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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

14 August 1984

SUCCESSION TO KHOMEINI: IMPLICATIONS FOR IRANIAN POLICY



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Summary

Ayatollah Khomeini's health is declining, although he does not now appear to be dying. The incapacitation or death of the Islamic Republic's charismatic leader would not lead to a quick unraveling of Iran's clerical regime. After nearly six years in power, the clerical network of institutions and instruments of repression are too well entrenched to wither away soon.



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Ayatollah Montazeri is the most likely immediate successor to Khomeini. As long as the clerics remain in control, we expect Tehran to emphasize Islamic ideology and to be wary of close relations with either superpower. With Khomeini gone, however, Tehran would probably move gradually to disengage from the war with Iraq. Still, tension between the two historical rivals would remain high.



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This paper was prepared by [redacted] Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis, Persian Gulf Division, at the request of the Director of Central Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Persian Gulf Division, [redacted]

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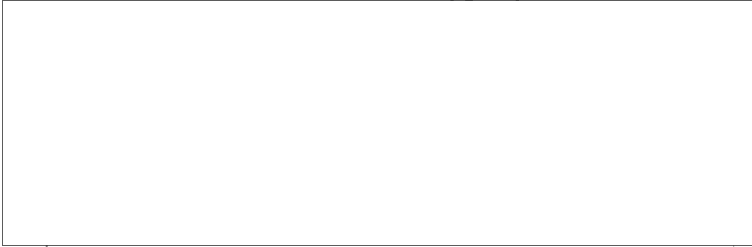
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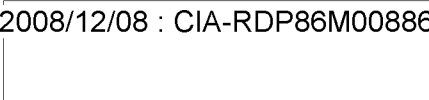


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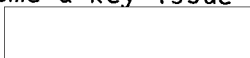
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All leading clerical contenders for power support the export of the revolution and some terrorist activity. As a result, we would expect Iran to continue subversive activities in the Persian Gulf and to sustain efforts to undermine US interests in the Middle East even after Khomeini's death. Eventually, however, violent export of the revolution is likely to become a key issue between moderate and radical factions.

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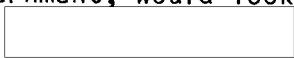
Over the longer term, there is a significant chance that competition for power among the clerics will threaten the regime's stability. There are currently no obvious alternatives to a clerical regime. A Revolutionary Guard leader who could obtain some clerical support and claim continuity with the Islamic Revolution might be able to seize power during a prolonged period of instability. Ideological hostility in the Guard makes it unlikely that such a successor regime would be pro-West. The regular military is even more closely controlled than the Guard and even less likely to take power. Neither the Shah's son nor any other Iranian exile leader possesses the necessary domestic assets to shape Iran's political future.

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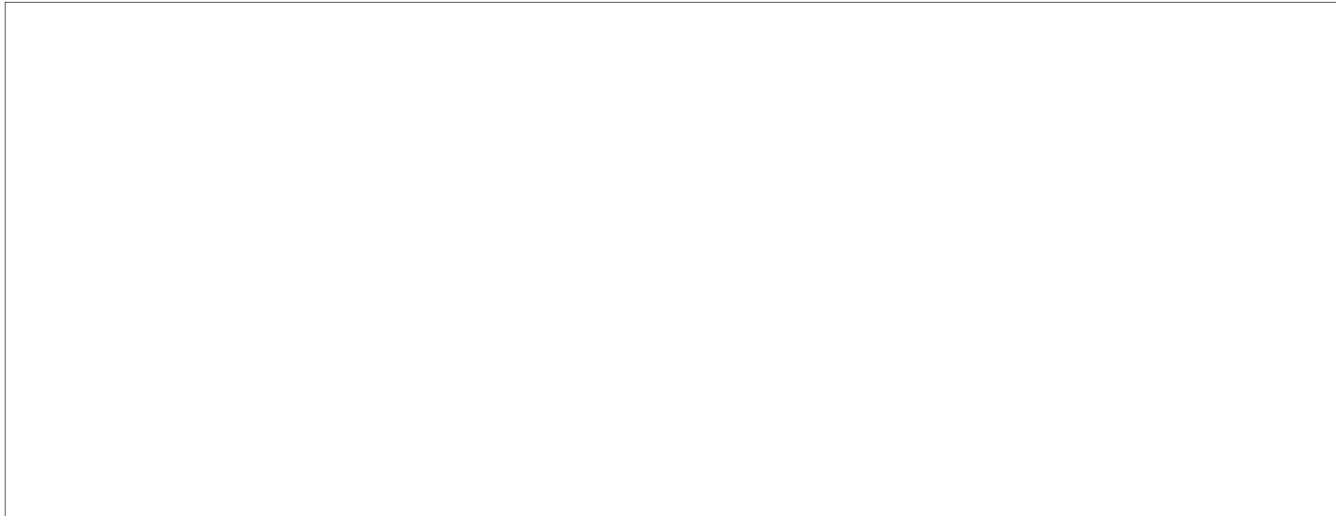


If Iran experienced prolonged upheaval, the Soviets would enjoy expanded opportunities for exploitation, particularly among Iran's ethnic minorities. We continue to doubt, however, that Moscow would be able to control events in Iran. Its best hope probably lies in the chance that a weakened central government in Tehran, particularly a Revolutionary Guard government, would look to Moscow for support and assistance.

