

are reformed. . . . Increase the number of mullahs.” It is now generally considered that Khomeini has realized that he cannot survive in the context of the new regime, and has decided to go down with the ship of state. In fact, when Khomeini had initially hesitated after the bombing of Rajai and Bahonar, other radical ayatollahs, such as Ayatollah Montazeri and the holy city of Qom mafia, openly broke with Khomeini—for the first time since the 1979 revolution—and attacked him for being too soft. They demanded an all-out crackdown.

According to Iranian sources, the U.S., British, and French intelligence services plan to bring back Bani-Sadr and the terrorist Islamic “Mujaheddin-e-Khalq” organization to govern Iran later this fall, after toppling Khomeini’s regime. The desire to support Bani-Sadr and Co. reflects the unwillingness of the State Department and the British SIS to learn from their mistakes.

By restoring “President Bani-Sadr,” a murderer who sent thousands to their deaths in 1979-80, the Anglo-Americans believe that they can retain something of the Islamic character of the current regime and thus continue to rally Iran’s mullahs around an “Islamic Republic” with a more strongly military nature.

In Europe, Gen. Bahram Aryana and Adm. Kamal Habibollahi, who carried out the useless terrorist seizure of the Iranian gunboat in the Atlantic last month, are reportedly being lined up to support Bani-Sadr and the Mujaheddin in a new Iranian regime. A number of other political Iranian exile forces, such as the duo of Admiral Madani and ex-Prime Minister Ali Amini, are willing to join this coalition.

The position of the monarchist forces is a bit different. A meeting of the top leadership of the pro-Shah forces was recently held in Switzerland, ending in an agreement to link 17 organizations in a coalition to overthrow the Khomeini regime. But there are signs that even the monarchists may be prepared to seek a deal with Bani-Sadr, although both sides will try to cut each other’s throats in the process. According to some rumors, Ardeshir Zahedi, Iran’s ex-ambassador to Washington and a pro-Shah loyalist, was dispatched to meet Bani-Sadr and Mujaheddin leader Massoud Rajavi in Paris after the Swiss summit.

The monarchists believe that the following simple logic holds: the West needs to stabilize Iran and prevent Soviet gains, Bani-Sadr cannot hope to stabilize Iran without the armed forces, the armed forces are generally loyal to the Shah, and—therefore—the Shah and the monarchist movement are needed by the West.

Such logic might initially sound reasonable. But some believe that it holds almost guaranteed potential for a double-cross against the monarchists, once they help Bani-Sadr to regain power. And still the question remains: who will challenge Moscow if the Soviets decide to veto the operation?

Current options for Iran’s exile groups

by Thierry Lalevée

The ongoing collapse of the regime of the mullahs in Iran, as well as the takeover in early August of an Iranian gunboat by a promonarchist, anti-Khomeini commando, has again brought to light the role of the numerous Iranian exile organizations. Mostly based in Paris, these organizations have been struggling for the past three years to end the Khomeini nightmare. According to *Le Figaro* on Sept. 7, the Iranian resistance is rapidly organizing to undertake some spectacular actions over the next two months.

Le Figaro’s reporter Desjardins described in that article his two-week-long journey from Istanbul to the inside of Iran, a journey made possible by the complicity of the Turkish authorities and the guidance of the Iranian

Admiral Habibollahi’s odd self-justifications

The following are excerpts from an Aug. 27 article published by the Iran Press Service based on an interview with Adm. Kamal Habibollahi.

On the Tabarzin affair: “ ‘But I want to emphasize that at no stage did we ever consider blowing up the vessel. I know the Iranian navy needs it very badly, especially since many of its other gunboats are inoperative because of the lack of maintenance. We are all Iranians and, though we know the war with Iraq is not of our making, we wanted to see the ship was handed back to them after we had proved our point.’ ”

On EIR: “Habibollahi suggested that it was corrupt personnel he had purged from the Imperial Army when he became commander that were behind the allegations that he had kept links with the Khomeini regime after he had fled from Iran five months after

resistance organizations. He reported that the Iranian central power in Teheran has lost any control over the northwestern territories, stretching from northern Kurdistan to Azerbaijan, which are dominated by promonarchist tribesmen, along with representatives of the various political and military organizations that are headquartered in Paris, which mostly cooperate with each other.

