it is in the military and security field that Bani-Sadr is the weakest. The widely publicized nomination of Bani-Sadr as commander-in-chief of the armed forces and the pro forma telegram of support from the chief of staff on Feb. 19 does not hide the fact that the military command has crumbled under repeated purges and executions, with army desertions ranging upwards of 75 percent.

In its moves to free the American hostages on the eve of the New Hampshire primary election, the Carter

administration has publicly offered to supply military equipment and spare parts to the Bani-Sadr government. On Feb. 19, the British government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher did the same. Generally, the Anglo-Americans are committed to supporting the Teheran government whose authority, at present, is confined to a shrinking area around Teheran and Qom in central Iran. Such an arrangement is guaranteed to be a losing proposition for Washington and London.

The armed forces have been primarily weakened by wild purges of officers by Muslim Brotherhood fanatics. Last week, five more top officers were executed by the Khomeini regime, and at least 50 arrested. According to the London *Financial Times* of Feb. 13, at least 7,500 officers and NCO's have been purged by a five-man committee of the Revolutionary Council. Putting further pressure on the army, at least 2,000 Air Force technicians staged a defiant sit-in at a Teheran mosque last week to demand that "Islamic councils" be established in the armed forces with executive authority and that Ayatollah Khalkhali, the head of Iran's Muslim Brotherhood (the *Fedayeen al-Islam*) and the so-called Judge Blood of the Revolutionary Courts, be appointed chief of the military tribunals.

Behind the scenes, of course, the United States and the British have been attempting to put together some



*Iranian Army troops before the Shah's ouster. Bani-Sadr is now "Commander-in-Chief"—but one cannot really speak of an army anymore.*

reliable connections inside the Iranian military and, probably, also seeking to prepare a capability for a pro-Anglo-American military faction. Two weeks ago, a top Iranian defense delegation visited London for secret talks with British defense officials on resuming supply for Iran of hundreds of British Chieftain tanks. Defense Minister Mustafa Chamran said on Feb. 10 that Iran is in "desperate need" of spare parts for its weapons.

Admiral Ahmad Nadani—whom Bani-Sadr has already described as the "American man" in the presidential vote—is the likely rallying point for such a collection of Iran forces. But it is precisely that possibility that has led the combination of the Tudeh Communist Party and clergy demands for further purges of former officials of the SAVAK (the Shah's secret police) who remain in the armed forces. The National Voice of Iran, reputedly run by Soviet intelligence from Baku, broadcast warnings in early February of an "imminent coup" in Iran by right-wing officers.

Ironically, according to *Le Figaro*, Bani-Sadr and Admiral Madani have been forming a tactical alliance to prepare for the impending civil war there.

### Opposition growing

At present, several forces are ranged against Bani-Sadr's government.

**First**, there is the so-called Tudeh, which is nominally a pro-Soviet organization but which, in reality, is a mixed entity jointly owned by intelligence services of China and several other governments in the West, including Britain.

**Second**, there is the National Front forces now regrouped around exiled Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar. In parallel fashion, there are also circles of the old armed forces, some still loyal to the deposed Shah, who are building up forces inside Iran.

**Third**, there are the various ethnic and regional Iranian nationalisms, of which the most important are: Kurds, Baluchis, Arabs, Azerbaijani Turks, Turkomens, Bakhtiaris, Lurs, and Qashqais.

According to *Le Figaro* and other sources in Western Europe, Prime Minister Bakhtiar has assembled at least two divisions of troops loyal to him and his government located in western Iran in Kurdistan and Azerbaijan. Several leading Iranian officers allied with Bakhtiar are commanding these forces. It is generally recognized that conservative forces around Ayatollah Shareatmadari, who comes from Tabriz in Azerbaijan, are allied with Bakhtiar's forces. In fact, the largest single component of Iran's population—as much as 40 percent—comes from Azerbaijan, which has also contributed the majority of the officer corps.

Another large grouping of the officer corps, includ-

ing the majority of the remaining generals, are organized around a monarchist faction commanded by General Oveissi, who plans to establish some sort of constitutional monarchy perhaps under Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, the son of the Shah. It is most likely that the Bakhtiar forces and the Iranian military can work out a mutual accommodation and would likely be allied together against the Teheran-Qom axis and the so-called Islamic Revolutionary Guard that is the security backbone of the Khomeini regime.

Generally, Bakhtiar is getting some support from the Europeans while Oveissi, who recently secretly visited the United States is reported to have American backing.

Both the Bakhtiar-National Front forces and the Tudeh forces are now competing for the allegiance of the various minority ethnic forces. Day-by-day, the Teheran government is losing control over provinces. Since the beginning of the "Islamic revolution," the Kurds and the Azeris were organized against the regime. They were soon afterwards followed by the Arabs of Khuzestan, organized covertly by Iraq into Arab Cultural Societies and the "Association of Arabestan Students." Iraq is reportedly also cooperating with both Bakhtiar and Oveissi.

Recently, there have been reports that armed opposition to the Khomeini regime has broken out in Lorestan and among the Qashqais, both deep in central Iran, which shows that the logistics and supply operations have reached far into Iran's heartland.

Of course, the Soviet Union would hardly remain neutral in an Iranian civil war. Especially if it appeared that American-supported officers were gaining the upper hand, the Soviets would intervene in full force. If it came to a showdown, it is generally recognized that the Soviets could easily put together a force strong enough to seize temporary power and then ask for Soviet military assistance, either in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan first, or in Teheran itself. Such a Soviet military intervention in Iran would meet no credible opposition, including from the United States—which does not have any capability of mounting a military force in that area.

More likely, however, the Soviet Union would simply use its capabilities for infiltrating arms and even personnel into Iran across the Soviet border, in order to present a very powerful armed force ranged in opposition to Teheran's crumbling regime. Already, the purges of the Iranian armed forces have opened the door for what is thought to be a large-scale Soviet build up of assets within the military and security forces. Not only the Tudeh, but the radical militia such as the Mujaheddin and the Fedayeen have armed and trained personnel in a "People's Army" which rivals the Islamic Revolutionary Guard and the regular army in power.