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DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE REPORT

**TRIBES AND ETHNIC
GROUPS IN WESTERN IRAN (U)**

NOVEMBER 1980



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PREFACE

(U) Continuing internal unrest and competing power centers threaten the stability of the revolutionary regime in Iran and draw attention to the complexities underlying Iranian politics and society. The nonresolution of the American hostage dilemma and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan have added urgency to understanding that complexity.

(S/NOFORN) This study provides background information designed to assist in the formulation of answers to questions concerning tribal and ethnic resistance to a hypothetical Soviet invasion of western Iran, aimed at the Persian Gulf. The study identifies and provides information on tribal and ethnic groups in this area of Iran, and develops some tentative conclusions as to willingness and capability of tribal and ethnic groups to engage in unconventional warfare against a Soviet invasion.

(U) Each classified title, heading, etc., in this report has been properly marked; all those unmarked are unclassified.

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TRIBES AND ETHNIC GROUPS IN WESTERN IRAN (U)

1. INTRODUCTION

(S/NOFORN) The purpose of this study is to identify and describe tribes and ethnic groups in western Iran and to develop some tentative conclusions on their possible willingness and capability to engage in unconventional warfare against invading Soviet forces and lines of communications.

(U) The study focuses on the mosaic of ethnic and tribal groups in western Iran on either side of an axis bisecting the Iran-Soviet Transcaucasian border and Khuzestan Province (see figure 1). The study identifies and describes the groups in this area by name, location, number, relevant social structure, political organization and leadership, sympathies and antipathies among groups and among leaders within each group, and significant outside support, influence or control.

(U) Language family is used as the principal device ordering various tribes and ethnic groups into broad categories: Turkic, Indo-Iranian, and Arabic. The geographic extent of these language groups is indicated in figure 2. The more narrowly defined type of group within language category is commonly called a "tribe," but all of the tribally identified groups described here are more precisely tribal confederations. It is at this level that the "tribes" of western Iran will be described. Their geographic distribution is indicated in figure 3.

(U) Tribes and ethnic groups vary greatly in their size and importance and in the amount of data available on them. Some of the information is quite dated; other desired data are lacking. Information, however dated or incomplete, which might indicate type of organization, leadership, sympathies, etc., is nonetheless included in the study.

(S/NOFORN) The assessment of potential willingness and capability of each group to engage in unconventional warfare against Soviet forces and lines of communications is preliminary. Conclusions do not provide scenarios of possible internal situations in Iran or means and extent of Soviet actions. They do allow some first thoughts on which groups might oppose Soviet forces at what levels of effort.

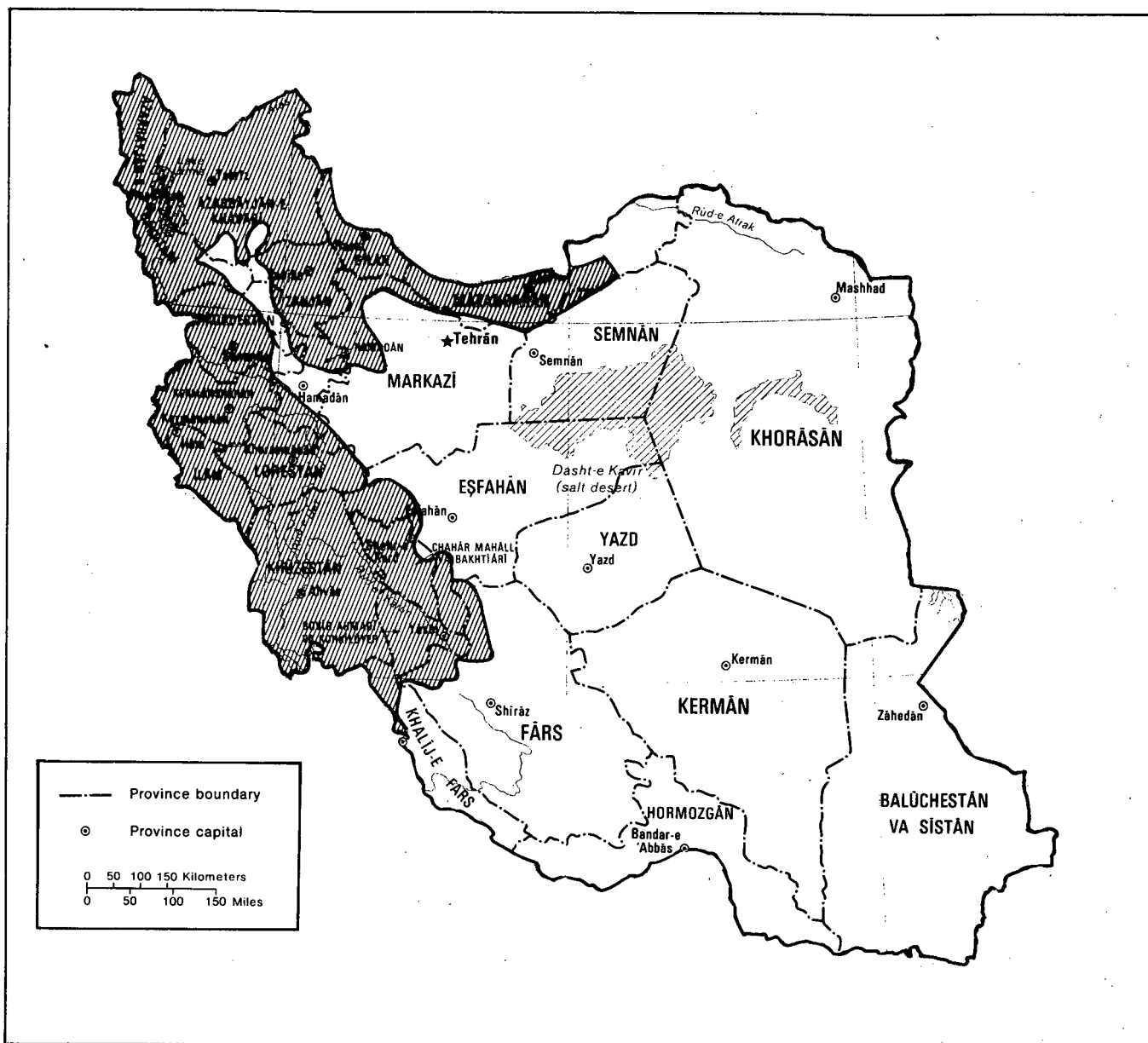
2. TURKIC-SPEAKING GROUPS

(U) The Turkic languages spoken in Iran tend to be mutually intelligible to all Turkic groups. Only Azari, the language spoken by Azarbayjanis, is written to any extent. In Iran it is written in the Arabic script, in contrast to Roman script in Turkey and Cyrillic script in the USSR.

(U) Speakers of Turkic languages form the second major element, but still a minority, in the Iranian population. (Two-thirds of the total population speak an Indo-Iranian language.) Turkic speakers are concentrated in northwestern Iran where they form a majority of the population in Azarbayjan-e Khavari and Azarbayjan-e Bakhtari Provinces (East and West Azarbayjan Provinces, respectively); in northeastern Iran, where small Turkic groups are mixed with Persians,

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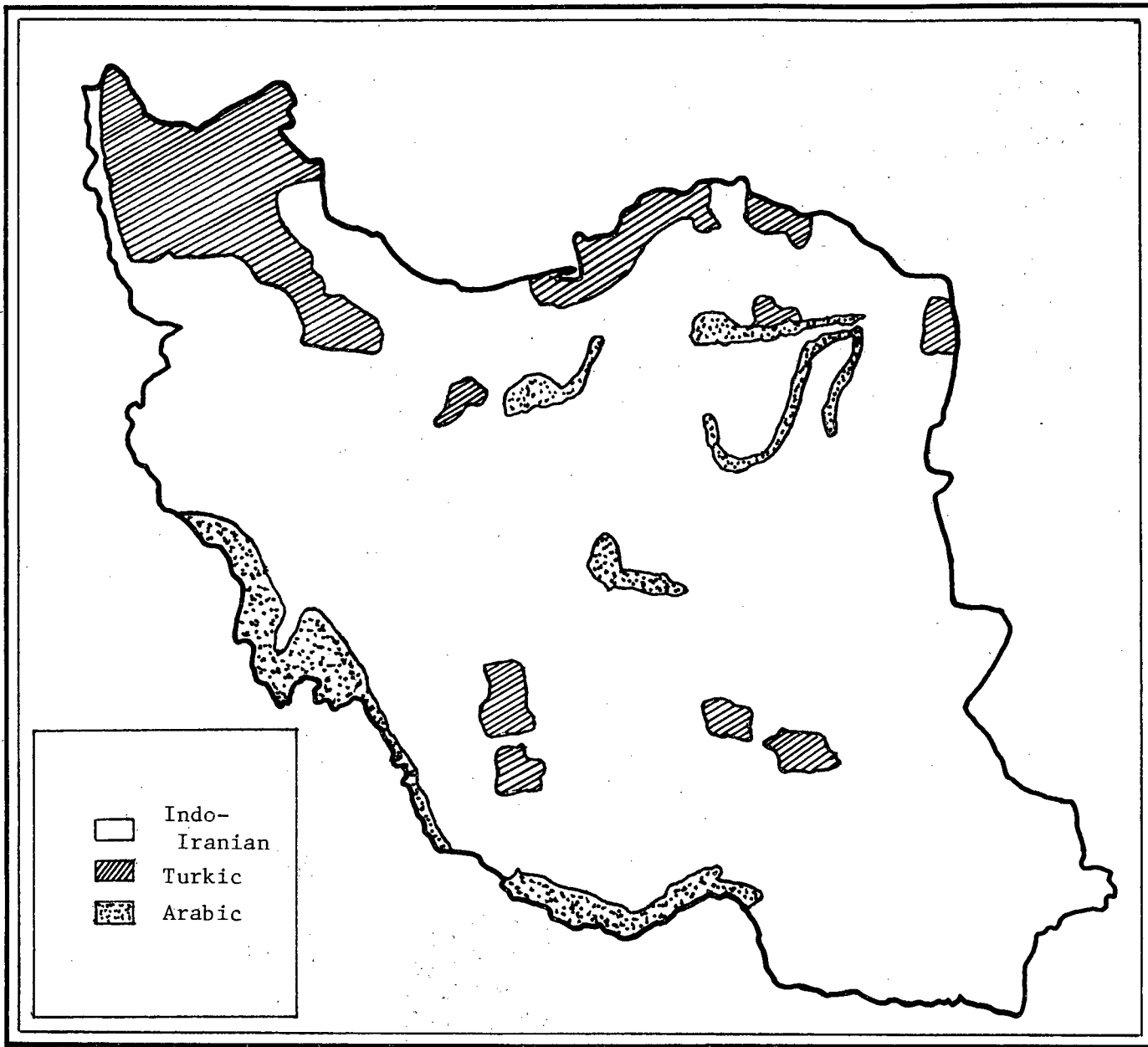