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Succession Mechanics

The Islamic Republic's constitution mandates that the succession to Khomeini's post as supreme political-religious authority be formally decided by a cleric-dominated, 60-man Assembly of Experts in religious law. The constitution allows a choice between a single heir or a leadership council of three or five top level clerics. Since Khomeini's recent illnesses, leading Iranian clerics have intensified efforts to prepare for Khomeini's succession while trying to avoid any public signs of urgency. In late July, for example, a subcommittee of clerics from the Assembly of Experts was named to define in detail the succession process. [redacted]

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If Khomeini were to die suddenly, a quick decision to tap Ayatollah Hosein Montazeri is likely. He has long been considered Khomeini's preferred choice as heir, and such a move would provide a visible sign of continuity. Majles Speaker Rafsanjani, second only to Khomeini in political power, endorsed Montazeri last month, and the government-controlled press now refers to Montazeri as a "Grand Ayatollah" in an effort to raise his religious standing. There are only around a half dozen other such senior clerics in Iran, including Khomeini. [redacted]

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Montazeri, who for years has acted as Khomeini's de facto deputy on a variety of important matters, has a reputation as a hardliner on the war and on the strict observance of Islamic law. In recent weeks, however, he has softened his public positions on such issues as the war and social policy, suggesting that he is trying to broaden his political base. Montazeri is about 60 years old. He was tortured while in jail under the Shah, weakening his health, but he is not known to have any life-threatening illnesses. [redacted]

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The Struggle for Power

Clerical infighting would not end with Montazeri's succession to Khomeini's position. Montazeri lacks Khomeini's religious stature and charisma. [redacted]

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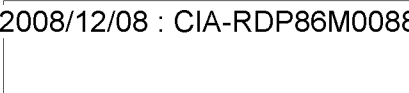
We expect that clerics who now control competing governmental, religious, and revolutionary organizations will continue to fight for political power, even though Montazeri will have titular authority. Clerical politics in Iran are best understood by viewing the clergy as roughly divided into three groups along an ideological continuum. At one extreme are activists who advocate strict clerical supervision of society under the leadership of one supreme religious jurisprudent. In the middle are clerical moderates who argue for only generalized clerical supervision, with less direct intervention in the government. At the other extreme are quietists who oppose any clerical involvement in politics--and, hence, the whole structure of Khomeini's Islamic Republic. Although this group represents the traditional Shia view and, [redacted] may have the largest number of adherents in Iran, its philosophy has kept it largely on the sidelines under Khomeini. [redacted]

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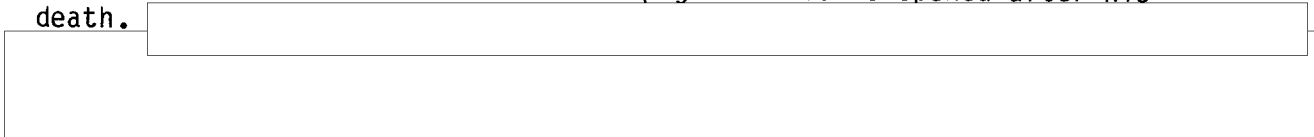


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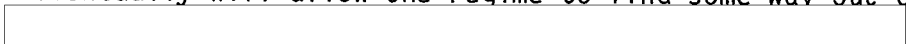

Short-Term Policy Implications

We expect competition among these individuals and their allies to increase as each attempts to impose his writ on Iranian politics. This struggle will affect both Iran's domestic and foreign policies as they are used as weapons for and against individuals vying for power. Last summer, Khomeini revealed he had written a 30-page will to be opened after his death.

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The War with Iraq. Despite Khomeini's will, we expect that his death eventually will allow the regime to find some way out of the war with Iraq.  senior figures in the government, the regular military, and even the Revolutionary Guard doubt that Iran can defeat Iraq militarily. Iranian leaders are increasingly concerned by the growing war weariness at home. 

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Still, the path toward an end to the war is likely to be lengthy and tortuous. Khomeini's clear identification with its continuation and with the demand to oust Iraqi President Saddam Husayn probably will require his heirs to allow some time to pass before they feel able to maneuver. His death, moreover, would deprive them of the one person with the stature to bless a compromise solution. Although concerned about war weariness, the regime would also fear that ending the war short of victory would call into question Tehran's claim of religious invincibility. [redacted]

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Whatever the eventual outcome, the long term geopolitical struggle between Iran and Iraq will continue. Moreover, should the Iranian succession degenerate into open factional fighting, Baghdad is likely to provide clandestine support to one of the factions in the effort to mold the outcome in its favor. [redacted]

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The Superpowers. Relations with both superpowers are unlikely to improve anytime soon. Political rivals will seek to discredit proponents of such moves, and the image of the US "satan" will be too important a symbol of continuity with Khomeini's legacy to allow any quick improvement in relations. Moscow also will be unable to make rapid political gains--most clerics are deeply suspicious of the USSR and hostile to Communist ideology. Moscow's military support to Baghdad, moreover, represents another serious constraint. On the other hand, there appears to be a consensus for continuing to improve relations with other industrialized countries, such as West Germany and Japan, whose products and expertise are essential to the sustaining of the Iranian economy. [redacted]

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Terrorism. There is also a wide clerical consensus on the "export of the revolution." Most prominent clerics--particularly Ayatollah Montazeri--have been associated with some terrorist activity. Montazeri also has been an advocate of close Iranian ties with Libya. If the struggle for power coalesces around moderate and radical factions, Iranian support for subversion and terrorism are likely to be key issues of dispute. [redacted]

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Economy. Clerical infighting probably will cause Iran's already serious economic problems to worsen. Disputes between activists pushing for strong central control, and conservatives who favor decentralization and private enterprise, have so far hampered implementation of any coherent economic development strategy. We doubt either group soon will become strong enough to impose its views on the other, and Iran's economy will continue to stagnate, leading to additional social unrest. [redacted]

