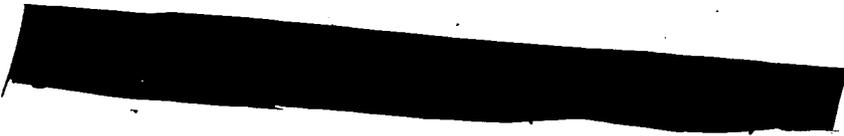


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# Near East and South Asia Review ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ B3

Supplement  
3 November 1989

Approved for Release  
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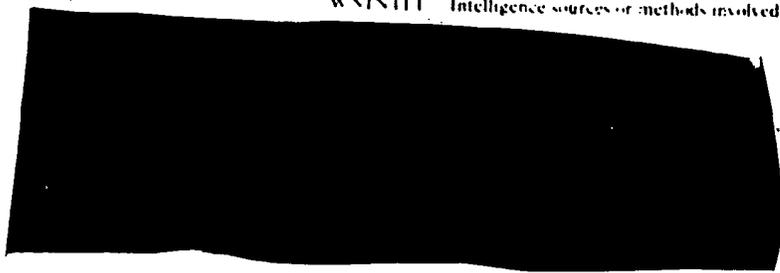
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Articles

Iran: A Changing of the Guard B3

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Recent changes in the Revolutionary Guard suggest that Tehran wants to transform Guard military and internal security components into more disciplined and structured forces. Uncertainty over its postwar role is fading as the regime reestablishes the Guard as the major protector of the interests of the Islamic republic. B3

South Yemen: Brothers in Revolution B3

[Redacted] B3

South Yemen apparently continues to provide support for Palestinian terrorist organizations and to broker contacts between Palestinian factions despite recent moves to soften its radical image. Revelation of this role could undermine prospects for obtaining much needed aid from Western countries. B3

Some articles in the Near East and South Asia Review are preliminary views of a subject or speculative, but the contents normally will be coordinated as appropriate with other offices within CIA. Occasionally an article will represent the view of a single analyst; an item like this will be designated as a noncoordinated view. Comments may be directed to the authors, whose phone numbers are listed. B3

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Near East and South Asia Review **B3**  
Articles

Iran: A Changing of the Guard **B3**

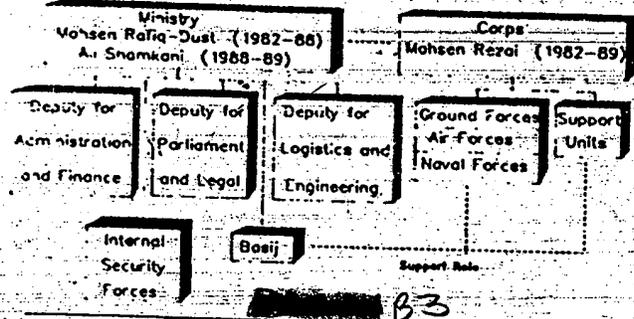
Changes in the organization and leadership of the Revolutionary Guard during the past year suggest that Tehran wants to transform Guard military and internal security components into more disciplined and structured forces. Continuing problems between the Guard and other government organizations probably have provided the impetus for the recent restructuring. Competition between the Guard and the regular military continues to hamper Iran's recovery from its war losses, while the Guard's participation in foreign policy and internal security matters often puts it at odds with the regime leadership. We believe that uncertainty over its postwar role is fading as the clerical regime reestablishes the Guard as the key institution protecting and promoting the interests of the Islamic republic. The Guard appears to have recovered from a decline in its political standing that followed its battlefield defeats in 1988, and it is well positioned to protect its interests. **B3**

No Revolutionary Changes

The changes made in the Revolutionary Guard's organization and leadership during the past year have been relatively limited, particularly in their impact on the Guard's most important day-to-day operations. These changes appear designed to improve the efficiency and cooperativeness of the Guard and include:

- The dismissal of Mohsen Rafiq-Dust, a "founding father," as Minister of the Revolutionary Guard in late 1988.
  - The merger of the Ministry of the Revolutionary Guard with the Ministry of Defense in August.
  - The reestablishment of a formal military staff for the Revolutionary Guard Corps in September.
- We believe the appointment of Abdollah Nuri, the Supreme Leader's representative to the Revolutionary Guard, as Interior Minister may also

