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**Intelligence
Appraisal**

IRAN:

RENEWAL OF CIVIL DISTURBANCES (U)



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RECENT UNREST INCLUDED ANTI-AMERICAN ACTIVITY

27 July	Shiraz	All windows of Iran American Society (IAS) building broken by demonstrators
1 August	Isfahan	Pipe bomb thrown in US Consulate compound
6 August	Shiraz	Crowd attempts to enter IAS compound and break windows
8 August	Shiraz	Crowd, marching from Mosque towards IAS building, is dispersed by police
Early August	Isfahan	Several Americans report that they have been threatened

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IRAN: RENEWAL OF CIVIL DISTURBANCES (U)

Summary

(C/NOFORN) Since 21 July, Iran has experienced a wave of dissident activity similar to that which plagued the country for the first five months of the year. Religious elements opposed to the Shah have sparked a series of confrontations with the government that have resulted in 12 to 20 killed, scores injured, and several hundred arrested. Other opponents of the Shah include those of a more liberal bent, students, and possibly terrorist groups operating on the fringes. While these groups may not have a definite plan regarding Iran's future, they are united in their opposition to the Shah.

(C/NOFORN) The recent round of disturbances seems to indicate an increasing anti-US tone. In their competition to out do one another, the various dissident groups may escalate the level of anti-American rhetoric, and the latent xenophobia in the Iranian character may surface. This could lead to some trouble for the large American community in Iran, particularly for those who might get caught up in events in the more conservative cities.

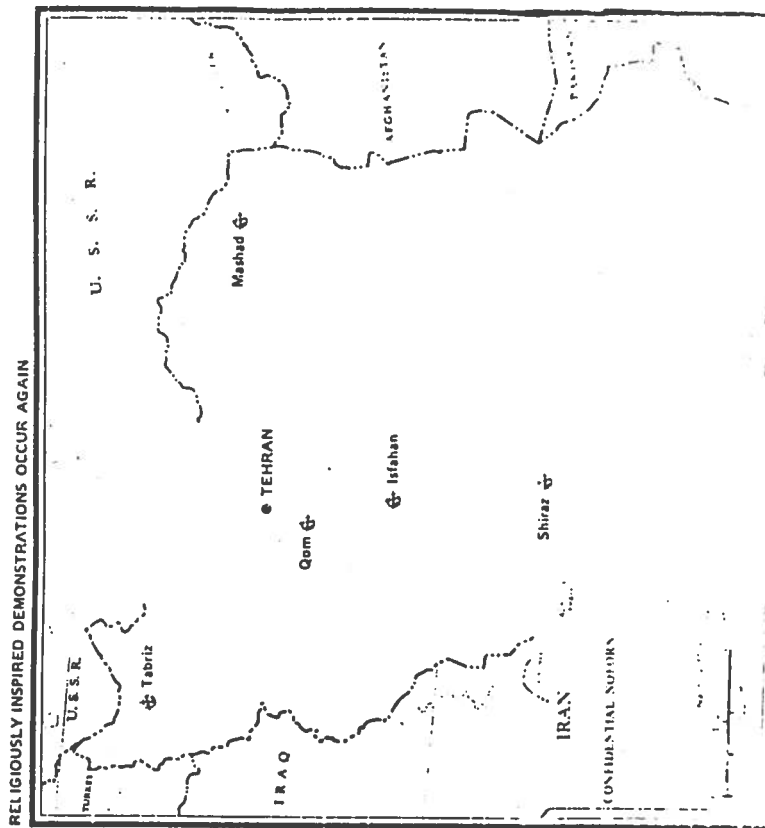
(C/NOFORN) The recent deaths may set off a new cycle of religious demonstrations such as those experienced earlier this year. The Islamic month of Ramadan, now in progress, and the special mourning days in late August increase the chance for further demonstrations. The government will probably be able to handle the situation, but the Shah is still faced with a dilemma: How to continue liberalizing Iranian society and maintain order at the same time without cracking down too harshly on the dissidents.

Background

(C/NOFORN) The resurgence of civil disturbances in Iran during the past few weeks is similar in many ways to that experienced from January to May. It has its roots in traditional opposition to the Shah by religious conservatives who oppose his secularization and modernization of Iranian society. The targets of demonstrators are the same -- parks, movie houses, vehicles, and ordinary business establishments. Other opponents lending their support, if not actual participation, include those of a more liberal outlook, such as students, followers of the now defunct National Front, and possibly terrorist groups. While the disturbances are similar to previous demonstrations, they have taken on some new twists.

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Discussion

Resurgence of Dissidence

(C/NOFORN) The recent troubles began on 21 July, a religious holiday of some significance to the Shiite Muslims of Iran. Instead of holding the usual celebrations, followers of Ayatollah Khomeini called for political meetings. Commemorative services for Ayatollah Kafi, a respected religious leader in the holy city of Mashad, were followed by a violent confrontation between government security forces and demonstrators the next day. Other cities also reported some incidents, which apparently were perpetrated by religious extremists.

(C/NOFORN) During the following week, mourning ceremonies for Kafi and for those killed the previous week led to further disturbances. The rumor that Kafi was killed by government security officials further incited his following. Isfahan suffered the most violence, consisting largely of breaking windows. Casualties, as reported in the government-controlled press, indicated that some 300 were arrested, up to six persons killed, and 26 injured in the two weeks of violence. Events culminated in the bombing of the US Consulate in Isfahan. While there were no injuries and only minor damage was done, it was the first clearly anti-American act in several months.

(C/NOFORN) The period from 5 to 10 August was somewhat calmer although violence occurred in the theological center of Qom and the cities of Shiraz and Isfahan. Almost any occasion has been exploited by the religious extremists, to include continuing commemoration of Kafi, Iran's Constitution Day, and the start of the Muslim month of Ramadan. The arrest of a prominent religious leader in Isfahan by SAVAK, the Iranian National Intelligence and Security Organization, also contributed to antigovernment demonstrations.