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Figure 1. (U) Approximate Area of Concern in Western Iran

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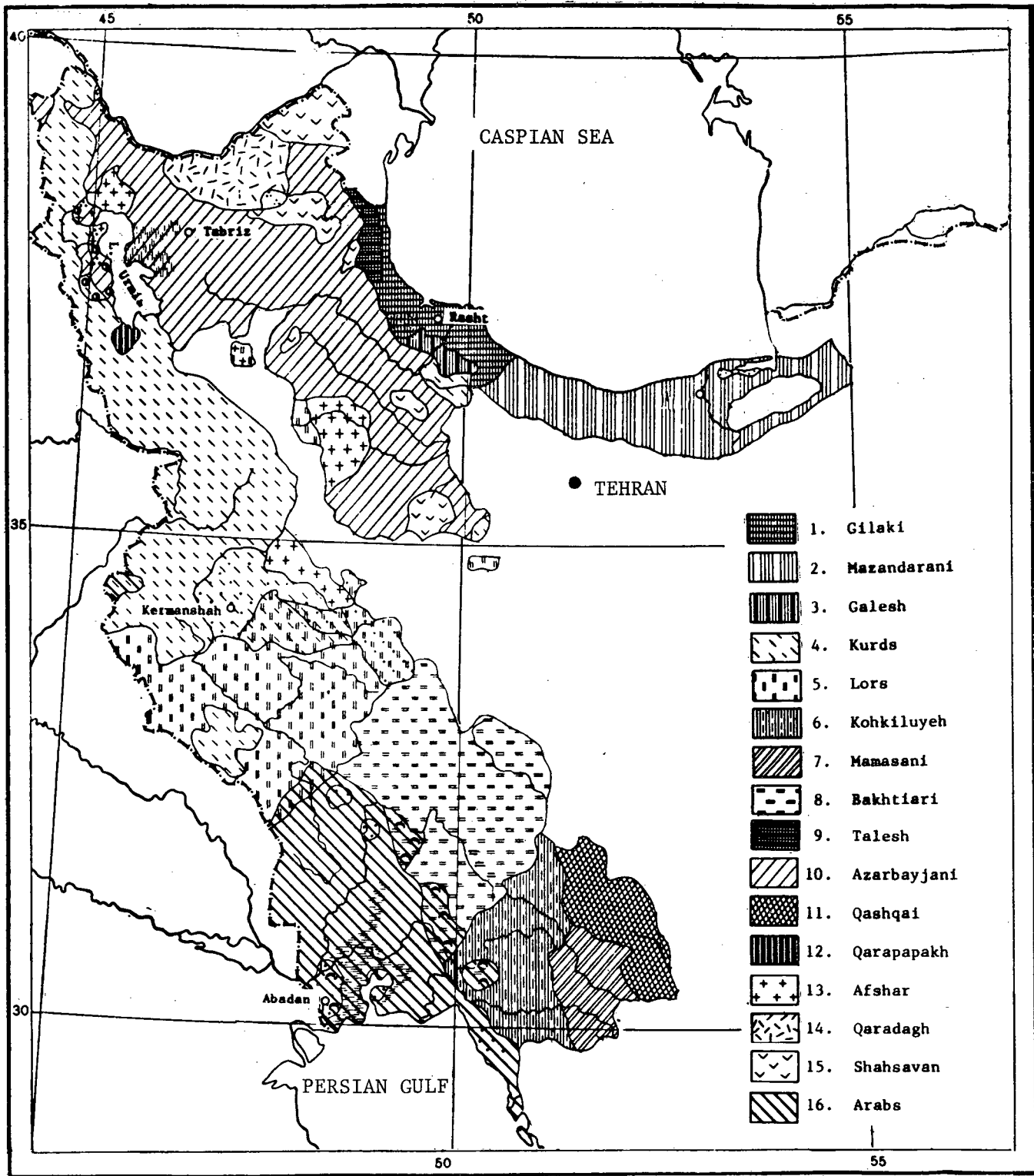


[Unclassified]

Figure 2. (U) Approximate Distribution of Major Languages in Iran

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Figure 3. (U) Tribes and Ethnic Groups in Western Iran

Source: Akademiya Nauk, USSR, Sovetskaya Etnografiya. Moscow, 1955.

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Kurds, and Arabs; and in Khorasan Province and southwestern Iran, where nomadic Qashqai and Afshar tribes form enclaves in primarily Persian areas. Except for the Azarbayjanis, significant numbers of the other Turkic groups are tribally organized and follow seminomadic forms of life.

a. Azarbayjanis

(1) Name, location, number

(U) The Azarbayjanis form the largest single ethnic group in the strategic grain-producing areas of northwestern Iran. Estimates of their numbers range from 3 to 14 million. This wide variance stems in part from the Iranian Government's past attempts to obscure minority distinctions and the size of minority populations. In addition, estimates by other observers sometimes include speakers of related Turkic dialects who would not necessarily consider themselves to be Azarbayjani or be accepted as such by Azarbayjanis.

(2) Social structure and dynamics

(U) The Azarbayjanis are almost entirely settled villagers or townspeople. They adhere to the Shi'a sect of Islam. As Shi'as, they have been integrated into Iranian society at the highest military and civilian levels of government to a greater degree than any other ethnic minority. This was true under the Shah and remained true through the early stages of Iran's revolutionary regime.

(3) Political organizations and key leaders

(U) The most prominent figure and religious leader among the Azarbayjanis and an extremely important individual on the national Iranian scene is Ayatollah Kazem Shariat-Madari. He has engaged in a power struggle with Ayatollah Khomeini and certain other members of the Revolutionary Council over the nature and direction of the revolution. Shariat-Madari enjoys a great deal of prestige and popular support among his fellow Azarbayjanis, and his struggle has become inextricably intertwined with Azarbayjani grievances.

(S) The Muslim People's Republican Party (MPRP) is the political vehicle for supporters of Shariat-Madari. He and his followers are considered "moderates" in that, while supporting the concept of an Islamic Republic, they seek to limit the role of the clergy and take great exception to the powers given to Khomeini under the Constitution. Despite Shariat-Madari's prestige and support in Azarbayjan, the MPRP reportedly suffers from lack of funds and organization. The secretary general of the organization is Dr. Ahmad Alizadeh.

(S) The Azarbayjan Democratic Party (ADP) is technically the Communist Tudeh Party's wing in the Azarbayjan provinces. After the 1946 collapse of the Azarbayjan Democratic Republic, the ADP functioned underground as the Azari-speaking equivalent of the Persian-speaking Tudeh Party. In 1959 the two amalgamated under the Tudeh name, but the ADP kept a separate identity within the larger body. A draft program of the Tudeh Party refers to the ADP as the "single working class organization in Azarbayjan." Its central committee functions as a provincial committee of the Tudeh. The policy of the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party in

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Iran has been to back the Khomeini regime publicly while preparing an organizational base. It reportedly supported progovernment forces during clashes with Azarbayjanis in January 1980.

(4) Mutual sympathies and antipathies among groups

(U) Under the Shah, individual Azarbayjanis held high government posts by becoming part of the larger Iranian culture rather than as representatives of a specifically Azari culture. Assimilated Azarbayjanis who achieved national position in Tehran rarely, if ever, used their influence to benefit Azarbayjan, much less to advance separatist aims.

(U) Azarbayjanis were also active in the effort to overthrow the Shah. Tabriz was a major center of anti-Shah revolutionary activity and many Azarbayjanis held high posts in the Provisional Government of Iran (PGOI) until early November 1979. These officials included former Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, former National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) chief Hasan Nazih, former director of the National Bank Mowlavi, and former Governor General of Azarbayjan-e Khavari Province, Rahmatollah Moqaddam Maraqay. It appears that many former prominent anti-Shah Azarbayjanis are no longer in the top echelons of the regime.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN) Azarbayjanis were well represented in the army and appear to remain so in spite of purges and doubtlessly increased concern over their reliability in the face of Azarbayjani dissidence.