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### The Longer Term

Over the longer term, Iran's political future remains clouded. At a minimum, however, it is clear that without Khomeini, no one will have the stature to cap clerical infighting. If this competition does get out of hand, clerics with close ties to various elements within the regular military and the Revolutionary Guard may seek their aid, raising the prospects for civil war, anarchy, and the disintegration of Iran. [redacted]

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[redacted]

If a post-Khomeini Islamic regime does fall, we believe the most likely successor would eventually emerge from the military, with some clerical backing. Either or both the Army and the Revolutionary Guard could be involved, but the Guard is more likely to play a decisive role. Given the purges within the regular military and the ideological hostility to the West in the Guard, we doubt that any such coalition would be pro-West. It would more likely espouse nonalignment and for some time be inward looking, attempting to consolidate firm control. [redacted]

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A prolonged period of upheaval would provide the Soviets with greatly expanded opportunities in Iran, especially among Iran's ethnic minorities along their common border. We believe, however, that the Soviets' ability to influence events in Iran would be limited--many of their assets were wrapped up following crackdowns on the Tudeh party and the Mujahedin, and their willingness to act boldly will be restrained by their experience in Afghanistan and by the possibility of superpower confrontation. [redacted]

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The Soviets are likely to court the new regime while covertly building their assets. They probably will hope that a weakened government in Tehran would seek Moscow's support and assistance, providing the USSR with direct access. This most likely would occur if a Revolutionary Guard leader assumed control with the assistance of left-leaning lay Islamic technocrats. Such a regime might be tempted to look to the Soviets for both military and economic assistance. Alternatively, Iranian leaders in a weakened post-Khomeini regime might fear that the Soviets would take actions along their common border or in Iraq or Afghanistan that would threaten Iran, and as a result could be accommodating to Moscow. [redacted]

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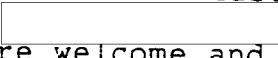


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Directorate of Intelligence

The Iranian Armed Forces: Clerical Control and Military  
Effectiveness 

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by  Office of Near Eastern and  
South Asia Analysis with a contribution by  Office of  
Central Reference. Comments and queries are welcome and may be  
directed to the Chief, Persian Gulf Division, NESA,   


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Information available as of 15 August 1984 has been used in the  
preparation of this paper

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August 1984



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Implications for the United States.




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Key Judgments

Five years after the Iranian revolution and the continuing purges of the military, Iran's clerical leadership remains suspicious of the loyalty of the country's Army, Navy, and Air Force. To monitor the loyalty and performance of these services Tehran has created a political control apparatus attached to all regular armed forces units. Independent of the Ministry of Defense, this Organization for Ideology is directed and staffed by clerics loyal to the clerical government and Ayatollah Khomeini.

--The system of informers and political/ideological officers is so extensive that we judge the regular Iranian armed forces are unable to pose a serious threat to the clerical regime.



The clerics also have attempted to counterbalance the regular forces by transforming two irregular organizations--the Revolutionary Guard and the Basij militia--into a major military force that is more loyal to the regime.

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[REDACTED]

--Clashes between the Army and the Guard--perhaps leading to a civil war--are likely if a lengthy succession crisis occurs after Khomeini's death.

--The regular armed forces are weakened, however, by divided loyalties and indecisiveness and probably would have difficulty defeating the 500,000 or more Guard and Basij troops now under arms. [REDACTED] 25X1

Although the creation of a political/ideological apparatus has increased Tehran's control over the armed services, we believe it also has contributed to Iran's military ineffectiveness against Iraq. Clerical interference and intimidation and the regular military's fear that the Revolutionary Guard will eventually replace it have hindered operations and lowered morale. Lack of cooperation between Army and irregular units has resulted in heavy casualties and missed opportunities throughout the war. [REDACTED] 25X1

Tehran probably believes that the enhanced security provided by the control apparatus offsets the cost of reduced military effectiveness and that surveillance of the military should be increased. Iranian clerics probably believe that military effectiveness will increase as more personnel are indoctrinated and trained. [REDACTED] 25X1

[REDACTED] 25X1

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We believe the clerical regime will combine and reorganize the existing armed forces and combat units of the Revolutionary Guard into new military services after the war. The political/ideological apparatus in the new armed forces will help strengthen Iran's ability to defend itself against foreign military threats by instilling loyalty and obedience throughout the services. A sizable Revolutionary Guard organization will continue to exist, however, to maintain internal security, operate abroad, and counterbalance the regular Iranian military.

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(end of Key Judgments)



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[REDACTED]

Iran's clerical regime has consolidated its control over the country and has resisted the Iraqi invasion, but it continues to doubt the loyalty of the regular Iranian armed forces. To deal with this problem, Tehran has built an extensive organization to monitor the armed forces' loyalty and increase their willingness to fight. The regime has succeeded in controlling the armed forces by establishing a broad network of informants and by using the irregular forces to counterbalance the regular services.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] elements in the Army, Navy, and Air Force still had not accepted the Islamic revolution and did not support the government [REDACTED]

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### Controlling the Regular Armed Forces

Structure. The Iranian clerical leadership depends primarily on the Organization for Ideology--Sazman-e Ideolog--to monitor and promote the loyalty of the regular armed forces. The Sazman has units and personnel assigned to all levels within the Army, Navy, and Air Force, [REDACTED] These political-ideological units are responsible for disseminating propaganda, propagating Islamic tenets, and, most importantly, maintaining "ideological security" and carrying out

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[redacted]  
counterintelligence operations [redacted]

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[redacted] Sazman units do not report to the Ministry of Defense, their nominal superior, but go outside military channels directly to a separate Sazman directorate overseeing the armed forces. Mohammad Reyshairi heads the Organization for Ideology. He is also Chief Justice of the Revolutionary Court system and a confidant of Ayatollah Khomeini and probably reports directly to him [redacted]

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[redacted] Sazman political/ideological bureaus, units, or officers are attached to all armed forces units down to the platoon or barracks level. Airbases, for example, have a ratio of about one political official to 100 Air Force personnel [redacted] A cleric appointed by Tehran usually commands each Sazman office, although trusted military officers sometimes head a few ideological units.