(C/NOFORN) On 11 August, the Iranian Government declared martial law in the nation's second largest city, Isfahan. Police attempts to break up a religious demonstration led to rioting, and military forces were called in to restore order. A curfew is in effect, and the gathering of three or more persons is prohibited. The martial law is to remain in effect for one month and reportedly will be extended to other cities as necessary. Unconfirmed press reports indicate it may already have been imposed in three small cities near Isfahan. The swift imposition of martial law in the industrial and tourist center indicates the seriousness of the situation and the government's intention to confront extremists with the force required to restore order. Casualties in Isfahan and other cities since 11 August have raised the total killed and injured, but reliable figures are not yet available.

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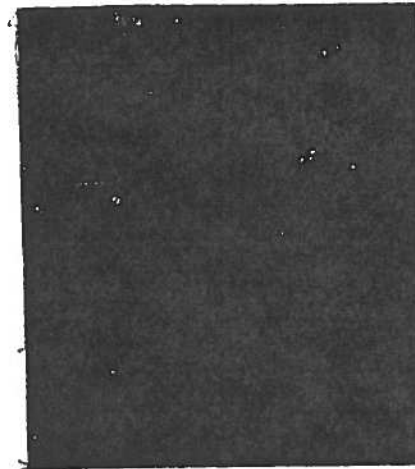
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EXILED RELIGIOUS LEADER STILL INFLUENTIAL IN IRAN



AYATOLLAH RUHOLLAH KHOMEINI

AGE: 76

*Has attacked Shah and his reform measures.
Opposed presence of Americans in Iran.
Exiled to Iraq in 1964.*

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Political Liberalization a Factor

(C/NOFORN) As the anti-Shah demonstrations and disturbances were winding down in May and the government announced a crackdown on dissidence, most religious leaders seemed to favor a calming of the situation. There were signs that a dialogue was taking place between the Shah and the religious community. At the same time, the Iranian leader reemphasized his policy of political liberalization, and preparations for next year's parliamentary elections dominated the news. The open political atmosphere prompted much debate and generally settled the volatile situation.

(C/NOFORN) The relative calm evidently did not sit too well with the monarch's more extreme opponents. The anti-Shah followers of the exiled Khomeini appeared to have been behind much of the violence, or at least to have exploited the genuine commemorations of the religious majority. Reportedly, the outlawed TUDEH or Communist Party of Iran is tacitly supporting religious groups loyal to Khomeini. Old time nationalists of a leftist persuasion also lend their support to the antigovernment activity. While these groups may not have the same plan for Iran's future -- if indeed they have a plan -- they are united in their opposition to the Shah and the present form of government.

(C/NOFORN) The recent outbreaks suggest that an increasing anti-US tone is developing in the government's opposition. Those national frontists long-opposed to the Shah have claimed that he is a puppet of the US and will do what Washington bids. They point to his liberalization policy and the improvement of human rights in Iran as examples that the Shah is following US instructions. Lately, there have been signs that the Shah's opposition believes that the US is not pressuring him enough on improving the political situation in Iran.

(C/NOFORN) The anti-American theme is reportedly also being exploited by religious elements, particularly in Isfahan. Khomeini has long preached against the American presence in Iran, claiming the US is the principal supporter of the Shah and exploits Iran's wealth, while Americans in the country enjoy special privileges. Iranians typically blame their troubles on outsiders, and Americans are a convenient target. In order to gain primacy over rival dissidents, some religious leaders may take a more extreme stand on opposition to the government. This could be reflected in increasing anti-US statements, and the latent xenophobia in the Iranian populace may surface. This could pose trouble for the large American community of about 37,000 to 40,000.

(C/NOFORN) The anti-American tone has not thus far surfaced publicly, and it may be limited to the more extreme opposition. However, the number of anti-American acts in the past few weeks is unusual, considering

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there were very few signs of anti-US feeling in the five months of civil disturbances earlier this year. Moreover, the large number of Americans within the country, particularly in the more conservative cities of Isfahan and Shiraz, could lead to some being caught up in the events. Most places that Americans visit in Isfahan, such as restaurants and shops, are in a relatively small area. The concentration of Americans is therefore high, increasing the possibility of incidents.

Outlook

(C/NOFORN) The old dilemma for the Shah remains -- how to continue the liberalization of Iranian society and maintain order at the same time without too harsh a crackdown on dissidents. His position is pressuring him to be even more liberal, and at the same time security forces are probably getting impatient with the restraints placed on them. The majority of the populace is no doubt upset with the constant disruption of normal living, and they may make demands for law and order. For the near term, the Shah is likely to continue with his same tactics, and may make another attempt to hold a dialogue with the religious opposition. Nonetheless, firm action by security forces will be used if it is necessary to quell the new round of violence. The martial law in Isfahan is an example of the Shah's determination to maintain law and order.

(C/NOFORN) The possibility of further disturbances is high. In the past those killed in demonstrations have been commemorated in ceremonies 40 days later, which have led to further violence. Thus, a new cycle of religious disturbances may have been set off on 22 July. Meanwhile, the Islamic month of Ramadan -- a time of fasting and prayer -- is now in progress, which may increase tensions. The period of 24 to 26 August, when Iranian Shiites mourn the death of Ali, their most venerated spiritual leader, will be a potentially dangerous time. The opening of school next month will probably add the student population to the unrest.

(C/NOFORN) The months ahead are to likely be turbulent ones for Iran. There is no threat to the stability of the Shah's rule, but continuing tests between the government and the opposition are in sight. (GDS-84)

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