(U) Relations with other ethnic groups, specifically the Kurds, have varied. Violence between the Azarbayjanis, Kurds, and other ethnic minorities that exists in small pockets throughout northwestern Iran has a long history. Typically such violence occurs when central authority is weak or seeks to use one minority against the other. Other causes have been sectarian antagonisms between Shi'as and Sunnis, raids by tribes of one ethnic group on villagers of another, or disputes between tribes over pasturage.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN) Clashes between Azarbayjanis and Kurds appeared to increase in early 1979, and seemed based on fears among Azarbayjanis that the Kurds were seeking to expand their territory. By the end of 1979, reports of more sympathetic Azarbayjani attitudes toward the Kurds were received. Leaders among both groups were aware that the central government was using the historic tactic of deploying predominantly Azarbayjani military units to quell Kurdish resistance. Kurdish units were generally very careful in dealing with Azarbayjani prisoners, as Kurdish leaders have been actively cultivating support and sympathy from other minorities.

(S/NOFORN) The Kurds, with their logistics network extending into Turkey and Iraq, were at least one source of weapons for Azarbayjani dissidents during the fighting in Tabriz in January 1980.

(5) Sympathies and antipathies among leaders within each group

(U) No information available.

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(6) Significant outside support, influence or control

(U) The Azarbayjani people have been divided between Iran and Russia since the early 19th century. Soviet Azaris are found principally in the Azarbayjan Soviet Socialist Republic, which borders on part of northwest Iran, and number about 5 million. Irredentist sentiment among Iranian Azarbayjanis has not been historically strong. Serious attempts to unite the two groups, however, were made by the Russian and Soviet Governments which occupied Iran's Azarbayjani provinces from 1909 to 1914 and from 1941 to 1946. The attempt in the forties to create a Soviet puppet state in Iran (the Azarbayjan Democratic Republic) did not receive widespread indigenous support and quickly collapsed after Soviet troops were withdrawn.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN) It was reported that the USSR may have left behind as many as 5,000 Soviet agents when it withdrew; activity on their part has not been documented. Information on Soviet support to specific Azarbayjani groups or leaders is not available, but in general, Soviet penetration and subversive activity in the area appears to have increased since late 1979. Rumors and unconfirmed reports of such activities by Soviet Azarbayjanis have abounded since the revolution began. Members of the Iranian Revolutionary Council are fearful of Soviet infiltration and subversion and many government officials accept with credulity even the most exaggerated rumors.

(U) No data are available on the amount of Soviet or other external Communist support to the Azarbayjan Democratic Party.

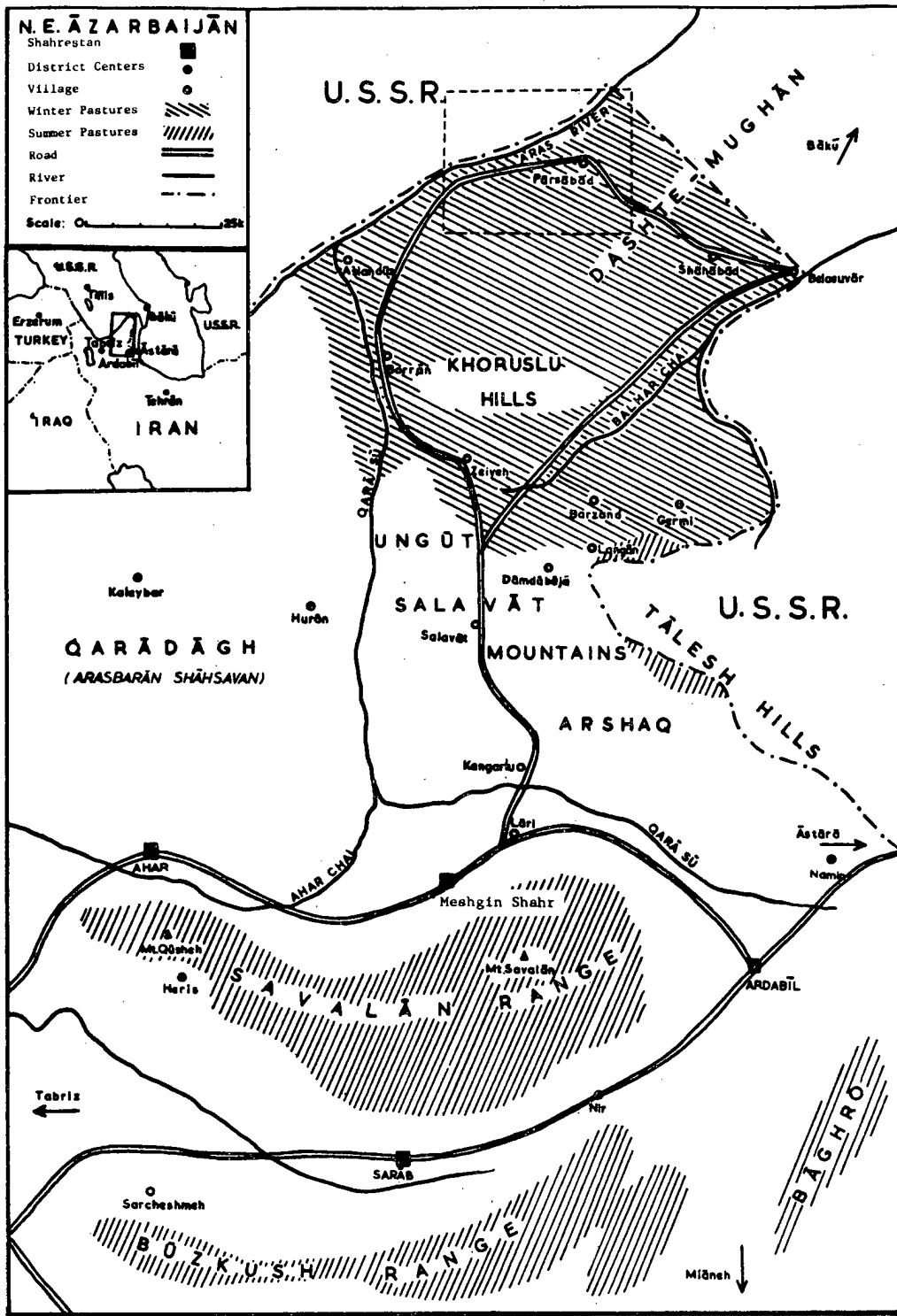
(7) (S/NOFORN) Potential willingness and capability for unconventional warfare against the Soviet Union

(S/NOFORN) A firm assessment on willingness cannot be made but certain factors must be taken into consideration. The Azarbayjani historical experience of the 1940s with the Soviet Union was not generally positive. While there are serious Azarbayjani-central government and Shariat-Madari-Khomeini tensions, and Azarbayjanis are not as prominent in the top echelons of government as in the early days of the revolution, Iranian Azarbayjanis in the past were strong supporters of Iranian nationalism.

b. Shahsavan(1) Name, location, number

(U) The Shahsavan are Azari-speaking, Shi'a Muslims, who inhabit part of the Province of Azarbayjan-e Khavari (see figures 3 and 4). The Qaradagh tribes (also known as Asbaran Shahsavan) constitute a major section of the Shahsavan confederation which inhabits the Arasbaran area of the province. Some sources treat them as separate from the Shahsavan since they are largely settled and their few seminomadic elements remain largely within the Arasbaran area. They, however, regard themselves as a branch of the Shahsavan. Because of this discrepancy and because the Shahsavan are sometimes counted along with the Azarbayjanis or other Turkic groups, estimates of their population vary from 180,000 to 300,000. Nomadic summer pastures are mainly on the slopes of 4,800-meter

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[Unclassified]

Figure 4. (U) The Shahsavan Tribes

Source: Richard Tapper, "Black Sheep, White Sheep and Red-Heads." Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies, vol. IV (1966), p. 64.

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Mount Sabalan (38-15N 48-15E), and winter pastures are in the Moghan Steppe (39-40N 48-15E) in the north. Their semiannual migrations between these locations take from 3 to 8 weeks to cover the 150- to 250-kilometer distance. The spring migration southward begins in May, and the autumn migration can begin as early as September. Meshgin Shahr (38-30N 47-50E) serves as the principal center for seasonal provisioning. Many Shahsavan villagers inhabit areas irrigated by the Aras River (39-56N 48-20E), directly bordering on the Soviet Union.

(2) Social structure and dynamics

(U) Most Shahsavan are probably now settled villagers or townspeople, but more than 5,000 households (possibly 35,000 to 50,000 persons) still live a seminomadic life (migrant shepherd pastoralists). They have a high degree of tribal identity and cohesion, in spite of division into some 32 to 60 tribal groups, and a history of internal tribal feuding in the early part of the 20th century.

(3) Political organizations and key leaders

(U) Prior to the reign of Reza Shah (1925-41) the Shahsavan tribes were ostensibly united under a paramount chief, called an Il-Beg, a position which ceased to be recognized by the Iranian Government and no longer exists. The lack of a paramount chief has affected the internal structure of the Shahsavan in modern times, shaping the formation of alignments among the tribes. Approximately six tribes are recognized as having a superior status, while the rest are considered secondary.

(U) In the absence of a paramount chief, three or four of the tribal chiefs are influential and probably conduct most of the administrative business which concerns the Shahsavan as a tribal confederation, dealing with the provincial governor or with Tehran.

(U) In the mid-1960s, the chiefs of the Geiklu, Talish-Mika'ilu, Ajirlu, and Hajji-Khwajalu tribes were recognized as fulfilling the administrative role. The Mughanlu and Qojabaglu tribes were also recognized as having superior status, but their leadership was in dispute. The Qojabaglu were reportedly the largest of the Shahsavan tribes.

(4) Mutual sympathies and antipathies among groups

(U) The word Shahsavan literally means "Shah-lover," an appellation acquired when the confederation was formed from dissident families and clans who broke with their rebellious chiefs and rallied to the support of the Shah Abbas I (1588-1629). The Shahsavan seldom thereafter lived up to their name.

(U) Current attitudes among the Shahsavan concerning the overthrow of the Shah and the revolutionary regime are not known. In the mid-1960s they were described as royalists, proud of being Iranian and favorable in attitude toward the central government, despite strong tribal identity and cohesion. One probable reason for their attitude was the Shah's relative neglect of the Shahsavan tribal areas and affairs at the time: while literacy, health, and other benefits were thus lacking, tribal life was generally undisturbed.

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(C) Several Shabsavan officers, serving in the Iranian Army in the early 1970s, described themselves to an American observer as proud to be Shabsavan, proud to be in the Iranian Army, and supportive of the Shah.

(5) Sympathies and antipathies among leaders within each group

(U) No information available.

(6) Significant outside support, influence or control

(U) No information available.

(7) (S/NOFORN) Potential willingness and capability for unconventional warfare against the Soviet Union

(S/NOFORN) Based on historical evidence, the Shabsavan would appear responsive to efforts to use them for unconventional warfare against the Soviets. The Shabsavan became increasingly lawless when Tsarist Russia established the present frontier early in the last century, depriving the Shabsavan of the greater portion of their traditional winter quarters in the Moghan Steppe. Until disarmed in 1923, they disrupted trade and settlements far into both Russia and Iran, causing friction between the two countries.

(U) The Shabsavan resisted the Russian occupation in the 1940s, attacked and massacred Soviet-sponsored Tudeh members, and boycotted pro-Soviet propaganda films in the villages.

(U) Despite wide listenership to Soviet broadcasts over transistor radios, the attitude of the Shabsavan toward the Soviet Union, at least through the 1960s, was generally negative. Most Shabsavan tribesmen came into regular contact with the Soviet-Iranian border and its heavy border security and realized that the freedom of their counterparts on the Soviet side was significantly less than their own. Many Shabsavan reportedly talked of the days when their tribes once roamed the Moghan area far to the north, appearing to harbor some resentment at the barrier created by the international boundary. Although reticent on the subject, most Shabsavan in the mid-1960s seemed proud that they had rejected the Soviet-sponsored Azarbaijan Democratic Republic in favor of the Shah.

c. Afshar

(1) Name, location, number

(U) The Afshar are a widely scattered Turkic tribal group (see figure 3). In western Iran they can be found along the northern shore of Lake Urmia (37-40N 45-30E) and along the edges of Kordestan Province, as well as in Zanjan Province. Estimates of their number range from less than 100,000 to as high as 400,000.

(2) Social structure and dynamics

(U) The Afshar language is closely akin to Azari. The people are usually described as seminomadic.

SECRET**(3) Political organizations and key leaders**

(U) Although these scattered groups differentiate themselves from the others that surround them, they share no common sense of political identity. Since the Afshars played prominent roles under the staunchly Shi'a Safavid dynasty (1501-1732), they are presumably Shi'a Muslims.

(4) - (7) (C) Information is not available on sympathies and antipathies among groups and leaders, outside support, or unconventional warfare capabilities.

d. Qarapapakh**(1) Name, location, number**

(U) The Qarapapakh are presently concentrated on the southern shore of Lake Urmia (37-40N 45-30E) with small groups scattered among the Kurdish population along the western shore (see figure 3). In 1828 the Qarapapakh migrated to this location from what is now eastern Soviet Georgia. The Iranian Qarapapakh may number about 21,000 (reliable figures are not available). As many as 9,000 Qarapapakh may live in the Transcaucasus region of the USSR, but by now they probably have been assimilated culturally and linguistically by the Soviet Azari population.

(2) Social structure and dynamics

(U) The Qarapapakh are probably evenly divided between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims.

(3) - (7) (C) Information is not available on political organizations, leaders, their sympathies and antipathies, outside support, or unconventional warfare capabilities.

e. Qashqai**(1) Name, location and number**

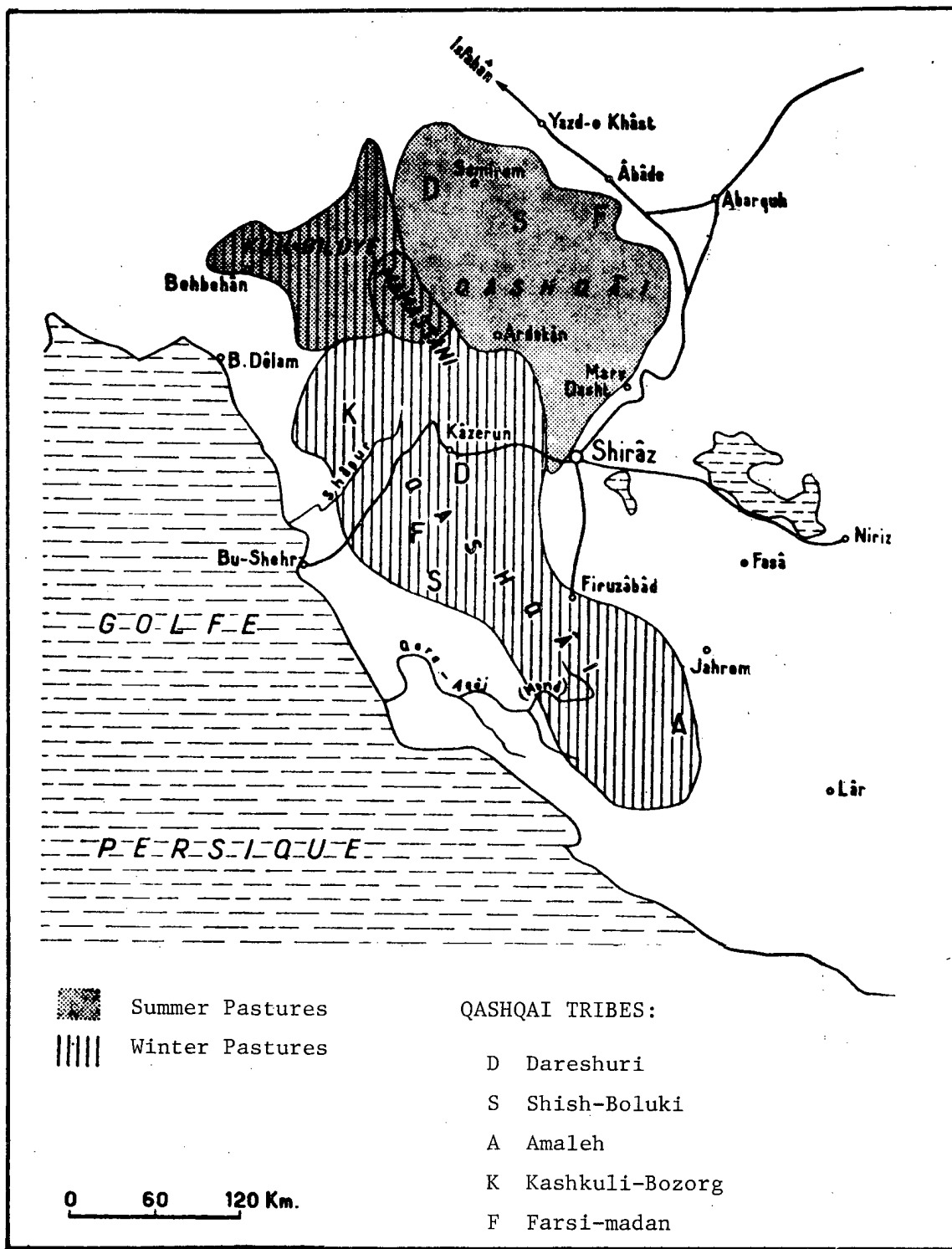
(U) The Qashqai are a seminomadic tribal confederation found in the western part of Fars Province (see figures 3 and 5). They number approximately 500,000 and are believed to constitute the largest group of tribally organized seminomads in Iran. The Qashqai migrate on a semiannual basis. In the spring and summer they inhabit the verdant grazing regions of the Zagros Mountain chain west of the middle third of the Shiraz-Isfahan road, as far as the Kuh-e-Dinar range (30-50N 51-35E). In the autumn, they leave the cooler regions for grazing pastures on the plains and fan out over a region spreading from Behbahan (30-35N 50-14E) to the region just south of Firuzabad (31-57N 54-16E). Their wide distribution during the winter months accounts for the varied amounts of time some tribes take to reach the summer pastures, ranging from 7 to 60 days.

(2) Social structure and dynamics

(U) The Qashqai tribal confederacy is composed of several different tribal and ethnic groups, all speaking a Turkic dialect closely resembling Azari.

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[Unclassified]

Figure 5. (U) Fars Province: Qashqai, Kohkiluyeh (Kuh-Giluye), and Mamasani (Mamassani) Tribes

Source: Vincent Monteil, Les Tribus du Fars et la Sedentarisation des Nomades (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1966), p. 12.

