

Middle East Report by Judith Wyer

Why Khomeini eliminated Ghotbzadeh

Lord Carrington's extremist mullahs disapproved of his inclination to deal with the United States.

The late-September execution of Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, former Foreign Minister of Iran's Islamic regime and one-time close confidante of the Ayatollah Khomeini, marks a turning point in the three-year-old Islamic dictatorship.

Ghotbzadeh had been charged with plotting a military coup against the ruling Islamic Republican Party. But the actual reason for his elimination, as with the previous assassinations of such luminaries within the Khomeini regime as Ayatollah Beheshti, is the bloody ongoing power struggle over the succession to the octogenarian Khomeini.

Ghotbzadeh's unusually close personal ties to Khomeini are thought to be the reason for the lengthy delay in reaching a verdict in his trial. The fact that Khomeini finally gave the go-ahead to Ghotbzadeh's execution proves that the Khomeini inner circle has become dominated by a group of extremist fundamentalists who are bent on destabilizing the Persian Gulf and challenging the United States and its allies in the region.

Ghotbzadeh was a symbol in Iran of a grouping within the factionalized Khomeini inner circle that favored building ties to the United States. The extremist mullahs responsible for his demise are vocal advocates of a radical non-alignment for Iran and the entire Muslim world under the banner of "neither East or West." This is the sloganized expression of nothing other than the so-called "third way" doctrine of Britain's former Foreign Min-

ister and Henry Kissinger associate Lord Carrington. Carrington's "third way" seeks to remove both superpowers' influence and power within the Muslim world, and to fill the vacuum by means of a reasserted British colonialism.

Iran's escalated drive in recent months to spread fundamentalist revolution to the Arab side of the Persian Gulf has played neatly into the implementation of Carrington's scheme, particularly by targeting the pro-U.S. Saudi regime.

In late August, Khomeini appointed Ayatollah Koini, the ringleader of the gang that captured the American hostages, to lead the Iranian pilgrims on their annual pilgrimage (the Haj) to Mecca. Koini organized a number of demonstrations in Medina, in direct defiance of Saudi security dictates, rousing Muslim pilgrims against the influence of the United States in Saudi Arabia.

Two weeks before Koini began the Iranian pilgrimage, the Iranian circular *Ash-Shahid* ran a lengthy manifesto from the Organization of Islamic Revolution in the Arabian Peninsula, denouncing the Saudi monarchy and calling for an Iran-style Islamic revolution in Saudi Arabia.

It should be noted that the crowd behind *Ash-Shahid* and the Organization of Islamic Revolution also helped to foment the October 1979 uprising at the Grand Mosque of Mecca during the Haj, and supported the uprising of Shi'ite rebels in the eastern Saudi oilfields late that same year.

Saudi Arabia is not the only target of the Khomeini regime. Since the execution of Ghotbzadeh, Iran has escalated its war effort against Iraq, opening a new front toward the Iraqi capital Baghdad. On Oct. 5 in a speech to the Iranian Military Academy Khomeini pledged never to negotiate a peace with Iraq.

Khomeini's hard line no doubt reflects the position of Iran's most fanatical mullah grouping, the Hojitali.

The wealthiest landed priesthood in Iran, the Hojitali are the most feudalistic and brutal grouping within Khomeini's inner circle.

Led by Ayatollahs Gulpayagani, Shirazi, and Qomi, the Hojitali have come under increasing attack from the Soviet Union in recent weeks, which has accused these mullahs of being the ringleaders within the Khomeini regime of a drive to destroy the Iranian Communist Party (Tudeh) and break nascent Iranian-Soviet ties. The Soviets have often taken note of the growing pro-Chinese sentiment brewing within Iran as its relations with the Soviets sour. While Iran is being played as the key pawn in Lord Carrington's "third way" plan for the Middle East, Khomeini's regime is also mending its relations with Peking.

The recent resumption of Tehran's historic ties to British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell, has been accompanied by moves to open up economic relations with the People's Republic of China. The ruling mullahs of Iran's Muslim Brotherhood cult should naturally find this arrangement comfortable, since both the Brotherhood and the Chinese are advocating a bucolic "back to the land" policy for the Muslim world like that which dominates China today. Britain and its oligarchical friends, of course, consider this policy totally compatible with the reimposition of colonialism.