

SECRET

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SUBJECT: The Theory

1. Although much has been written about Khomeini's personality, little has been written about how he views others, how he selects his circle of friends and who he listens to. Khomeini does not operate in a vacuum and he appears to use people to suit his particular purposes, turning them off or on, contradicting and supporting as he sees fit. The re-emergence of Yazdi and Bazargan is a case in point.

2. I strongly believe that Khomeini's goal in life is to establish an Islamic state. Not in the sense that most Arab and Muslim states are Islamic, but one in which Islam is more than a state religion, it is the state. Khomeini believes that such an idea is contagious and also that an Islamic state will be more or less a militant Islamic state: aiding the establishment of other Islamic states on the Iranian model until there is a true brotherhood of such states.

3. Iran must be the example of such a state. It has the wealth, the numbers and the revolutionary zeal to lead. It cannot continue in chaos and anarchy. The purge must end and normal activities must be renewed so that Iran provides an attractive example.

4. A Muslim recognizes his mortality so Khomeini must ensure that the institutions and instruments for running this state are well established before he leaves the scene. He alone has the total concept of this state and no individual or group can dominate or prevail unless it fits his concept.

5. Khomeini's greatest concern at present is that time is short and there are many who would dash his dream if they could. The greatest bete noire is westernization epitomized by the U.S. He sees the paradox between getting this state moving and the western orientation of the very men he needs to make it move.

6. I believe that Khomeini saw in Bazargan, Yazdi et al the epitome of that paradox. As the initial impact of the revolution began to wear off in late summer 1979 this group started to look to the west for assistance. This presented Khomeini with the spectre of his dream falling apart. Khomeini has to be aware of the intense rivalries in his coterie and must be smart enough to play on these rivalries to his advantage. Fearing that the western trend might present a serious challenge to his Islamic state, Khomeini either engineered, gave a signal or took advantage of the Embassy takeover to rid himself, temporarily, of Bazargan - Yazdi, hold the U.S. hostage against interference in his goal and show the general weakness and decadence of the West in the face of Islam.

SECRET

SECRET

7. Khomeini, through the acceptance of his Islamic constitution, his humiliation of the U.S. (read the "West") and his proven ability to dominate the political figures in the country has now achieved his major goals. He must now find a face-saving way out of the hostage situation and get on with an active and successful Islamic state.

8. I believe the face-saving device will be an international tribunal that points out and condemns the U.S. It will show the U.S. as anti-Islam and anti-nationalist (the two pillars of his own strength). After this tribunal, the hostages will be expelled in some humiliating way - dumped across the border into the USSR - and relations will be severed. He then will rehabilitate the Bazargan-Yazdi group to get the country running with the implicit notion that dealing with the West excludes the U.S.

9. I believe we are seeing some initial signs of this stage going on right now. Khomeini may be impelled to move faster by the ethnic problems that are fast getting out of hand, but will not be forced into action directly by any U.S. sanctions. In fact, he cannot be seen to be reacting to sanctions and increased sanctions may well delay the process.

10. I believe it is important, as an indicator, to watch the actions of the key personalities around Khomeini. Bazargan, Yazdi and Bani Sadr are all being given more high profile roles, while the opportunistic Ghotbzadeh is trying to read the trends and be all things to all people. The radical ayatollahs are more subdued and the ambitious Beheshti is being uncharacteristically cautious. Another sign to watch is Khomeini's action toward the left. He needed their support during the past month, but has to be uncomfortable with their potential. When (if) he starts cracking down on them we will have a major signal that he believes he is, once again, in control.

11. The above, of course, is speculation. It supposes that Khomeini can control the "student" captors and that the establishment of an Islamic state is his ultimate goal. We have learned that Khomeini is single-minded and, most assuredly, his own man. We cannot state that Khomeini will be satisfied with one Islamic state in the short run or that the internal situation will be controllable. These factors temper the Ames Theory and lead us to put it forth with caution.

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