

# A secret war against Iran's Khomeini

by Thierry Lelavée

At the end of May, reports went out on the international newswires that Iranian regular forces had massed on the Iraqi border in the number of half a million, ready to make the "final" onslaught against the government of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on behalf of the Islamic Revolution. Yet as of the middle of June, no such offensive had taken place.

Apart from the internal political strife among the Iranian military and religious leadership in recent months on the real aims of the war against Iraq, the cause of the long delay of Iran's major offensive is the poor state of the armed forces. All components of the army are known to be lacking vital military spare parts. Out of the several hundred airplanes the Shah left behind him, no more than 70 are reported still able to fly; the navy has nearly ceased to exist, and the ground forces are in no better state.

Whenever the offensive starts, Iranian soldiers will be deployed almost unarmed against the Iraqi war machine. While Iraq has been receiving military aid from the Soviet Union, France, and the United States, directly or indirectly, most channels of weapons deliveries to Iran have been closed down. Against Iraq's new weapons, including the deadly cluster-bombs recently received from Chile, Iran's human offensive will not last very long.

For the past several months the United States, in the beginnings of a tilt away from its "balance-of-power" politics in the Gulf, has been waging a secret war against arms smuggling to Iran. This has begun to have some direct effects.

- U.S. President Reagan reached an understanding with French President François Mitterrand and Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the corridors of the June 7 London economic summit, on the need to starve Iran for weapons.

- In early June, Argentine President Raul Alfonsín personally vetoed a \$500 million deal with Iran, which included the sale of British-made vessels, for "ethical and political reasons." This was done at the last minute, even though Iran had already deposited the money in a Swiss account for the Buenos Aires government.

- In the United States, the May 17 arrest of international arms smuggler Reza Hashemi was one of the most significant

public indications of the effectiveness of this campaign. Hashemi, generally based in London, has been for the past four years the main supplier of weapons to Iran, together with his brother Cyrus, based in New York, who doubled as a representative of the Iranian intelligence service (Savama). Arrested at a New York airport, Reza has been charged with illicitly selling weapons to Iran, while his brother decided to flee to London where he is being sought by Interpol.

- The May 24 crackdown on a major West German arms smuggling ring immediately followed the arrest of Reza Hashemi. The network, which is the first to be dismantled in Germany since the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war, was led by Hamburg-based Countess Lisa von Schwerin, a 67-year-old member of the Hamburg jet set who owns a real-estate firm. The countess, known among the jet set as "Bibi," was arrested together with two other Germans, an American, and an Iranian, for trying to sell no fewer than 250 M-48 tanks to Iran.

## Tanks, drugs, and murder

Investigations quickly revealed that the German police authorities, who have been known for their good relations with the regime of dictator Khomeini, were very embarrassed by such arrests and quickly put official pressures on the newspapers not to write any more about it, imposing a surprising seal of secrecy on the affair. There is even some doubt that the German authorities would have ever broken up such a network, but for the fact that all details and evidence were provided by American law enforcement agencies, creating a situation the German police could not ignore.

Despite the imposed secrecy, it became known that von Schwerin's M-48 tanks were part of a package that Khomeini's special envoy Sadegh Tabatabai had unsuccessfully negotiated in previous months. Indeed, negotiations had been stopped short when Tabatabai was arrested on Jan. 8, 1983 for drug smuggling in Düsseldorf, after a meeting in Zürich with his Brazilian partner Joseph Vanucek of Still, Inc. The same day, the New York-based representative of Still, Inc., George Perry, disappeared from his hotel in New York, only to be found four months later at the bottom of the lake in a nearby state park.

Tanks, drugs, and murder are the components of a major international scandal that Iran's friend in Bonn, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, does not want to be known.

## The Sharon connection

These last two spectacular arrests followed other earlier arrests which were less publicized. In March, for example, the Italian authorities stopped a Turkish ship which was on its way to Iran with artillery equipment and light weapons. Originating in Turkey, the *Viking* planned to receive a shipment in Italy, then sail to Iran through the Black Sea. Such an indirect route obviously included some Soviet coopera-

tion. This operation became more interesting when it was discovered that behind the cover of a British firm called Marimed stood a group of notorious Israeli-controlled arms firms, such as KTI of Haig Galustian in London, and the International Desalination Company in Tël Aviv of Jacoov Nimrodi, an associate of former Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon's cabinet and Israeli military attaché in Teheran.

