

Middle East Report by Robert Dreyfuss

The Iran-Libya connection

A trip by Iran's "blood judge" revealed that a new phase of cooperation between Mideast extremists has begun, with European policy a target as much as Arab stability.

The visit to Libya this week of Iran's Ayatollah Khalkhali signals a new phase in the cooperation between Muslim extremists in the Arab world and those in Iran's Islamic Republic. It bodes ill, in particular, for Saudi Arabia and Iraq, virtually the only two OPEC members still committed to increasing production and exports, who are threatened by terrorists backed by Iran and Libya.

Ayatollah Khalkhali, widely known as the "blood judge" who was responsible for over 600 summary executions since last year, is the head of the Muslim Brotherhood in Iran, the Fedayeen-e Islam. Though he holds no official post, he wields enormous power by controlling the inner leadership of the Muslim Brothers. He is a sadistic madman, once interned in a psychiatric ward for killing cats by torture, and a virulent homosexual.

His visit to Libya marks a sudden closing of relations between these two nations, after a year of estrangement. A kidnapping of a Lebanese Shiite leader by Libya's secret police in 1978 caused friction between Libya and Iran's Shiite leaders, but during this week's visit to Tripoli Khalkhali absolved the Libyans of all responsibility for that kidnapping.

To understand the significance of Khalkhali's trip, it is first necessary to understand the agency

behind the behavior of the erratic Libyan Col. Muammar Qaddafi.

In recent weeks, Qaddafi has launched a crusade against France in the Middle East and Africa. After sponsoring armed Muslim fundamentalists' insurrections in Algeria and Tunisia earlier this year when those two nations began to improve their ties to Paris, Qaddafi then publicly threatened to kill French President Giscard d'Estaing on the eve of his arrival in the Persian Gulf. Only weeks before, Giscard's confidante and Africa policy adviser René de Journiac, was killed in a plane crash in West Africa that was blamed on Libyan intelligence.

Now, Libya has intensified its activities in West Africa by fueling civil war in Chad, a crisis that threatened to spread across all of West Africa and severely set back French diplomacy there.

Meanwhile, according to Iranian sources, the Teheran regime has launched a massive diplomatic and terrorist campaign against France. In the Gulf, Iran is putting pressure on the Arab oil-producing regimes, including by overt threats to provoke insurgencies by pro-Iranian fanatics. In North Africa, Iran is also lobbying against France—in direct coordination with Libya.

For instance, Iran's Oil Minister Moïfar paid a quick visit to Libya in an effort designed to co-

ordinate pressure on other OPEC countries to cut back oil production. Both Libya and Iran threatened Saudi Arabia, which announced its intention to maintain high production through 1980.

So the question remains: who stands to gain? The answer, it appears: the enemies of Giscard.

That leads us in several directions.

First, the key to Libya's Qaddafi reportedly is M. Roger Garaudy, a former member of the French Communist Party who was expelled years ago for advocating a "Marxist-Christian dialogue." Presently, Garaudy is a close adviser to Qaddafi, perhaps even Qaddafi's controller. His links to Qaddafi were exposed in a recent issue of *Jeune Afrique*, a French-language magazine close to Tunisian circles.

Garaudy is now the candidate for president of France of the new ecologist party, and is a bitter opponent of Giscard d'Estaing. In France, he is associated with the old French aristocratic circles led by the Society of Jesus.

Second, Garaudy and his associates are supporters of two Italian based networks relevant to the Libya-Iran connection: the Lelio Basso Foundation, which has sponsored both Libyan and Iranian Muslim fundamentalist projects for years, and the Vatican's own "Muslim-Christian dialogue."

What is certain is that the Paris circles associated with Garaudy are exactly the same circles that produced Bani-Sadr, Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh, and other leading Iranian officials during their long period of exile in Paris, at the Sorbonne and the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris.