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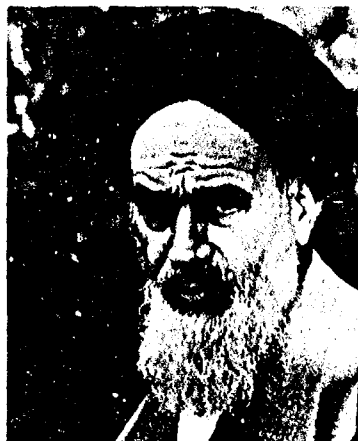
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Ruhollah KHOMEINI
(Phonetic: kohmayNEE)

IRAN

Religious Leader

Addressed as:
Your Eminence



After 15 years of exile in Turkey, Iraq and France, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the charismatic and intransigent symbol of opposition to the Shah, returned to Iran on 1 February 1979. Within 10 days the government of Prime Minister Shapur Bakhtiar had collapsed and the Provisional Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran had been established. It was another victory in the Ayatollah's long and single-minded campaign to restore the dominant influence that the clergy once had in every aspect of Iranian life. Khomeini has said that he does not intend to run the country but to retreat to his modest home in the holy city of Qom and provide useful advice. His influence will remain strong, however. [Redacted]

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Because he believes that Shi'a Islam is a total political-economic-social system that needs little further explanation, Khomeini has tended to speak in ambiguities and pious generalities of virtue and vice and has avoided discussing specific programs. Moreover, what he says is often mis-translated--a situation that compounds the problem of learning just what he really means. He says that his Islamic republic will be based on universal suffrage, but he vaguely states that the "final shape and type of government" will be defined by "the people," guided by their religious leaders. Corruption, he says, will disappear, and Shi'a values will be restored. Alcohol and narcotics will be banned, and movies, books and magazines will be heavily censored. (He does, however, promise freedom of the press--except for articles "harmful to the nation.") According to him, there will be a heavy emphasis on morality, enforced by Shari'a law (religious law), which will replace the present French-influenced legal system. He speaks of redistribution of wealth in

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favor of "the oppressed," national control of the economy, and an industrialization program emphasizing development of heavy industry instead of the mere assembly of imported parts. [redacted]

Khomeini's statements on individual rights, like many of his statements, sometimes seem progressive, but they can be misleading. He asserts that "woman is equal to man. Like him she is free to choose her destiny and activities." The freedom he would grant to women, however, is the freedom to be "moral." He opposes coeducation because, he claims, it undermines the family, and he favors the veiling of women to avoid temptation. He says he favors religious freedom for everyone except the Baha'i, who are considered heretics by most Muslims and pro-Shah by Khomeini. He has attempted to reassure Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Sunni Muslims, but they are worried. [redacted]

Attitude Toward
Other Countries

Khomeini says that his Islamic republic will be independent and nonaligned. He has attacked the United States, the United Kingdom, and the USSR for interfering in Iran's internal affairs and has blamed them for Iran's poverty. He has strongly criticized President Jimmy Carter for his support of the monarch. On 1 January 1979, however, Khomeini declared that he was willing to start with a clean slate after the Shah and the dynasty were gone. He asserted that future US-Iranian relations would depend entirely on the US Government, which would have to show respect for Iran and avoid interfering in its affairs. Similarly, the USSR, as one of the countries that has "harmed" Iran, would not be allowed to interfere in Iranian affairs. As for Communism, he scornfully declared that one could not be a Muslim and a Communist at the same time. [redacted]

Early Life

After religious studies in Qom and in Isfahan in Iran, as well as in the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala in Iraq, Khomeini returned to Qom to teach. In 1963 the Shah antagonized the clergy when he launched the Shah-people revolution, which ended the clergy's dominance in education, marriage and divorce and stripped religious groups of their large landholdings. Apparently because of his oratorical ability and the circulation of his

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dissident views, Khomeini was selected to lead the opposition elements in the clergy. In January 1963 his violent attacks on land reform and women's rights brought him nationwide attention. In June 1963 he was arrested. Riots ensued in several cities--the worst demonstrations since the overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosadeg in 1953--and were put down by martial law. These events enhanced Khomeini's reputation as a forceful leader, and he received the title ayatollah (prominent leader). [redacted]

Released from jail later in 1963, Khomeini was held under house arrest, but he continued to oppose the Shah. In 1964, when the government submitted a bill to Parliament that would have granted exemptions from the jurisdiction of Iranian courts to US military personnel serving in Iran, he attacked the measure as a return to the days of the 19th and early 20th centuries when British and Russian nationals had special privileges in Iran. He also attacked the United States and called on the army to overthrow the Shah. He was immediately placed under close arrest again and taken to Turkey. In 1965 he rejected an Iranian offer that would allow him to return home provided that he abstain from political activity. Instead, he settled in Iraq, where some of his followers joined him, and he continued to speak, write, and work against the Shah. In October 1978 Khomeini left Iraq for France. [redacted]

Personal Data

[redacted] Khomeini, who is about 78 years old, speaks in low, measured tones. His black turban marks him as a descendant of Ali, the leading imam of the Shi'a Muslims. Khomeini has written two or three books--all of them about Islamic jurisprudence. A number of his lectures have been recorded, edited and published by his students. He speaks Arabic. [redacted]

27 February 1979