Does that mean that the collapse of the mullarchy will lead to the establishment of a constitutional monarchy—as most are advocating—which will pave the way for rebuilding Iran as a nation? The situation is not that simple. Since the mid-July arrival in Paris of former President Bani-Sadr and his new-found ally Massoud Rajavi of the Mujaheddin-e-Khalq, the same Anglo-American forces that put Khomeini in power, have been juggling option after option, based on policy guidelines, rather than personalities as such, aimed at ensuring that Iran continues to be a mere pawn in the geopolitical game that Haig recently named “strategic consensus” after Brzezinski’s “arc of crisis.”

The military option

Though the Anglo-American consideration of the leftist Mujaheddin-e-Khalq is more favorable, as expressed by former Undersecretary of State George

Ball’s recent endorsement of the group, the actual plans are more connected with a direct military takeover than anything else. The London *Times* of Sept. 2 leaked the plan by calling on the Iranian army to take over under the pretext of “defending the true principle of the Iranian Islamic Revolution” to establish in Iran a regime like Pakistan’s Ziaul Haq. The London *Times*’s argument was simple: Rajavi and Bani-Sadr do not have the forces to take power right now, the other Iranian exile movements are not acceptable, and the current internal chaos bears the danger that the communist Tudeh party will emerge as the strongest force; hence, the army is the most stable force to prevent such an occurrence. How to achieve such a plan is another matter, taking into account the visible lack of any significant leader in the Iranian army within Iran.

In fact, as it comes out, the “military option” turns around a trio of former generals and military men who were deeply involved in the overthrow of the Pahlavi monarchy. These are General Gharabaghi, the former Iranian chief of staff; Admiral Madani, the former governor of the Khuzestan province and rival candidate for the presidency against Bani-Sadr; and former Savak chief General Fardoust, the new leader of the Savama who personally directed both the assassination of the Shah’s nephew Prince Shariar and the later attempt

the revolution.

“He was answering questions from IPS’s Paris correspondent on allegations mentioned in the *Executive Intelligence Review* publication *Hostage to Khomeini*, which linked him with Cyrus Hashemi and Bahram Nahidian, said to be two of the Khomeini regime’s chief agents in the United States. He was also said to have served as naval attaché at the Washington embassy for the Khomeini regime while in the U.S.A.

“Habibollahi said he had never seen either of the pair, or worked at the embassy, and the stories about him had been spread by those who had taken their money abroad after being thrown out of the navy for corruption. Habibollahi had taken over from Admiral Atai, a young officer close to the Shah, who was himself dismissed for corruption, including manipulation of the navy’s budget and taking commission on purchase.

“When he took over, Habibollahi said, he found ‘incredible corruption’ and navy personnel were ashamed even to be seen in uniform in the streets as a result. He had been brutal in cleansing the service, and many people who had been dismissed or punished had found their way to the United States and saw the

chance when he arrived there to avenge themselves on him.

“The admiral said that when he had asked Robert Dreyfuss of the *Executive Intelligence Review* from whom he had obtained the material he had written about him, Dreyfuss replied, ‘Your friends.’ ‘I asked him why he had not checked on me as an honest journalist,’ Habibollahi said. ‘He then offered to interview me, but I refused. I didn’t want to be manipulated by those people.’ ”

On Gen. Robert Huyser’s role in the Iranian revolution: “One of the main reasons why the decision was made to make the army neutral at the fateful meeting of Feb. 5, [1979] in Teheran, was that the forces already threatened to break up. Already some air force elements had attacked army units. And on the previous day, out of 12,000 men sent onto the streets with 30 tanks, only 4,000 men and 3 tanks had returned. . . . Too late was how Habibollahi characterized that state of affairs at that time. . . . The stories that General Huyser had been trying to break up the army were not true. He came to Iran to support the army, not to encourage its disintegration, Habibollahi said.”