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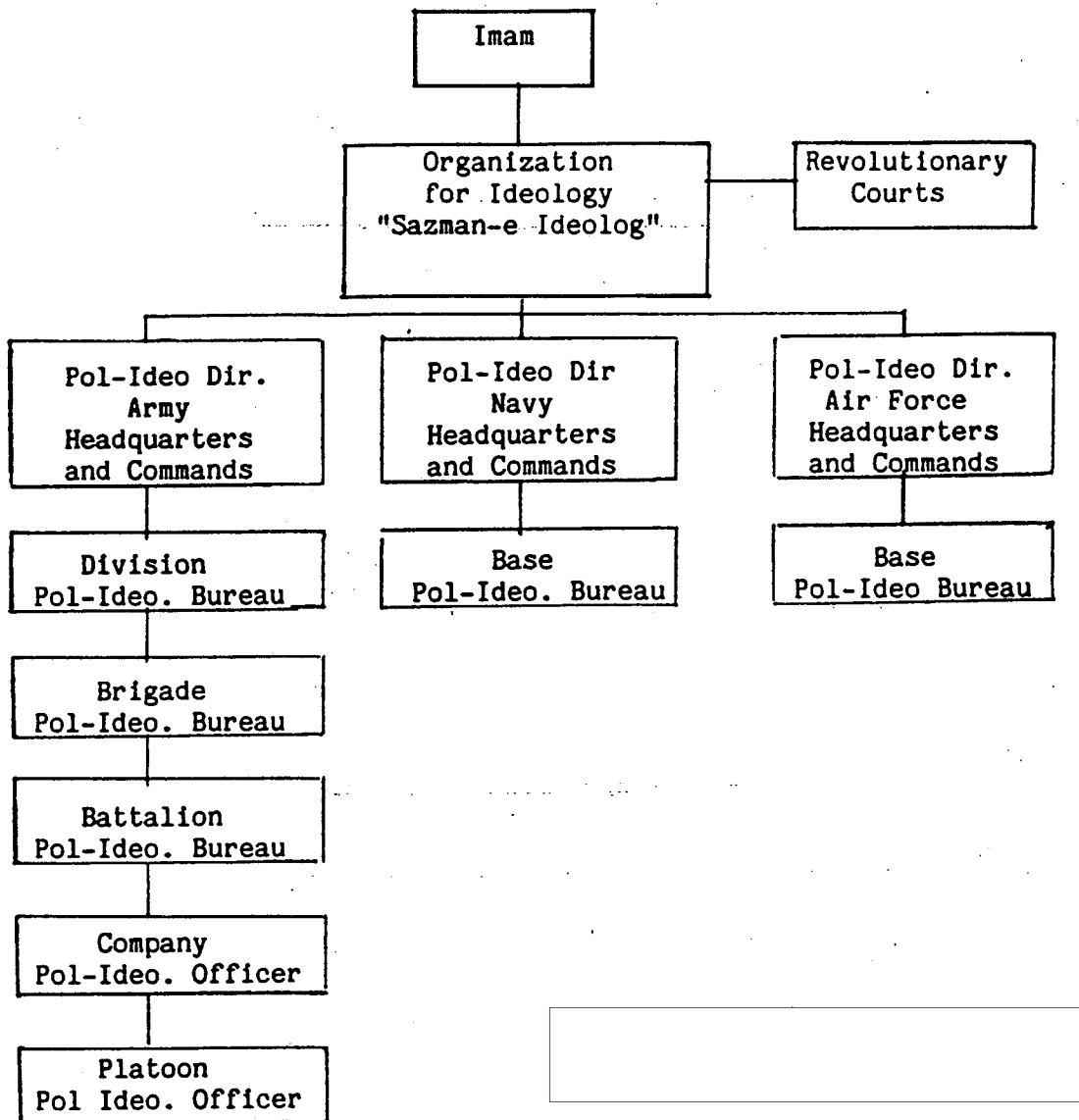
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[redacted]  
The political control officials appear to maintain close liaison with Revolutionary Courts and Revolutionary "Komitehs" to increase regime authority over the military. The Revolutionary Courts and military police arrest, prosecute, try, and punish suspects [redacted] The "Komitehs," made up mostly of noncommissioned officers and enlisted men, apparently have ideological and surveillance functions over personnel. The chief of the political/ideological unit sometimes is a member of [redacted]

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Political Control Structure  
of the  
Iranian Armed Forces



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[Redacted]

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these other organizations or can direct them to arrest offenders, according to Iranian officers. [Redacted]

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Enforcement. The Sazman units use an extensive system of informers to provide information on disloyal activity in the military. [Redacted] Names are then turned over to the military police and Revolutionary Courts for arrest and trial. [Redacted]

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political/ideological officials have taken advantage of the traditional animosity between officers, warrant officers, and enlisted men to foment distrust and elicit information on disloyalty. We estimate that the political units have thousands of informers in the Iranian armed forces. In larger Iranian Army units, the political ideological units command "strike groups" that follow regular units into battle to prevent them from deserting [Redacted]

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[Redacted] the threat of reporting suspect activity to Tehran gives political officials control over the decisions of the regular military unit commander. Political officials can influence an officer's actions by forwarding the findings of the "Komitehs" in each unit that periodically meet to assess and criticize the unit commander's performance. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] clerics directing political/ideological units were the real commanders of the bases.