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Lori-, Kurdish- and Arabic-speaking tribal splinter groups have affiliated with the Qashqai from time to time, thus it is not uncommon to find Qashqais who also speak one or more of these languages. The principal motivation for joining the confederacy has been to secure grazing pastures and migration routes from competing tribes. The five principal tribes of the Qashqai are the 'Amaleh, Dare-shuri, Kashkuli-Bozorg, Shish-Boluki, and Farsi-Madan. Perhaps a dozen or more smaller tribes and clans are also affiliated with the Qashqai.

(U) The Qashqai are nominal Shi'a Muslims. They have limited organizational ties with central religious institutions.

(3) Political organizations and key leaders

(U) The Qashqai historically have been one of the most cohesive tribal confederations in Iran. The confederacy is organized in a hierarchical power structure, incorporating units as large as tribes and as small as households. The paramount chief, or ilkhan, rules over the khans, or tribal heads who in turn control the subtribes, pasture groups, encampments and households. Through this structure, the khans traditionally have been able to call up troops for limited military engagements, usually for raiding purposes.

(C) Day-to-day leadership has reportedly devolved onto secondary notables called kalantars. There are three to ten kalantars each in four of the five major Qashqai clans; the fifth has seven leaders of lesser stature. None has attempted to assume a leading position in the tribe.

(U) The Qashqai have never been completely integrated into the Iranian political community, and their relations with the former Shah and his father were at times bitter. Reza Shah suppressed the Qashqai in a military campaign that ended in 1933 with the imprisonment and murder of their paramount chief and the forced sedentarization of the tribes. The Qashqai returned to nomadic life after Reza Shah's exile in 1941 and led or participated in other rebellions in 1946, 1952, and 1962-63.

(U) The Qashqai have never formed any political organizations of their own.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) Since Ayatollah Khomeini's rise to power, the Qashqai have generally supported the current government. However, hearing that some forces in the government are unstable, elements within the Qashqai have considered backing a return of the National Front or the creation of a new, middle-of-the-road, moderate party.

(U) Qashqai have reportedly offered protection in their mountain realms to some "refugees of the revolution," displaying some sympathy with the plight of those recently displaced.

(C/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) Four brothers in the traditional paramount chief's family are currently living in Iran: Nasir Khan, Khosrow Khan, Mohammad Hosayn Khan, and Malek Mansur Khan. The first three were exiled or left the country following Pahlavi government reprisals against their

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family due to Qashqai support for the Mossadegh government. The most recent members to return were Nasir and Khosrow who have both become active politically inside the country.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) Nasir Khan appears to be recognized as the Qashqai tribal leader or paramount chief. He believed that he had some possibility of becoming President of Iran before the recent elections and claimed to be taking a role in developing contacts among the southern tribes. Nasir Khan is concerned about the weakness of Khomeini's leadership and the possibilities of a Communist or leftist takeover should the Ayatollah's rule fail.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) Khosrow Khan, reportedly the oldest brother, has been nominally supportive of the Khomeini government although he favors a return of the National Front under younger leadership. He believes that Khomeini has provided a unifying figure for Iran's disparate elements, but he does not think that the religious leaders now controlling the government are capable.

(C/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) Mohammad Hosayn Khan has been in Iran for some time and, prior to the Shah's downfall, initiated contacts with the US Government offering to provide protection for the oil lines crossing Qashqai territory. At that time, he declared himself to be a royalist although not necessarily supportive of the Shah. In September 1979, he claimed that his tribe would be willing to overthrow the Ayatollah in return for US weapons.

(C/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) The generally acknowledged leader of the younger generation of Qashqai leaders is Nasir Khan's son, Abdullah Qashqai. He has an M.D. from Harvard and recently practiced medicine in Maine. Homan Qashqai, who was also educated in the United States, at the University of West Virginia, is Mohammad Hosayn Khan's son. Homan is reportedly very politically astute.

(4) Mutual sympathies and antipathies among groups

(U) There has been some minimal friction with smaller tribal groups occupying the same area. Qashqai and Bakhtiari share some of the same summer grazing pastures in the mountains and have on occasion shared alternating hostilities and friendship. During the 1946 rebellion, the Qashqai were supported by the Bakhtiari.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) The Qashqai can probably count on support from the Bovir Ahmadi found to the northwest, with whom there is some intermarriage and an occasional alliance.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) Despite efforts to build some sort of solidarity with Iran's Kurds, the Qashqai reportedly refused a request from the Kurds in the summer of 1979 to initiate an uprising to relieve government pressure on Kurdish territories. Qashqai leaders pleaded lack of preparedness. The Kurds had facilitated delivery of weapons to the Qashqai prior to that time.

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total population of Gilan Province, according to the 1976 census, is about 1.58 million, of whom 460,000 are urban and 1.12 million are rural (including pastoral nomads, if any). The total population of Mazandaran Province is 2.4 million, but this number includes Turkic-speaking groups inhabiting areas outside the scope of this study.

(U) Outside the major towns, the population of Gilan and western Mazandaran is believed to consist almost entirely of settled farmers or fishermen. To the extent that pastoral nomadism is still practiced, it is probably quite localized, small in scale, and confined to the mountains and foothills south and west of the coastal plain.

(2) Social structure and dynamics

(U) No specific information is available on the Galesh, but the Gilak, Talesh, and Mazandarani speak dialects of Persian that, while differing very little from each other, are unintelligible to other Persians. Most members of the four groups, however, speak standard Persian as well as their own dialects. Educated Iranian urbanites see them as inferiors, rustic and unsophisticated, but, until the revolution, economic development was linking the region more and more closely to the central government. All four groups are Shi'a Muslims.

(U) The Agajani and Sasani are two Taleshi tribes that apparently still retain a tribal organization and identity, although they are believed to be entirely settled. No other information is available on the Agajani and Sasani.

(3) Political organizations and key leaders

(U) No recent information is available.

(4) Mutual sympathies and antipathies among groups

(U) No information available.

(5) Sympathies and antipathies among leaders within each group

(U) No information available.

(6) Significant outside support, influence or control

(U) No information available.

(7) (S/NOFORN) Potential willingness and capability for unconventional warfare against the Soviet Union

(U) Little specific information exists on these groups.

(U) Prior to incorporation into the Iranian state in the late 16th century, the Caspian region enjoyed a relatively autonomous existence, protected from inland invaders by the Elburz Mountain chain (36-00N 53-00E) and the damp, oppressive climate that most outsiders considered enervating and unhealthy. The

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Russians, however, annexed the territory briefly, from 1724 to 1734. Separatist sentiments have been voiced occasionally in modern times, but came to fruition only once, and then with considerable outside assistance: The Bolsheviks succeeded in establishing a Soviet Republic of Gilan with the help of a few local leaders during the confused period following World War I (1917-21).

b. Kurds(1) Name, location, number

(U) Iran has approximately 3,500,000 Kurdish inhabitants, or 10 percent of the total population. Kurds make up all the rural and 90 percent of the urban population of Kermanshahan and Kurdistan (Kordestan) Provinces. West Azarbayjan is considered 40 percent Kurdish; and Hamadan and Ilam have Kurdish minorities comprising 25 to 30 percent of their respective populations. Iran also has an estimated 130,000 Kurdish refugees who fled Iraq following the Shatt al-Arab Agreement of 1975, most of whom were moved into Lorestan and Kermanshahan Provinces. Geographic distribution of Kurds in western Iran is indicated in figures 3, 6, and 7. There are also small Kurdish communities in other areas of Iran.

(U) Kurds speak an Indo-Iranian language which is grammatically distinct from Persian. Farsi is widely understood in the Persianized provinces of Kermanshahan and Ilam, where the Kurdish dialect spoken contains a good number of Farsi words. Kurds in northern and rural areas have resisted past attempts to suppress their language and claim to speak a purer dialect than their southern brethren. Since the Shah departed, schools in many parts of the region have begun using and teaching Kurdish.

(U) The northern Kurds are almost all Sunni Muslims of the Shafi school of Islamic law. About a quarter of them are members of Sufi dervish sects. The Kurds in the Provinces of Kermanshahan and Ilam are virtually all Shi'a.

(U) Approximately 80 percent of the Kurds are settled in rural and urban areas; the rest practice seasonal migration. Many nomadic Kurds were settled in small communities where they could be easily observed by Iranian authorities.

(2) Social structure and dynamics

(U) Most Kurds, urban or rural, associate themselves with specific tribal groupings. Iranian Kurds adhere to more than 40 tribes and tribal confederations. In traditional Kurdish society, chieftains known as aghas or khans wielded considerable power over tribal clans. The khans owned extensive lands farmed by sharecroppers. In order to undermine their authority, the Shah implemented land reforms in the 1960s and 1970s to redistribute the large estates of the khans among landless peasants. The feudal villages of the plains and valleys were detribalized, whereas the seminomadic communities in the upland areas retained their tribal organization. Urbanized Kurds are primarily artisans and merchants; tribal identity is of limited social and economic importance to them.

