
'The Iranian Revolution'

The coming 13th Hidden Imam

by Thierry Lalevée

On Feb. 1, the Iranian mullahs began the ceremonies which are to culminate on Feb. 11, the eighth anniversary of their 1979 takeover of Iran. Not surprisingly, the ceremonies began at the Behesht Zahra Martyrs' cemetery; as the mullahs commemorated, in front of the Fountain of Blood, the latest dead from the front in the war with Iraq, thousands of coffins arrived, waiting for yet another extension of the cemetery. More than the city of Teheran itself, or even the Bazaar, Behesht Zahra cemetery has become the meeting point and pulse of the so-called Iranian revolution.

This year's celebration will have a very particular tone. One of its central features is that Islamic Iran's spiritual leader, Ruhollah Khomeini, is not expected to live much longer. On Jan. 18, Western intelligence reports indicated

that Khomeini was extremely sick or maybe dead already. The mullahs responded on Jan. 20, broadcasting a television film showing Khomeini addressing a large crowd. For careful watchers, however, it didn't take too long to realize that Khomeini's speech had no relevance to any current events, such as the latest military victories claimed by Iran against Iraq. Experts guessed that the tape was perhaps two years old. Khomeini may not be dead yet, but he is certainly very sick, awake no more than a couple of hours each day. His son Ahmad has never been so busy standing in for his father at religious and political ceremonies, and signing dozens of *Fatwas* (religious edicts) each day, in his father's name.

Hence, sometime during the course of the year, Shi'ite mythology will be enriched by the myth of the 13th Hidden

The Hezbollah: Iran's apparatus abroad

Although often presented as a Lebanese Shi'ite organization, the "Party of God" or Hezbollah have become, since their creation in 1981 in Teheran, one of the world's largest Islamic fundamentalist organizations.

The Hezbollah are not even just Shi'ite (the minority sect of Islam), but now include Sunnis (majority sect) as well. This has come about as the result of more than 40 years of negotiations, which began after World War II in Cairo when official Sunni Islam, finally recognized Shi'ism as a legitimate branch of Islam.

The negotiations were begun by Iran's Ayatollah Khashani, Khomeini's teacher, and by the Nazi-allied Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, al Husseini, to pave the way for a reunification of Islam, but broke off after a few years. In 1980, under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Islamic Guidance, today led by Ayatollah Khatemi, the Iranians launched a new round of talks aimed at imposing Khomeini as the Imam and Caliph of all Islam. As a result, in

1982 the Tawhid movement or Movement of Islamic Unity was created in Tripoli, Lebanon, led by Shaykh Said Shaaban. This little-noticed process has been the subject not only of countless Islamic seminars in the West, but of many mergers in the Middle East. Among the beneficiaries of the latter is the beefed-up Hezbollah, many of whose members, such as the Hamadei brothers recently arrested in West Germany, are from non-Shi'ite communities.

'Principles'

The following manifesto of the movement, the only one to be made public, was read on Feb. 16, 1985 by Sheikh Ibrahim al Amin, in South Beirut, on the occasion of the funeral of Hezbollah regional leader Sheikh Ragheb al Harb:

"Who are we and what is our identity? We are the sons of the Umma of the Hezbollah whose vanguard was made victorious in Iran by God to pave the way for a Worldwide Central Islamic State. We obey orders from one single leadership, wise and just, the leadership of the Fakih; the Imam, Ruhollah Khomeini.

"Because of that, we are not in Lebanon a closed and organized party. . . . We are an Umma associated with the Muslims of all over the world. . . . Anything happen-

Imam, Ruhollah Khomeini. His death is not to be acknowledged; he will merely "disappear." The mullahs have in recent years refused to consider him a mere ayatollah, or even a grand ayatollah of the Shariat Madari variety; they have called him Imam. For many of his fanatical followers, Khomeini has been the reincarnation of the 12th Imam, Tayyib, killed at a young age in the 12th century. Faced with internal strife for the leadership of the already divided Shi'ite community after the assassination of the last Imam, Musta'li, the mullahs conjured up a mythical figure to hold the community together, announcing that the Hidden Imam would return to bring Islam to its original glory. Khomeini is much older than Tayyib ever was, to be sure, but for cynical mullahs, creating another myth is the easiest way out of an embarrassing political situation.