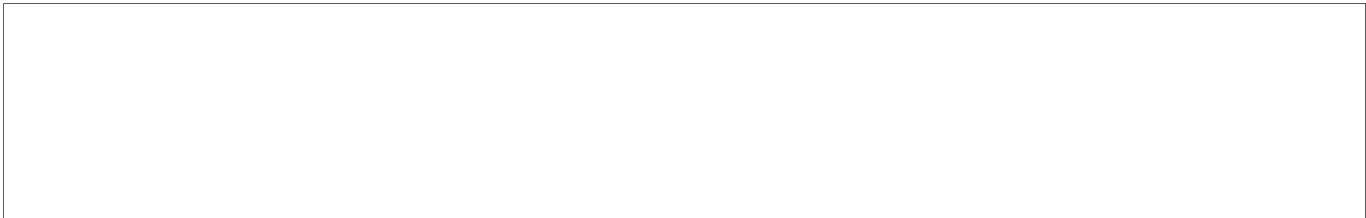
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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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There are no reliable reports on the number of soldiers arrested, imprisoned, and executed each year for disloyalty. The clerics were preparing to remove about 300 politically suspect officers and enlisted men from combat positions in 1983

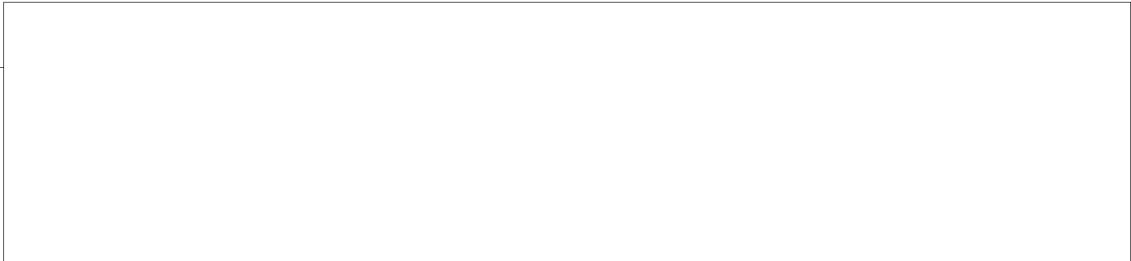
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We believe, however, that the number of military personnel arrested or executed annually is under a thousand--less than 1 percent of the 300,000 men in the regular forces.

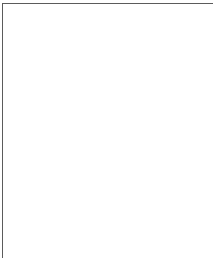
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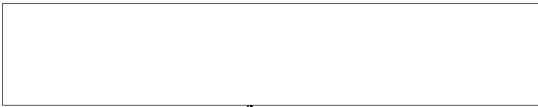
The number probably has declined in the last year because most officers loyal to the old regime have been purged and replaced by men who are careful to hide their political beliefs or are neutral toward or support the Islamic Republic.

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Molding a Loyal Military Command. Tehran also has laid the foundation for a more loyal military command by carefully controlling who is chosen for the officer corps and who is promoted. a cleric in each unit must approve all officer candidates or applicants for the military

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[redacted]

academies and vouch for their political reliability. Six months before an officer becomes eligible for promotion, he must attend a three-month series of indoctrination classes taught by clerics that stress sacrifice and martyrdom for the regime. [redacted]

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The clerical leadership has been careful to assign loyal or obedient officers to top military commands and probably exploits disagreements between them to increase the regime's security.

General Qasim Zahirnejad owes his reinstatement in the post-revolution Army, his promotion to general, and his appointment as chief of the Joint Armed Forces Staff to his family ties with influential clerics [redacted]

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Colonel Ali Sayyed Shirazi was appointed commander of the Iranian ground forces [redacted] because of his

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devotion to Islam and his relationship with Ayatollah Montazeri, Khomeini's heir apparent. [redacted] Zahirnejad

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and Shirazi often are at odds over the conduct of the war, but the clerical leadership probably believes that disagreements among top officers reduce the chances they will unite in a military coup. [redacted]

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The regime also tries to buy the loyalty of some servicemen, especially those with critical skills in the Air Force [redacted]