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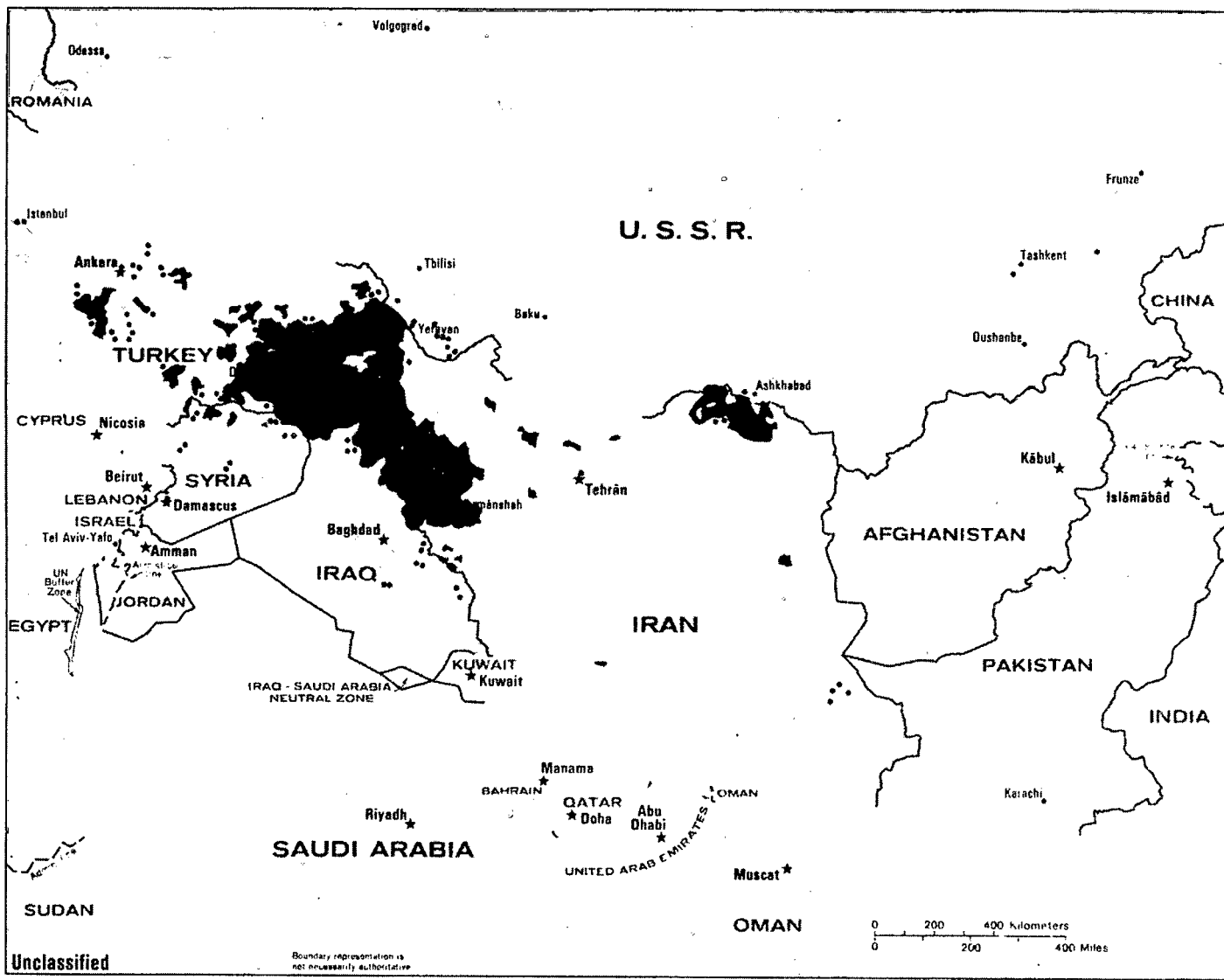
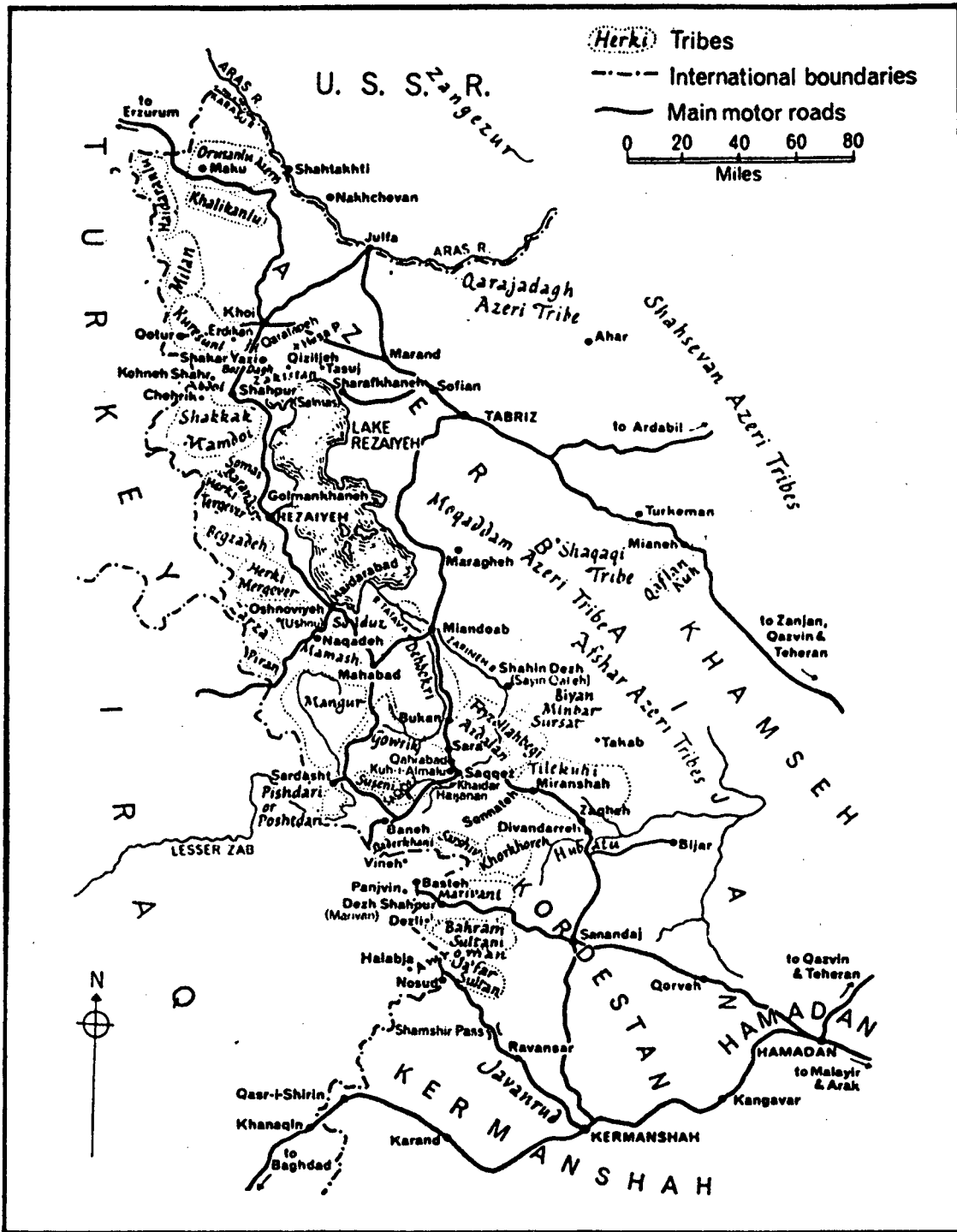


Figure 6. (U) Kurdish Areas in the Middle East and the USSR

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Figure 7. (U) The Kurds in Iran

Source: Hassan Arfa, The Kurds: An Historical and Political Study (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 49.

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SECRET**(3) Political organizations and key leaders**

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) The nontribal, secular, nationalist Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), headed by Secretary General Abdol Rahman Qasemlu, wants to achieve political autonomy for Iranian Kurds in a democratic, peaceful way. Nevertheless, Qasemlu inspired Kurdish irregulars to confront government troops and Revolutionary Guards until Khomeini appeared willing to negotiate with the Kurds over their demands. The KDP has considerable appeal among young, urban, and educated Kurds. Many have been mobilized in the partisan militia or armed group of the KDP, the Pesh Merga, to which a majority of the estimated 20,000 Kurdish resistance fighters in Iran belong. Abdol Rahim Abbasi, a former Iranian Army major and member of the KDP Central Committee, is the Pesh Merga leader. His forces operate from Western Azarbayjan to the south of mountain trails to Iraq. Kurdish forces have some contact with the Tudeh Party, but actually collaborate only with the People's Fedayeen and the Charika-ye Feda'i-ye Khalq.

(C) Secretary General Qasemlu is supported by Shaykh Ez-ed-din Hoseini, a popular Sunni spiritual leader in Mahabad who is Chairman of the Shura-i Hamahanag [sic] (probably Shura-ye Hamahang-e Kordestan - Council for the Harmonizing of Kurdistan). Shaykh Hoseini has become a major spokesman for the KDP and has had access to the Ayatollah Khomeini. Although Hoseini's support is basically tribal and religious, he has contacts with representatives from the Kurdistan Section of the People's Fedayeen and may be a bridge between leftist and religious elements.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) Another Kurdish partisan group is the Sazeman-e Zahmet-e Kashan-e Kordestan led by a former law student Salah Muhtadi. This is a Marxist-Leninist, leftist military unit operating either in the south near the Iraqi border or near Sanandaj.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) The Kurdistan Section (Shaha-ye Kordestan) of the People's Fedayeen is a Marxist-Leninist organization which strongly opposes the Khomeini regime. The Kurdistan Section is not a purely Kurdish entity in that it is part of a larger Iranian organization.

(C) Marxist influence is also very strong among Kurdish fighters in the Charika-ye Feda'i-ye Khalq. Their group, led by Ashraf Dehqan, clashed with government forces in Kurdistan.