Massoud Rajavi in France

against the Shah's former prime minister, Shahpour Bakhtiar. Appended to that triumvirate is the controversial figure of Adm. Kamal Habibollahi, the man who engineered the hijack seizure of the Iranian gunboats last month, as they were being shipped from France to Khomeini's Iran.

Admiral Madani has been variously discussed as the man who would readily accept the task of being an Iranian version of Ziaul Haq. In fact, since his self-imposed exile in northern Germany, Madani has unceasingly written letters to Khomeini advising him to oust Bani-Sadr, and install Madani as a military ruler. To prove his good faith to the imam, Madani engaged himself in arms deals to Iran through his London-based company. He is rumored to have been a key mediator in the recent Israel-Iran deals which had been conducted through various companies in London.

Madani also met in France with the leader of the Mujaheddin to discuss a potential agreement which would imply a recognition of the Mujaheddin as part of a military takeover, provided they stop all actions inside Iran. Madani is testing other fields and is speaking in terms very similar to those of the former Prime Minister Ali Amini about a national reconciliation that he could lead—speeches which are meant to signal that Madani might still be for sale for other options.

The monarchist option

By "other option" is in fact meant a secret relationship which has been maintained over years between Madani and Habibollahi. Habibollahi, who spent some three years quietly in the United States, emerged in early August in the Tabarzin gunboat seizure. In a fortnight, this man, whom many Iranian officers still consider a traitor for his previous activities, donned a new political sheepskin in the shape of an anti-Khomeini "resistance fighter." As some were quick to point

out, his re-emergence simply meant that the Anglo-Americans—who were holding such other cards as Bani-Sadr, Rajavi, and Madani—also intended to keep their options open within the monarchist camp.

Though Habibollahi had gained the cooperation of General Aryana, leader of the exile group Azadegan, because the latter wanted to "do something" spectacular, he certainly was not the right person for an "inside job" like the gunboat seizure. In fact, the refusal of the Azadegan crew to man the hijacked Tabarzin vessels is directly the fault of the admiral himself: no Iranian naval officer had agreed to serve under his orders. To hide that fact, Habibollahi asserted that he, in any case, never wanted to take over the boat, but told the Iran Press Service that, because the mullahs' navy "needs it very badly, especially since so many of their gunboats are inoperative [and] we are all Iranians . . . we wanted to see the ship was handed back to them." In that same interview, Habibollahi denied that NATO's Gen. Robert Huyser had sought the disintegration of Iran's armed forces in 1979, a statement that must have raised some eyebrows in some quarters—but not from among Habibollahi's colleagues who had met with Huyser at the time: they have all been shot.

For these reasons it seems that Habibollahi's "anti-Khomeini" career is severely curtailed, since Aryana has already excluded him from any decision-making. But the effect of his reappearance among exile groups has already been destructive, a reappearance made possible by the exile groups' two-year-long inactivity, which has led them to indiscriminately accept anyone with any "action plan" regardless of his past. Habibollahi unhesitatingly played on this fact. While military actions as such were being pushed, calls for national unity under the leadership of Azadegan and Aryana were broadcast, from the "extreme left to the extreme right," in Aryana's words.

This is a recipe which might soon lead to the emergence of another military leader like Habibollahi, ensuring that, were the monarchy to be restored, it would be under control of the Anglo-Americans. For Iran, it would be a new disaster. But so far, no Iranian anti-Khomeini group has yet dared to put into writing a programmatic alternative to the Khomeini regime, underlining the fact that to overthrow Khomeini means to restore Iran as a sovereign nation-state striving for economic development within Iran and throughout the region. Without such steps, the Iranian opposition will continue not only to be the center of secret negotiations with various Anglo-American forces, but will also remain unable to rebuild its nation. That point was recently made by Patrick Cockburn in the *Financial Times*, who happily wrote that the "strength of Khomeini" compared to all his opponents "is that he knows perfectly what he wants to do with Iran."