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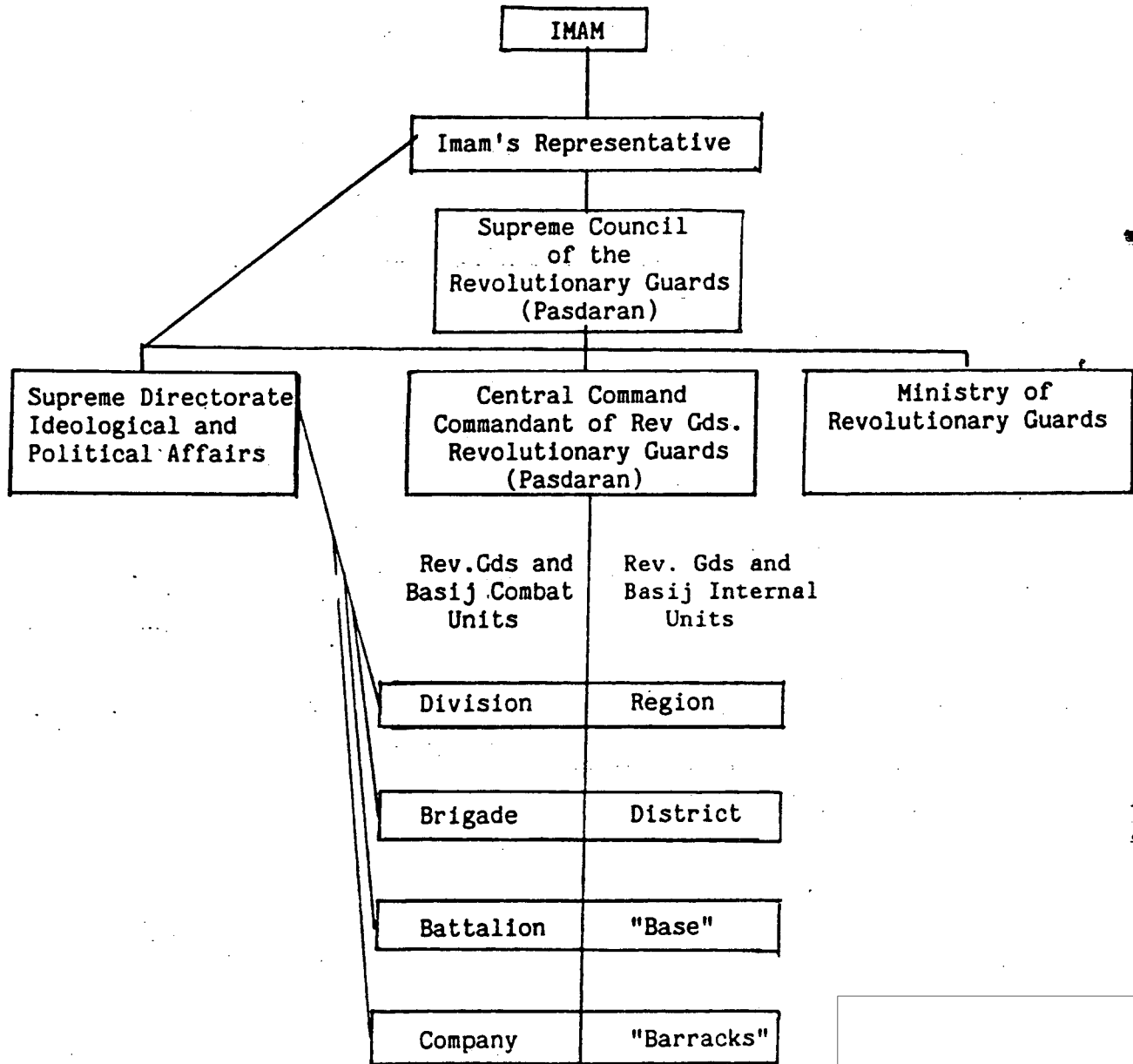
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[redacted] Air Force officers have received gifts of land, scarce consumer goods, fuel, and low-cost housing.

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### Revolutionary Guard and Basij

#### Command Structure



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These privileges often go to people close to the clerics, while others who have served the country well are ignored



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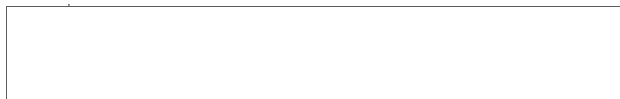
The Revolutionary Guard and Basij

The clerical leadership also has formed and maintains the Revolutionary Guard Corps--Sepah-e Pasdaran-- and the Basij militia at least partly as an alternative or counterbalancing, military force to the traditional armed forces. Unlike the Army, Navy, and Air Force, whose loyalty is still largely questionable because of their association with the Shah and Western training, the Guard is manned by personnel chosen for their loyalty to the new regime. The Iranian leadership views the Revolutionary Guard as an elite force that is the protector of the regime against a military coup, according to press statements



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Controlling the Guard. Tehran has developed an extensive political control structure to oversee the Revolutionary Guard and Basij that is similar to the apparatus attached to the regular services. The Guard is directly subordinate to Ayatollah Khomeini through his personal representative to the Corps, the cleric Fazlollah Mahallati, according to press reports. Mahallati sits on the Supreme Council of the Revolutionary Guard and also heads



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[redacted]

the Guard's Supreme Directorate of Ideological and Political Affairs, which is responsible for monitoring the political reliability of Guard personnel. [redacted]

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The Directorate appears to function in much the same way as Sazman units in the regular armed forces. Directorate officials are attached to all Revolutionary Guard and Basij units to oversee propaganda, select new recruits, and oversee the activities and decisions of unit commanders. In mid-1984 in a press interview, Mahallati stated that there were 250 clergy providing ideological training in the Guards. We estimate that there are thousands of officials and informers responsible for political control in the Guard and Basij. [redacted]

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Even more than in the regular services, Tehran has been careful to select men to command the Revolutionary Guard who have proven their loyalty to the revolution and have an interest in the survival of the regime and its leaders. Mohsen Rafiq-dust owes his appointment as Minister of the Revolutionary Guard to his close relationship with Majlis Speaker Rafsanjani. [redacted]

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[redacted] Rafiq-dust

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first came to the attention and favor of Ayatollah Khomeini because of his willingness to execute a number of the Shah's senior military and police officials. Mohsen Rezai became commander of the Revolutionary Guard when he was friendly with Rafiq-dust and because he may be related to President Khamenei, according to sources of varying reliability. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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[REDACTED]