(C) Idris and Masud Barzani, sons of the late Mulla Mustafa, are actively cooperating with the Khomeini government which is financing their efforts. They are trying to build the Iraqi Kurdish Force, a 3,000-man anti-Baghdad, border unit, into a larger and more powerful group with support from the Barzani and Jaf tribes which migrated from Iraq into Iran since 1975. Headquartered in the town of Urumiyeh (Reza'iyeh) (37-33N 45-04E), the Barzanis' troops are stationed mainly along the border area between Naqadeh (36-57N 45-23E) and Khaneh (36-41N 45-08E), north toward Qashnavih (no coordinates). A rival KDP leader, Jalal Talabani, has about 700 men at his disposal in Iran.

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(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) Two small Kurdish armed resistance groups originating in Iraq are also active in Iran: a branch of the People's Socialist Movement of Kurds in Iraq headed by Rossoul Molman and the group of Dr. Mahmoud Osman.

(C) The central Iranian Government has designated its own Kurdish leader Ahmad Moftizadeh. His support presumably comes from Shi'a Kurds in the southern regions.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) The Khomeini government claims that pro-Shah ex-military and SAVAK officers are forming dissident bands in the Kurdish areas of the northwest. Alleged incidents involve clashes with government troops along the Iraqi and Turkish borders, highway robbery, and looting. Some armed bands are reportedly led by Lt General Azzizollah Palizban, a Kurd and probable Shi'a, who was chief of military intelligence under the Shah. General Palizban has also been reported to be working for exiled former Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) A new Kurdish organization called Shahit (probably Shahid - witness) was formed in Iranian Kurdistan in October 1979 to liquidate Kurds who are collaborating with the Khomeini regime. The organization was responsible for the killing of a Turkish landlord who had cooperated with Khomeini's representatives.

(4) Mutual sympathies and antipathies among groups

(U) The Kurdish nationalist movement in Iran has historically been threatened by disunity and fighting among the tribes. There is no single leader to whom a majority of tribes give their allegiance. In addition to tribal and clan rivalries, regional differences impede unity. Sunni Kurds of the north, who remain politically and economically isolated from the mainstream of Iranian life, engage in antiregime activity; Shi'a Kurds of the south tend to support their co-religionists in Tehran. No Kurdish organization, including the KDP, has been able to achieve a policy consensus among varied constituencies in the rural and urban areas. Traditional leaders in the mountains and countryside favor localized and semiautonomous political action. They often distrust centralized organizations which operate out of the cities. The secular, Marxist orientation of some KDP factions, the People's Fedayeen, and other resistance groups is anathema to rural and traditional Kurds. There is also a schism in the Kurdish movement, and particularly within the KDP, between the older, traditional leadership and the younger "intellectuals" who have acquired education and technical skills, prefer a Kurdish nationalism to the tribal parochialism of their elders, and are more militantly opposed to the Khomeini regime.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) There is evidence that younger members of the KDP are becoming more influential in the party and more demonstrably anti-Communist. At the Fourth Congress of the KDP held on 28-29 February 1980, some younger delegations so severely criticized certain pro-Tudeh members of the KDP that the latter were not reelected to Central Committee positions. Qasemlu was reelected and many of the newly elected Central Committee members came from the ranks of the young.

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(U) With the exception of tribes controlled by the Iraqis or the central government in Tehran, the Kurdish community is unanimous in its approval of Kurdish autonomy, but most do not now favor total secession. The demands of KDP moderates include administrative autonomy, local control of law enforcement and security units, the use of Kurdish in the schools and public media, and guaranteed civil rights. The Sunni Kurdish community acted with unusual unanimity in boycotting the December 1979 referendum on the new national Constitution in which the central government refused to make concessions to the Kurds. The Kurds also boycotted the 25 January 1980 presidential election when Khomeini disqualified their candidate, Masud Rajavi. On the other hand, most Kurds adhered to the unilateral cease-fire declared by Hoseini and Qasemlu in November 1979 after it appeared that the government was willing to negotiate with the Kurds over their demands. Their antipathy to the regime is contingent on their lack of receptivity to governmental autonomy concessions.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) Despite the retreat of Kurdish resistance fighters and the extensive material and human losses suffered in August 1979, the spirit and morale of the general Kurdish population in Iran is high. Iranian Army units presently stationed in Kurdistan are trying to establish a good rapport with the local population, and often protect the locals from Khomeini's Revolutionary Guards. The KDP and other moderate Kurdish factions support this effort and are themselves working to win the sympathy of Iranian Army units.

(U) For relations with other groups see Azarbayjanis and Qashqai.

(5) Sympathies and antipathies among leaders within each group

(U) Tribal, regional, and political differences are an obstacle to unity within the Kurdish leadership. Many dissident Kurdish leaders will support an integral autonomy movement insofar as it will enable them to consolidate their control over particular groups and localities. In their quest for personal aggrandizement they may withhold support from parties and guerrilla groups or seek greater opportunities in an alliance with the central government.

(C) The alliance between Shaykh Hoseini and Secretary General Qasemlu has been enhanced by Tehran's recalcitrance in dealing with Kurdish demands. The alliance may now be undergoing a period of strain. Qasemlu is being pressured by younger elements in the KDP and new Central Committee members to disassociate himself and his followers from the Tudeh Party and other leftist organizations. Shaykh Hoseini, on the other hand, has purportedly reinforced his contacts with Marxist organizations. By doing so, he may be alienating sections of his tribal and religious power base. A number of shaykhs have criticized Hoseini for his "Communist" affinities.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) There is evidence of a split between Qasemlu and armed groups of the KDP and affiliated parties. Qasemlu spends most of his time in Iraq and seldom comes to Iran. The majority of the KDP Central Committee members, such as Mehmed Emin Siraci (also spelled Seraji), Amir Khazi, and Hani Buluriyan, remain in Iranian Kurdistan with the armed groups. Some KDP leaders involved in military operations did not attend the Fourth Congress proceedings held in February 1980. Qasemlu has indicated a preference for negotiation over the use of force vis-a-vis the central government.

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(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) The Barzani brothers are under pressure from subordinates to withdraw their support of the Khomeini regime. Some Barzani forces in Iran are no longer willing to back Tehran. A Barzani Kurd in Oshnovieh (37-02N 45-06E), Sami Abdul Rahman, head of 400 to 500 troops, wants to break with Khomeini and is attempting a reconciliation with the KDP of Iran.

(U) For relations with other leaders see Bakhtiariis.

(6) Significant outside support, influence or control

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) In October 1979 it was reported that arms are coming to Iranian Kurds via Iraq. The main supplier of arms is the Iraqi Government acting through the Jalal Talabani organization. Iranian Kurds are allegedly receiving aid from East Germany, Romania and Cuba. This aid includes medical supplies, food, and clothing delivered initially to Iraq.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN) Since February 1979, the Feda'i-ye Khalq and the Mujahidin-e Khalq have been transporting large amounts of weapons to the Kurdish provinces, including automatic rifles, machineguns, antitank weapons, technical equipment, and radios.

(C) Clandestine Soviet radio stations, the National Voice of Iran and Bizim Radyo, have expressed some sympathy for Kurdish autonomy, but have not come out clearly in support of Kurdish separatism.

(7) (S/NOFORN) Potential willingness and capabilities for unconventional warfare against the Soviet Union

(S/NOFORN) Tribal leaders and factions within the KDP are avowedly anti-Communist and could be mobilized to resist an invading Soviet force providing there were opportunities for personal gain and assurance that their efforts would not ease the way for a return of the Shah. Confronted with a common enemy, the Kurds have demonstrated in the past a remarkable capacity to overcome differences and coordinate activities. As it stands now, however, the Kurdish resistance movement appears too fragmented and beset by internal quarrels to delay a Soviet advance significantly. In addition, certain armed militias have expressed an affinity for Iranian Marxist organizations and are supplied, directly and indirectly, by Warsaw Pact countries. Kurdish resistance fighters are well armed and their morale is high. Considerable stores of arms and ammunition passed into their hands as the regular army and security forces deserted Kurdish territory. Kurdish irregulars have also armed themselves with weapons captured from the central government's military outposts in Mahabad (36-45N 45-43E), Salmas (Shahpur, 38-11N 44-47E) and Sanandaj (35-19N 47-00E). The Kurdish strongholds are located in the areas surrounding Mahabad, Baneh (35-54N 45-53E), Sar Dasht (36-09N 45-28E), Piranshah (35-30N 46-01E), and Oshnovieh (37-02N 45-06E). Their presence is weakest in Urumiyeh (Reza'iyeh) (37-33N 45-04E), Salmas (Shahpur), and Kermanshah (34-15N 47-20E).

c. Lors

(Note: (U) Most reputable and reliable unclassified sources treat the Lors (commonly spelled Lurs) in conjunction with their neighbors to the south-east, the Bakhtiari, the Kohkiluyeh, and the Mamasani with whom they share a

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common linguistic bond. The Lors proper and the Bakhtiari are major ethnic groups in Iran. The Kohkiluyeh and the Mamasani are relatively minor tribal groups for which information is very scanty. The area occupied by these four peoples has been known historically as "Greater and Lesser Lorestan." The amalgamation of Lori-speaking peoples in the sources creates a problem in the treatment of the "Lor" proper, as distinct from the Bakhtiari, the Kohkiluyeh, or other linguistic cousins.)