The Old Guard: Organizational Structure, 1982-89



The Revolutionary Guard — also known as the Pasdaran or Sepah — was formally established in May 1979. The hastily collected coalition of trusted revolutionary committees, clerics, militias, and ex-servicemen was ordered by the new regime to consolidate control over urban and rural areas and to absorb or destroy the numerous independent armed groups and rebels. In addition to internal security, the Guard was commanded to propagate the values of the new Islamic order at home and abroad. When Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980, the Guard created combat units to augment — and later to rival — the regular military. **B3**

The Ministry of the Revolutionary Guard, initially led by Mohsen Rafiq-Dust, was established in late 1982. Its responsibilities included supporting Guard combat units at the war front and administration of the Guard's internal security and police forces. The Revolutionary Guard Corps was originally formed as the military arm of the Guard. Although nominally equal to the ministry, the corps and its commander, Mohsen Rezaei, enjoyed a higher status because of their importance. **B3**

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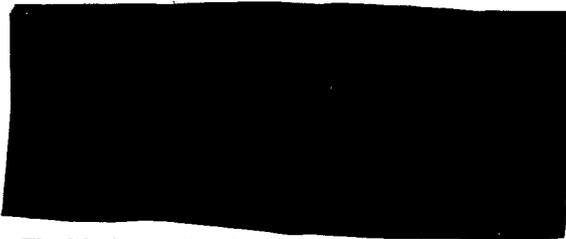


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Other Revolutionary Guard Corps Commanders

Position	Name
Deputy Commander	Rahim Safavi
Commander, Ground Forces	Mostafa Izadi
Commander, Naval Forces	Hosein Alai
Commander, Air Forces	Musa Refan

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The Ministry's Demise

The cease-fire in the war with Iraq and attendant pressure to cut military spending almost certainly strengthened support for efforts to merge or eliminate redundant and often nonessential organizations. As a result, efforts to merge the Ministry of the Revolutionary Guard with the Ministry of Defense were renewed in early 1989, culminating in August with the formation of the new Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics. We believe Tehran hopes the new and eventually leaner ministry will be able to correct endemic inefficiency and waste. ~~██████████~~ B3

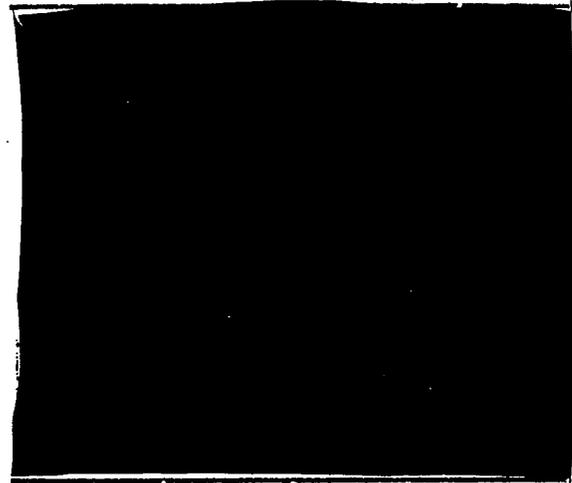
A merger probably could not have been approved over the Guard's opposition, and the Guard leadership probably agreed that some reforms were necessary. ~~██████████~~ the responsibilities of the expanded Defense Ministry will be limited to budgeting and funds allocation, military production, coordination of industrial research, equipment repairs, and foreign purchases. ~~██████████~~

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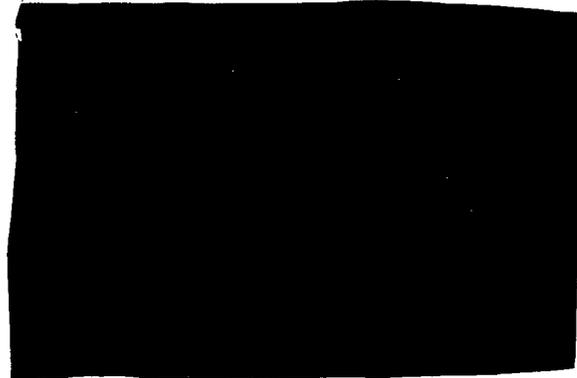
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There has been only a limited impact on the Guard's day-to-day operations since the merger. ~~██████████~~