A Rival to the Armed Forces. The major role of the Revolutionary Guard in the war against Iraq has increased its stature and capabilities as a military competitor to the Army. As a consequence, the Guard's abilities to counter the regular Army in an internal struggle have also grown. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Guard troops have often borne the brunt of the fighting and, because of their aggressiveness, have helped win some major battles. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] an Iranian official states that there are 120,000 armed Revolutionary Guards. [REDACTED]

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High-ranking Guard officials have claimed that the Guard eventually will replace the traditional services and it has attempted to assume the functions and capabilities of an army, navy, and air force over the last four years. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the Guard formed an armored division in late 1981 and established artillery and commando units in mid 1982. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Although the Army provides the Guard with logistical support, [REDACTED] the Guard set up its own artillery ammunition factory near Tehran in April 1984. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the Guard has been establishing its own air force and began making proposals for a

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Estimated Iranian Military Manpower  
July 1984

Army	235,000
Air Force	50,000
Navy	15,000
Revolutionary Guards	100,000-150,000
Basij	over 500,000



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[Redacted]

joint Revolutionary Guard Air Force command in early 1983. A Guard official claimed in early 1983 that Guards were learning to fly jet fighter aircraft in Syria and that the Guard wanted to establish its own flight school. The pilots from this school were to make up the nucleus of the future Revolutionary Guard Air Force.

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[Redacted] 12 Guards were sent to East Germany for training on MIG-19 and MIG-21 fighter aircraft in early July. There is no other evidence that Guards are being trained on fighter aircraft [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted] The Guard has tried to purchase transports and helicopters [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Revolutionary Guard naval units have formed joint commands with regular Navy forces for operations in the Persian Gulf. In mid-December 1982 Guard officials attempted to gain control over the Navy through a request to share naval facilities [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Guard personnel serve on some regular Navy vessels [Redacted]

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Revolutionary Guard naval units assumed responsibility for the defense and patrol of Iran's coasts in February 1983. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] the Guard has received new patrol boats in the last year. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[redacted]

In late 1979 the Iranian regime created the Basij--  
 "Mobilization of the Oppressed"-- in response to Ayatollah  
 Khomeini's call for a 20 million-man army to defend against a  
 possible US invasion and later to fight Iraq [redacted]

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[redacted] The Basij is a lightly armed and poorly trained  
 militia that has provided the Revolutionary Guard with the masses  
 of expendable but fanatical manpower to launch "human wave"  
 attacks. Revolutionary Guard cadres are responsible for training,  
 arming, and commanding Basij units [redacted]

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[redacted] as of  
 mid 1984 there were 700,000 armed Basij troops, although the  
 Iranians claim publicly that the organization has 2.5 million  
 members. [redacted]

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#### Impact on Military Effectiveness

Low Morale. The creation of an extensive political control  
 organization in the armed forces has reduced the threat of a  
 military coup, but it has also hurt military effectiveness and has  
 not stopped an apparent decline in the services' will to fight.

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[redacted] the  
 Iranian Army did not support the war effort and was not willing to  
 pursue victory against Iraq. Army units sent to the front lines  
 in June 1984 had little desire to wage war and suffered a large  
 number of desertions [redacted]

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[redacted]

Army's reluctance to fight tends to be confirmed by casualty statistics [redacted] indicate that the Army suffered only 2,000 casualties in combat early this year compared with Revolutionary Guard and Basij losses of over 32,000. [redacted]

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Interference by clerics or political officials in the conduct of military operations appears to be one of the main causes of military ineffectiveness and the decline in officer morale. [redacted]

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[redacted] there was widespread discontent among middle level and senior officers about the clerical leadership's interference with planning and combat.

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[redacted] orders from clerics make little sense and are not enforceable without disrupting operations. The undermining of officers' authority by the clerics also has demoralized middle level commanders in the Army, Navy, and Air Force [redacted] The presence of clerical military "advisers" has disrupted the chain of command because when they have the backing of political officials, junior and noncommissioned officers sometimes refuse to obey orders from more senior officers. [redacted]

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Friction Between Regulars and Irregulars. The development of the Revolutionary Guard and threats that it will eventually replace the regular services have further undermined Iranian military effectiveness. Press statements by leading Iranian

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[Redacted]

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officials--including Khomeini--promising that the regular services will not be dissolved have not calmed fears among officers. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Army personnel believe that a victory over Iraq would be a victory of the Revolutionary Guard over the Army. [Redacted]

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officers believe the clerical regime is using the war to weaken the armed forces so they will be easier to disband once the conflict ends. [Redacted]

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Animosity between the Revolutionary Guard and the regular services occasionally erupts into clashes. In June 1982 20 Guards were killed in a shootout between Guard and Army personnel at an Army base near Esfahan [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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in May 1984 Revolutionary Guards in Shiraz were used to put down a mutiny by an Army unit that refused to leave for the front. [Redacted]

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Problems on the Battlefield. Tehran's attempts to integrate Revolutionary Guard units with the regular services in "joint commands" on the battlefield have fostered only a surface unity and have not improved coordination or military effectiveness.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

25X1



[Redacted]

25X1

[Redacted]

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Questions about the Army's willingness to fight have caused the Basij to refuse orders from the Army and led to a near total lack of communication between the two groups [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Although Tehran probably has increased its political control over the armed forces and the conduct of operations by combining the services and Revolutionary Guard in joint attacks, Iranian effectiveness on the battlefield also has suffered. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

The integration of untrained and uneducated Revolutionary Guard and Basij troops with armed forces units has also helped

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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reduce efficiency in some operations. A lack of training and discipline caused Basij troops to panic and led to the failure of attacks in early 1984 [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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because Guard pilots lack even a high school education, they are too ignorant to fly and crash many of the helicopters they attempt to pilot.

