

Africa Report by Douglas DeGroot

IMF seeks Khomeinis in Africa

A conference in Sierra Leone attended by Iranian radicals called for a holy war to be waged by Africa's 100 million Muslims.

A drive to bring the so-called Islamic Holy War to Africa that was kicked off last month is another piece of weaponry being thrown into the campaign to eliminate development potential by weakening central governments in Africa.

First on the target list, as I reported last week, is Nigeria. Nigeria has wealth and a large population—around 100 million, or 20-25 percent of Africa's total—and, therefore, has the potential to industrialize rapidly. Unless, of course, it is derailed by some form of the Khomeini scourge. Roughly half the Nigerian population is Muslim.

The ayatollahs are now bringing their message to Africa. A recent conference in the small West African nation of Sierra Leone was attended by Iranian agitators who called on the more than 100 million Muslims in Africa to join the world-wide holy war against "un-Islamic and anti-Islamic" forces.

In response to this threat, Nigerian President Shehu Shagari called on Nigerians Sept. 27 to halt the dangerous trend whereby certain groups and individuals introduced divisive elements into political activities in the country. In a message released from Abuja, the new federal capital, he pointed out that the purpose of the 1983 election was to select people who were prepared to serve the nation regardless of their religious belief.

"Religion should not be mixed with politics and elections," he said. "Under our constitution, religion is a per-

sonal and private affair." When the constitution was drawn up before the return to civilian rule in 1979, a big push was made to have the Islamic law incorporated into the constitution; a secular constitution modeled on that of the United States was adopted instead.

Shagari especially urged the Muslim community in Nigeria, of which he is a member, to reflect on these principles.

The Sierra Leone conference reportedly set up something called The Supreme Islamic Council of Africa, and recommended the establishment of an Islamic radio station, television station, and newspaper to spread "Islamic" propaganda.

The consequences for industry can be seen already in Iran.

I don't know why Sierra Leone would host a conference which bodes so much evil for Africa. Perhaps the backers of the conference agreed to pay the tab.

Sierra Leone has itself been put through the IMF wringer and its severe economic crisis threatens to destabilize the country. The chaotic elections this May resulted in the death of 100 people.

Sierra Leone President Siaka Stevens had been promised money by Libyan strongman Muammar Qaddafi if he would attend the OAU summit in Tripoli last August, according to confidential sources cited by a recent issue of *Jeune Afrique*. That summit aborted when a quorum of heads of state did not show up.

Stevens had intended to go, but got a message before going from his neighbor, Sekou Toure, which hinted at destabilizations in Sierra Leone if its President showed up in Tripoli. The issue was that of recognizing the Polisario movement as an independent country separate from Morocco. Stevens was ready to join Qaddafi at the summit in supporting Polisario, while Toure opposed recognition, and was trying to keep African heads of state away.

Stevens did not go to Tripoli, and Qaddafi kept his money, according to *Jeune Afrique*. Maybe hosting the "Islamic" conference in September was another way to get some money for the impoverished Sierra Leone government.

Development of a country cannot occur without strong central governments to create the institutions needed to direct that development. The murderous conditionality policies so brutally imposed by the IMF forcing both the abandonment of development projects and the lowering of already very low standards of living, is the leading weapon weakening central governments and creating conditions of instability.

The World Bank's Berg Report last year attacked strong centralized institutions for directing development. The World Bank, the only source of funds for many of the poorest African countries, has refused to fund the large-scale infrastructural projects without which industrial development and modernization cannot take place.

The campaign to weaken central governments, if not checked by the implementation of a New World Economic Order, will return the continent to a colonial status, with states decentralized into tribal groupings, at best merely degraded suppliers of raw materials.