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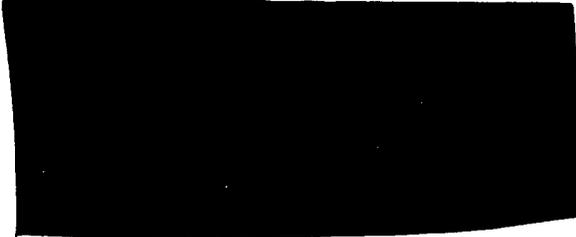


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The Guard is not likely to suffer from the loss of separate Cabinet representation. Shamkani was moved to the new organization as a deputy minister and almost certainly will protect the Guard's assets and interests in the likely bureaucratic battles over the merger and elimination of subordinate offices. The Guard Corps, which was only loosely associated with the procurement problems, maintains its relatively high status in the government. Moreover, it will have influence in other high-level government bodies for establishing and implementing defense policy, such as the Supreme Defense Council and the General Command Headquarters. Widespread Guard participation in responsibilities ranging from logistics requirements to overseas procurement and indigenous production almost certainly will ensure a strong role for the Guard in the new ministry. ~~██████████~~ B3

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**Guard and Regular Military Rivalry Waning?**

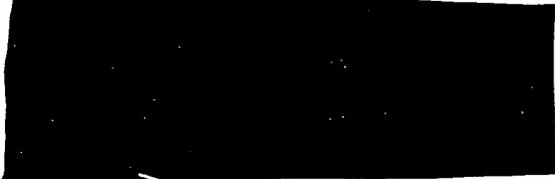


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Implementation of Resolution 598 and the key Iranian leader coordinating activities with the UN observer group station in Iran, has at times appeared to ignore the Army's wishes in working with the UN Observers.

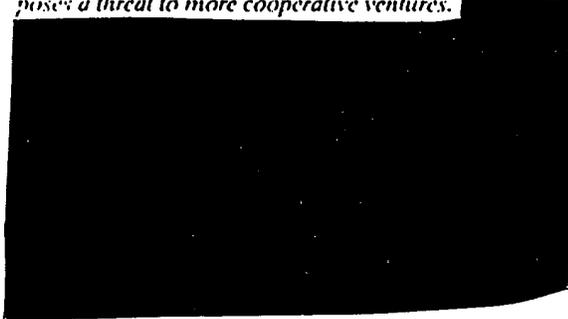
- We believe the Guard has taken the lead in combating the recent rise in Kurdish insurgent activity. b3

The Guard continues to set itself apart from the regular military in several ways and has limited its cooperation in important areas. For Example:



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The strong rivalry that often flares into armed clashes poses a threat to more cooperative ventures.



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- Former Revolutionary Guard Minister Ali Shahrkani, as head of the Military Organization for

**The Guard Forever**

We believe the recent reorganization and other actions by the regime indicate that Iran will not try to merge the combat forces of the Revolutionary Guard with the regular military. Although both may have accepted the centralization of logistic organizations, neither the Guard Corps nor the regular military want their combat forces integrated. Since late 1988 regime leaders have publicly emphasized cooperation and "unity" between the regular military and the Guard Corps but have stressed that both organizations would remain distinct. The strongest statement about the two military forces was made in mid-September by Supreme Leader Khomeini, who said, "In obedience to the esteemed Imam and our deceased man of wisdom (Khomeini)...both organizations will remain strong and exist like two arms of the Islamic Republic of Iran." Few Iranian politicians would contradict Khomeini's wishes by proposing a merger of the combat forces, in our judgment. b3

Khomeini ordered the Guard to re-establish its general staff in apparent support of his position on

having separate "arms."

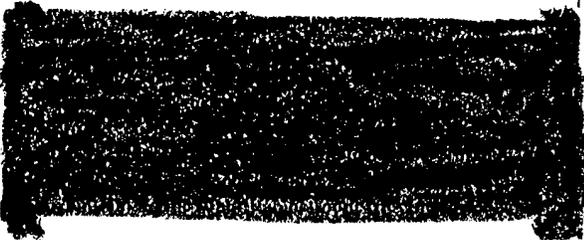


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We believe this further defined the separate status of the two services. b3