In the following period, no fewer than 20 Iranians were arrested throughout Europe for their involvement in supplying Iran with weapons. In late March, a strange network led by Lausanne-based Ali Zaghian was busted as it was selling large quantities of drugs to buy weapons. Ali Zaghian, who lived for the past two years in Lausanne under the quiet cover of a university professorship, worked under Hojatessalam Rafighdust-Hashemi, the Iranian minister of the Pasdarans (Revolutionary Guard).

Zaghian and several of his agents, students in the same university, were arrested. Investigations revealed that Zaghian worked with Marcus Bruppacher of the SATI company in Zug, whose colleague Andreas Jenni made international headlines in 1981 when one of his chartered planes crashed in Soviet territory, filled with weapons.

According to French investigators, Jenni and Bruppacher are known to work with Hans Albert Kunz of Finenco in Geneva, who is better known for his association with Grand Master Licio Gelli of the illegal "Propaganda-2" Freemasonic lodge, and Nazi banker François Genoud. Out of such networks, the Geneva-based company Gatoil has in recent years been buying and selling Iranian oil to buy weapons.

Gatoil was also mentioned in the case of the *Viking*.

Leads provided by the arrests allowed the French police to pick up 11 Iranians in Paris and Marseille who were doing a brisk business in large quantities of drugs. Little is known of what happened to them since their arrest, not by the regular police, but by the Gendarmerie Nationale (French military police).

More recently, several Iranians were arrested in Zürich and others in Düsseldorf.

### **Penalties not worth the risk**

The word spread rapidly in the small community of arms smugglers that for once, the United States meant business. Prices have rapidly increased because of the risks, and many dealers have simply desisted from doing business with Iran, even in West Germany. In France, individuals with dubious legal status have been told in no uncertain terms that should they be caught selling weapons to Iran, they would have no chance to ever do business anywhere in Europe.

For other reasons, even the Soviets have decided to stick to their Iraqi customer, whose weapons purchases are largely financed by the Gulf countries, which means a lot of hard currency for the pragmatists in Moscow. Iran's next battle may indeed become, as Hojatessalem Rafsanjani declared on June 13, the "last offensive."

# Papandreou installs KGB terror apparatus

by Phocion

The elections for the European Parliament in Greece will have been held by the time this communication reaches its readers. The formal results of that election will have been of only tertiary significance. All important judgments to be communicated respecting the significance of that election for Greece and for Europe, can already be stated.

The two months which preceded the June 17 election were employed by the Papandreou government for the objective of installing a formidable apparatus of electoral fraud and political violence, a project undertaken with the Soviet KGB and its local Greek adjunct, the Greek Communist Party (KKE). In the course of these two months, the Papandreou government:

1) Conducted a massive purge of the top ranks of all law enforcement agencies and of all the military services.

2) Carried out hundreds of shifts in the commands of the police, gendarmerie, and other law-enforcement organizations in every significant area in Greece.

3) Appointed 16,322 "election judges" of its own choosing and prevented the appointment of other judges who could have been acceptable to the nationalist opposition parties, thus reducing the total number of election judges to 25% fewer than the number required to cover all election districts.

4) Distributed millions of illegal, pre-marked paper ballots, whose existence makes an honest election a technical impossibility.

5) Mobilized a semi-private army for carrying out political violence in the streets against its nationalist and conservative opponents.

6) Prohibited the nationalist opposition parties from having access to the government-run radio and TV contrary to law.

7) Conducted "search and seal" raids against the residences of elected members of parliament who happen to disagree with Papandreou, including those who belong to Prime Minister Papandreou's own PASOK party.

On the basis of these newly acquired capabilities, the Papandreou regime conducted itself in the last two weeks of the election campaign as a true dictatorship. In every major city of the country, large numbers of policemen and gen-