Indeed, there can be no direct successor to Khomeini, in a political sense; his death could mean the explosion of the Shi'ite community in factional brawls. It is a sign of how far backward the mullahs have been able to drive the Iranian population, that a myth like this is expected to be believed. Among the inner elite of the priesthood which is preparing Khomeini's imminent "disappearance," many will accept this solution out of sheer political expediency, out of fear of a leaderless community. But many millions within Iran and abroad will accept it on the basis of blind faith. The myth of the 13th Imam will be the driving force guiding the new holy

wars, the *Jihads* that will spread throughout the region.

What 'moderate mullahs'?

The mullahs have never been in so strong a position within Iran, due in part to the military help they received from the United States and Israel, in the notorious arms-for-hostages deals. Teheran has received in recent months the kind of weapons it needed. In recent weeks, scores of Iraqi jet fighters have been shot down, thanks to the new batteries of U.S. Hawk anti-aircraft missiles. Meanwhile, revolutionary fervor seems to be running as high as ever. Local observers report that it was no problem for the mullahs to recruit some 100,000 fresh troops in December, and that it won't be any problem to send some 10,000 fresh troops a week to the front. This fervor has much to do with Iraq's strategic mistake: the continuous bombardment of Iranian cities. As was proven during World War II, when Hitler's Germany bombarded British cities, such operations strengthen rather than weaken the will of the population to resist and fight, whatever the devastation suffered.

The unfolding of the Irangate scandal in Washington and Israel has also played a role in furthering this militant spirit; the whole of Iran has been laughing its head off, about how they succeeded in tricking Washington and even the clever Israelis. This sentiment was demonstrated from Teheran to Cairo, where the Muslim Brotherhood used the scandal as

ing to the Muslims of the Philippines, Iraq, Afghanistan, or anywhere else has an impact on the Umma of which we are a full part. . . .

"Our culture, its essential roots lies in the Holy Koran . . . and the Fatwas [religious edicts] of the Fakih.

"No one can imagine the importance of our military apparatus. Each of us is a soldier. When there is the need for the Jihad [holy war], each one will meet his duty. . . . The United States, its allies within the Atlantic Alliance, as well as the Zionist entity are continuously attacking us. . . . This is why we are more and more in a state of permanent alert to defend our religion, our lives, and dignity. . . . The sons of the Umma of the Hezbollah know that their enemies are Israel, the United States, France, and the Kataeb. . . . We will fight until . . . the final expulsion of Israel from Lebanon . . . the definitive expulsion of the United States and France . . . and their allies from Lebanon and the region, and the end of any colonial influence. . . ."

Roster

International and central leadership of the Hezbollah, established 1981 in Teheran:

Hoj. Hadi al Gaafari, leader of the Hezbollah in Iran;
Hoj. Mohammad Taqi al Modarassi, chairman of the "Is-

lamic Action Party"; Hoj. Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, leader of the Hezbollah in Lebanon; Hoj. Hadi al Modarassi, leader of the Bahrein Liberation Front; Hoj. Abbas Mahri, leader of the Kuwait Liberation Front; Hoj. Bakr al Hakeem, chairman of the SAIRI (Iraq); Hoj. Hairy Qomani, Iranian ambassador to the UAE; Sheikh Mehdi Sadegh al Lawassani, leader of the Qatar Liberation Front; Sheikh Mohammad Ahmad Safwat, member of the Takfir wal Higra (Egypt); Hoj. Mahdi al Hakeem, leader of the Da'awa Party (Iraq), leader of the Hezbollahi in England.

Leadership in Lebanon:

Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah; Sheikh Sobhi al Tofaily, leader of the Baalbek region; Soyyed Hussein al Moussawi, leader of "Islamic Amal"; Sheikh Salah al Din Arkahdan, leader of the "Gamaat Islamiyya" in Saida; Sheikh Maher Mahmoud (Sunni), leader of the "Islamic Gathering" in Beirut and Saida; Sheikh Said Shaaban, leader of the Tawhid Movement, Tripoli; Sheikh Moharram al Arfi (Sunni), leader "Gamaat Islamiyya" in South Lebanon; Sheikh Mohammed ali Al Jouzou, Sunni Mufti of Mount Lebanon; Ali Arfani a.k.a. Abu Turab, leader of the Pasharan Units in Lebanon; Abbas al Hakim, military leader of the Hezbollahi; Ali al Saleh, military leader of the Hezbollahi; Hamid Aftjii, leader of the Information department, editor of *Al Ahd* magazine.