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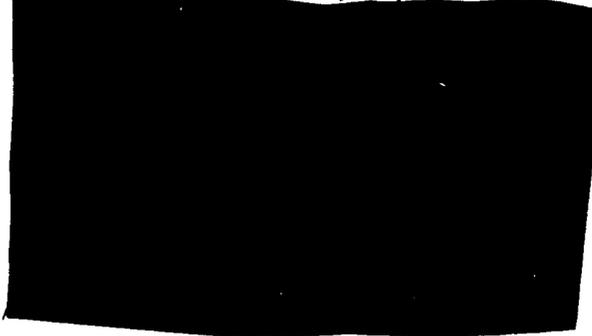
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**The Guard on the Street**

We believe the subordination of the Guard's internal security forces is the largest remaining question following the restructuring. [redacted] b1, b3  
[redacted] police activities undertaken by the Revolutionary Guard. Tehran has not announced who commands these forces. The internal security forces previously were subordinated to the Revolutionary Guard Ministry, but it is unlikely they were merged into the expanded Defense Ministry. The Guard probably would not willingly surrender its responsibilities for domestic security. [redacted] b3

The Guard's minor reorganization probably will also serve to maintain Rezai's high standing in the defense establishment. In addition to his other actions in September, Khamenei appointed a new deputy commander for Rezai as well as a commander for the Guard's ground forces. In our judgment, Rezai is surrendering his wartime role as operational commander of the ground forces to focus more on political and administrative issues, possibly assuming responsibility for Guard organizations left outside the expanded Defense Ministry. Statements by Rezai suggest that he may also be addressing the important goal of formalizing the organization and mission of the Guard's mobilization forces, the Basij, through legislation. [redacted] b3

We believe the internal security forces have been assigned to the Guard Corps, but we cannot rule out that its control will be weakened. The Guard Corps probably has taken at least temporary control



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### South Yemen : Brothers in Revolution

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South Yemen apparently continues to provide training facilities for Palestinian terrorist organizations and to broker contacts between Palestinian factions despite recent efforts to soften its radical image. In our judgment, Aden has attempted to conceal its relations with Palestinian terrorist organizations because, if revealed, they could jeopardize potential sources of urgently needed foreign economic and technical assistance. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ B3

#### Aden's Attitude Toward Terrorism

**Radical Legacy.** Since its independence in November 1967, South Yemen has been dominated by a leftist leadership. The first president, Qantari al-Shaabi, was forced to resign because of his more moderate policies. From 1969 to 1980, South Yemen was controlled by radical, Marxist-oriented leaders who were outspoken in their support for radical causes in the Middle East and hostile to Israel and the United States. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ B3

During this period, South Yemen provided support to insurgencies in Oman and North Yemen as well as to Palestinian groups. Of the Palestinian groups, Aden maintained the closest ties to the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, with which it shared ideological roots. South Yemen also supported radical leftist groups dedicated to the overthrow of moderate and conservative governments in the Middle East such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the National Democratic Front, a group targeted against North Yemen. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ B3

Although it lacked the resources to provide much financial support to the terrorists, South Yemen permitted some groups to maintain training facilities in the country and furnished them with other forms of support such as passports, safehaven, and plane tickets. South Yemen also was used as a conduit for weapons and money and permitted hijacked planes to land in Aden. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ B3

**Moderating Aden's Image.** Under the leadership of Ali Nasir Muhammad (1980-86), South Yemen began to back away from its more radical policies by curtailing support for the National Democratic Front and Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and

reducing its ties to radical Palestinian groups. Despite Ali Nasir's ouster by a more radical regime, economic necessity forced Aden to maintain a facade of moderation in its foreign policy. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ B3

Aden has lowered the public profile of its relations with radical groups and states since the early 1980s.

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- It no longer avidly supports the clerical regime in Iran, largely because Tehran has failed to provide significant economic aid, especially free or subsidized oil, in return for diplomatic support.
- Aden's once enthusiastic support for Libya and Ethiopia has declined since they signed a tripartite mutual defense treaty in 1981. Aden deflected Ethiopian requests for arms and ammunition last January, and in our view, South Yemeni-Libyan cooperation has declined as a result of reduced Libyan economic aid to Aden and closer Libyan ties to North Yemen. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ B3

#### Limited Support for Insurgent Movements

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Muscat remains concerned that Aden harbors Omani dissidents. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ B3

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~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Until the border agreement with North Yemen last May, however, South Yemen continued to harbor members of the front and threatened to allow it to resume operations against North Yemen. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ B3