Revolutionary Guards assigned to ships have extremely limited training [Redacted]

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The Revolutionary Guard, in turn, has complained that the Army's lack of support and aggressiveness has undermined joint operations. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted] Revolutionary Guard and Basij troops also have been unhappy with Army logistical support [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Guard commanders were complaining about shortages of modern weapons last June. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Prospects

Regime Security. In our judgment, the extent of the regime's political control apparatus makes it unlikely that conspirators in the regular services could recruit and organize a sufficient number of units to carry out a successful coup. Moreover, we believe that no coup could succeed without the complicity or acquiescence of both Revolutionary Guard officers at Army commands and large numbers of Revolutionary Guard units. The Guard owes its existence and prosperity to the clerical regime and will not support plots that would replace its benefactors in Tehran with the military. 

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If a power struggle develops, the Revolutionary Guard is likely to play a more important role than the armed forces in determining a successor to Khomeini in the short term. The Guard maintains extensive internal security forces inside Iran --particularly in the capital and other major cities--while almost all Army units are at the front. The Guard also can call up Basij militia in any area of the country. A faction controlling Revolutionary Guard units probably would use them to seize key power centers quickly after Khomeini's death to solidify its control. At the same time, political control officials in the

  
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[REDACTED]

services would try to keep regular armed forces units in garrison to prevent a coup during a succession crisis. Moreover, because they fear being charged with disloyalty by political officials, Army commanders probably would be reluctant to favor one contending faction in Tehran over another. [REDACTED]

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The regular armed forces probably would be drawn into a conflict-- perhaps leading to a civil war--if a power struggle among clerics continued for at least several months. Such a conflict could begin if one clerical faction ordered Revolutionary Guards to neutralize armed forces units and another ordered these units to resist. Because of indecisiveness and divided loyalty, the regular armed forces would have difficulty winning such a conflict. Some ideologically committed Army commanders probably would lead their units to side with the Guard, further reducing the chance that the military would prevail. Although the Guard is inferior in manpower and equipment to the regular services, it probably would remain unified and could mobilize hundreds of thousands of Basij troops to support its cause. [REDACTED]

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Military Effectiveness. Rivalry and mistrust between the regular armed services and the Revolutionary Guard will continue to limit Iranian military effectiveness against Iraq and other military opponents for the foreseeable future. The regime's political control measures will impose an outward appearance of loyalty or acquiescence in the Army, Navy, and Air Force but will

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[REDACTED]

not cause them to fight more effectively or vigorously against Iraq. Because of its fear of a takeover by the Revolutionary Guard and a desire to limit its own losses, the Army will delay attacks, withhold assistance, and attempt to force the Guard to bear the burden of fighting. Revolutionary Guard suspicion of the regular military's loyalty and the Guard's unwillingness to subordinate its troops completely to the regular military command will lead to additional missed opportunities and heavy casualties.

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[REDACTED]

The Iranian regime, however, appears to believe that the control gained by both the political apparatus in the military and the use of the Revolutionary Guard as a counterbalance to the regulars is worth the present military ineffectiveness. Moreover, Tehran probably believes that overall Iranian military effectiveness will eventually improve. The Revolutionary Guard will gain additional military expertise in combat and will grow stronger as it expands into a force that includes artillery, armor, air, and naval units. Through combat attrition, control of promotions and assignments, and officer selection, the regime also will reman the Army, Navy, and Air Force with personnel who will work with the Guards.

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A New Iranian Armed Forces. In our judgment, after the war Tehran will combine the armed forces and combat units of the Revolutionary Guard and reorganize them into new, more loyal

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[REDACTED]

military services. The new military probably will be staffed primarily by personnel from the existing Guard, although some men from the old armed forces who had proven their loyalty would be included. Most of the present regular forces personnel are likely to be retired immediately after the war--those needed in technical positions would be retained only until politically loyal replacements are trained. The clerical leadership understands the need for competent personnel to fight Iraq, however, and does not want to further weaken Iran's war effort by launching a destabilizing reorganization during the conflict. [REDACTED]

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In any event, we believe Tehran will continue to maintain a Revolutionary Guard organization--independent of the Ministry of Defense--as a possible hedge against future disloyalty even in the new, reformed Iranian armed forces. The Guard will be an elite force primarily responsible for internal security and for covert operations abroad. Moreover, the Guard probably would retain control over a Basij militia organization as a large-scale source of manpower outside the regular services' influence. [REDACTED]

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### Implications for the United States

For the foreseeable future the clerical regime will continue to believe that the United States and other Western countries are attempting to foment sedition within the armed forces. The purging of regular servicemen associated with the West has reduced

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[REDACTED]

significantly the number of officers who support a more favorable relationship with the United States. Moreover, we believe the political control organizations probably will be fairly effective in discovering and eliminating efforts by any country to influence Iranian military personnel in Iran or abroad. The gradual remanning of the services with men indoctrinated against the United States will make it even more difficult for the United States to exert influence on Iran's new military. [REDACTED]

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In the long term, especially after the postwar reformation of the armed forces, we believe the political/ideological organization in the military will help strengthen Iran's ability to defend itself against foreign military threats. The new unified armed forces will eliminate some coordination problems. Continuing indoctrination will help instill a fanaticism, similar to that seen in Revolutionary Guard and Basij units, among Iranian enlisted men that would stiffen efforts to defend Iran against any attacker. A new, loyal officer corps will slowly emerge from the reorganized Iranian military academies. They will bring greater professionalism to the military and will replace incompetent "political" commanders appointed during the war with Iraq. [REDACTED]

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