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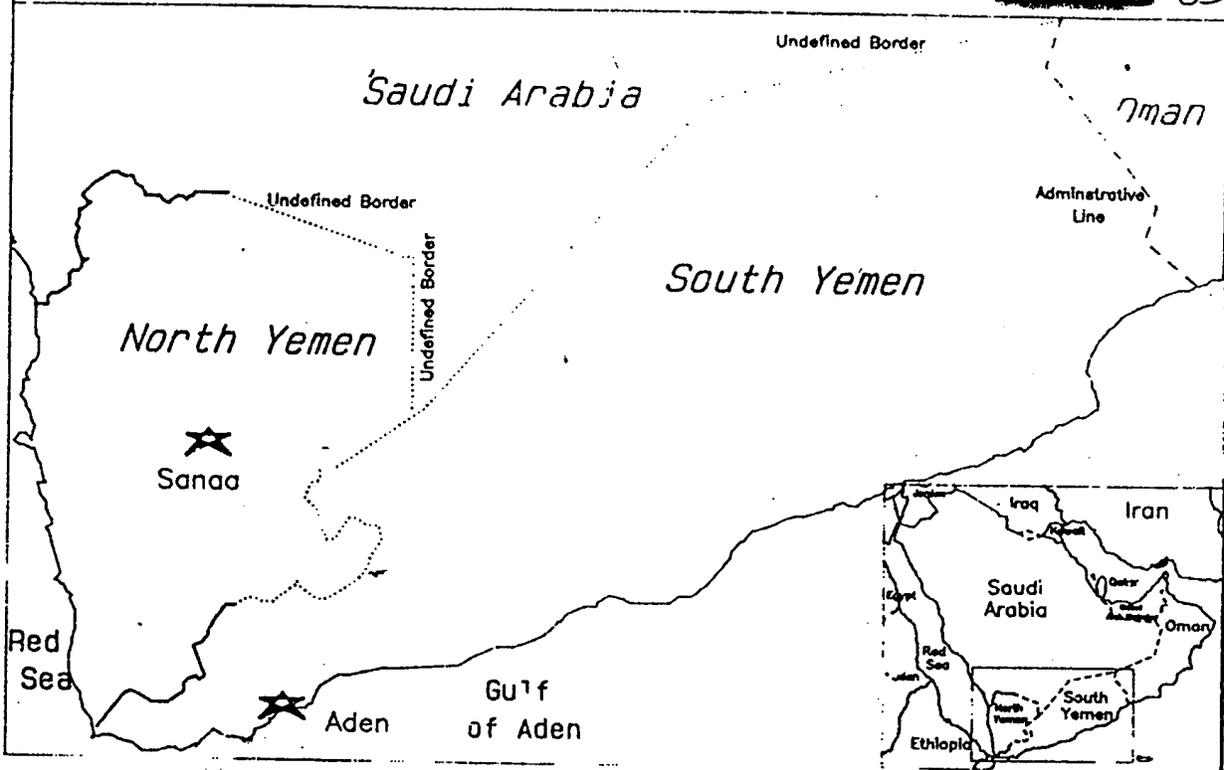
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The dynamic and forceful Muhammad Zaydan (Abu Abbas) helped found the Palestine Liberation Front, one of the smallest groups in the PLO, in the late 1970s and has headed a faction of it since 1983. He is one of the most controversial members of the PLO Executive Committee - the principal decisionmaking body of the PLO - because of his links to terrorism, especially his masterminding of the Achille Lauro hijacking in October 1985. In July 1986 an Italian court sentenced him in absentia to life in prison for his role in the hijacking. [REDACTED] B3

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# South Yemen



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### Outlook

We believe South Yemen will continue to hide its support for terrorist groups and maintain its facade of moderation. The leaders in Aden are beset by political troubles and are under considerable pressure to moderate their foreign policy. Aden is not likely to admit that it supports terrorism, because this could undermine prospects for foreign aid from

Western countries — a primary impetus for Aden's recent decision to seek diplomatic relations with the United States. The USSR, South Yemen's main benefactor, is pressing Aden to maintain its cautious foreign policy to safeguard Moscow's gains with North Yemen and the conservative Arab Gulf states. Despite these pressures, South Yemen probably will continue to provide safehaven to Palestinian groups. Although we do not believe Aden will directly support terrorist operations, it will run the risk of being linked to them. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ B3

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