(1) Name, location, number

(U) The roughly 500,000 Lors occupy a territory in the Zagros Mountains (33-40N 47-00E) south of Kordestan Province and northwest of the region in which the Bakhtiari range. (See figures 3 and 8.) The Lors are centered in Khorramabad (33-30N 48-20E), capital of Lorestan Province; however, several of the more than 60 Lori tribes reside in or near Fars, Khuzestan, and Ilam va Poshtkuh Provinces. Today, the Lors are usually divided into two major groupings, the majority being Posht-e Kuh ("from behind the mountains") and the rest, Pish-Kuh ("from this side of the mountains"). The "mountains" referred to are the Kabir Kuh (33-25N 46-45E). A third grouping, the Bala Gireh, living in the mountains, is sometimes separately distinguished and at other times considered part of the Pish-Kuh.

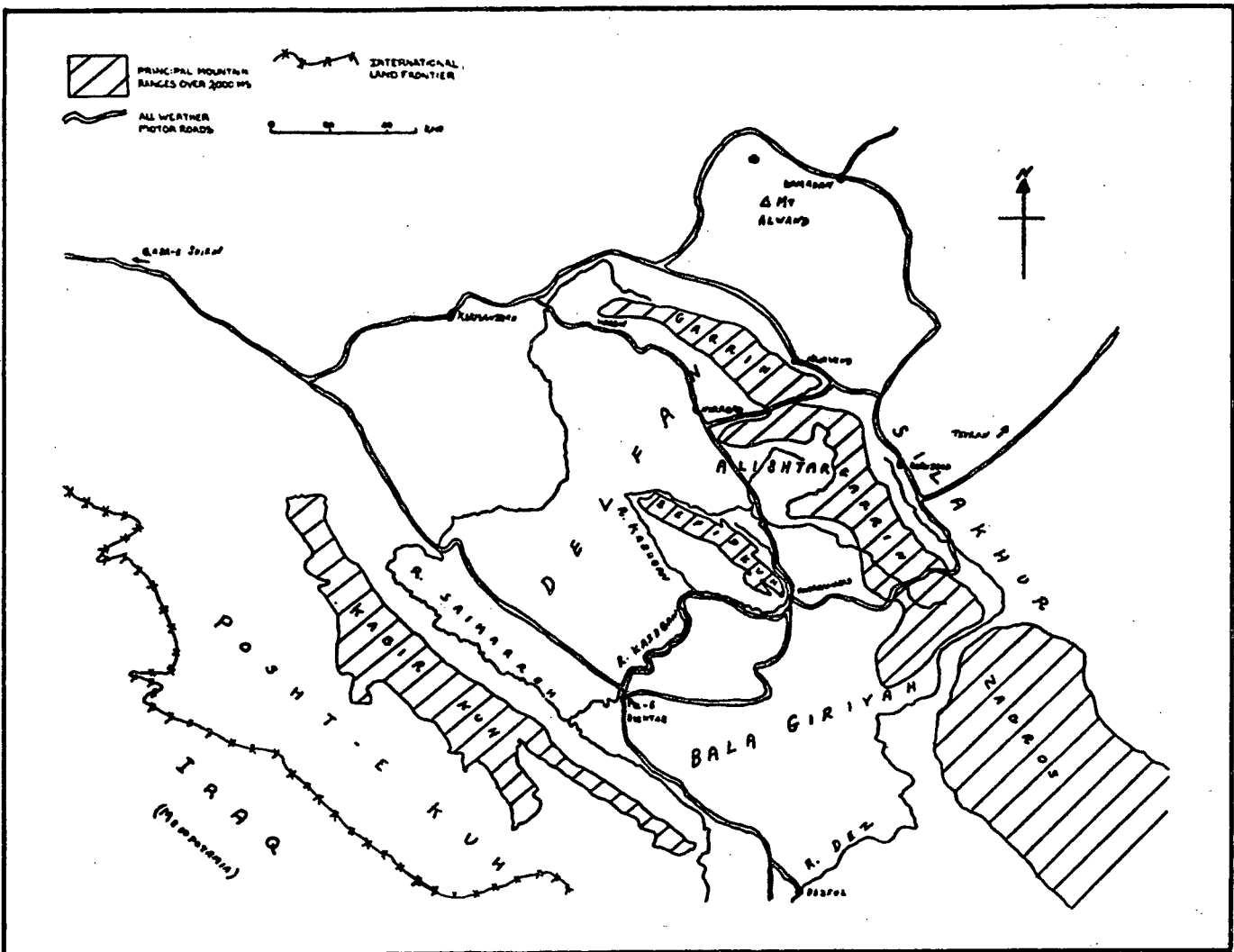
(U) Most Posht-e Kuh are still nomads in the Province of Ilam va Poshtkuh (33-38N 46-26E). The vast majority of Lors apparently live in Lorestan and Ilam va Poshtkuh Provinces. Lori tribes that live in Fars and Khuzestan Provinces are believed to represent small isolated pockets which have broken off from the main tribal concentrations. The 1926-27 military suppression of the Lors by the government may account in part for their diaspora. The post-World War II Encyclopedia of Islam lists the principal Lori tribes as the Tarhan, the Delfan, the Selseleh, and the Bala Gireh. This last group is further divided into the Dirigwand, the Sagwand, and others. The Posht-e Kuhl region is peopled by the Selseleh Confederation (the Hassanwand and two other patrilineally related tribes), the Bairanwand, and the Delfan. Routes of migration are not known; however, the Bairanwand winter in the vicinity of villages inhabited by their sedentary kinsmen. The Hassanwand purchase winter grazing from the Judeki and the Kurdish sedentary populations. The Bovir Ahmadi (also spelled Boyer Ahmadi and Boir Amadi), in Bovir Ahmadi va Kohkiluyeh Governate, are believed to number 120,000 and are reportedly divided into six subtribes.

(U) In general, the nomadic pattern for the Lors is the same as for all mountain-dwelling pastoral nomads. In winter they seek the valleys, moving up the mountain slopes with the summer. Those who have settled on the land, roughly half of all Lors, have been beset by extreme poverty, land erosion, and denudation of forest areas.

(2) Social structure and dynamics

(U) The advent of modernization imposed by the Pahlavi dynasty, specifically the introduction of tractors to till the lowlands, has freed mules and cattle to plow less accessible hill pastures. As hill pasturage gives way to farming, pastoralism and nomadism decline. In addition, Reza Shah, in an effort to compel nomadic peoples to settle, ordered them to select a place of residence, build homes, and farm. The tents of those reluctant to do so were burned.

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[Unclassified]

Figure 8. (U) Lorestan: Posht-e Kuh Area and Major Tribes of the Pish-Kuh

Source: Jacob Black-Michaud, "An Ethnographic and Ecological Survey of Luristan, Western Persia: Modernization in a Nomadic Pastoral Society." *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2 (May 1974), p. 211.

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(U) The Bovir Ahmadi of Kohkiluyeh, believed to be Lors, are presumed to be representative of the Lors. Their basic social and economic unit is the tent household (a man, his wife, children, sheep, and goats). At the next level, six to eight tent households who trace their ancestry from a common male ancestor form an oulad. Several oulads form a tireh or subtribe. The most inclusive political and social unit is the tribe, the il, headed by a khan whose power is based on his military guard. He is chief administrator and judge for his il. The cost of administration is paid for by an annual levy on livestock and grain. Reza Shah, to break the power of the khans, subverted their guards and denied them their levies. Some he executed.

(U) The Lors are Shi'a Muslims.

(3) Political organization and key leaders

(U) No significant leaders, either tribal or political, have been identified.

(4) Mutual sympathies and antipathies among groups

(U) As a result of recent (the past 20 years) ecological changes, the nomadic Turkashwand--who are assumed not to be Lors--have moved southward, competing with the Bairanwand and the Hassanwand for pasturage. This has led to "major military confrontations" between the Turkashwand and the latter two tribes. During summer migrations to the higher elevations, the Turkashwand race northward to beat the Bairanwand and the Hassanwand to traditional Turkashwand summer pastures on the slopes of Mount Alwand (33-33N 50-12E) near Hamadan (34-28N 48-30E).

(U) The Lors have traditionally been enemies of the Bakhtiari.

(5) Sympathies and antipathies among leaders within each group

(U) The share-cropping, sedentary Lors, mostly Pish-Kuh, lease their land from wealthier Lors who, as a rule, evince little sympathy for their fellow tribesmen.

(6) Significant outside support, influence or control

(U) No concrete information indicates significant outside support, influence, or control over the Lors. It is known, however, that nomadic Lors of Ilam va Poshtkuh supplement their income by smuggling guns, opium, and other contraband from Iraq.

(7) (S/NOFORN) Potential willingness and capability for unconventional warfare against the Soviet Union

(S/NOFORN) Traditionally, the Lors have been among the fiercest of Iranian tribes, frequently preying on villages in Lorestan. During the reign of the former Shah's father, Reza Shah, the Lors frequently challenged the central government until they were finally decisively defeated. More recently, the Lors

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have engaged in fierce intertribal military confrontations over pasturage. Thus, they have preserved their traditional bellicosity and might offer resistance with small arms to invading Soviet forces.

d. Bakhtiariis(1) Name, location, number

(U) The predominantly Lori-speaking Bakhtiari Confederation (Il-e Bakhtiari) is estimated to number roughly 570,000 individuals (81,000 families) and is divided traditionally into the majority Haft Lang (Seven Legs/Tribes) and the minority Chahar Lang (Four Legs/Tribes). Since the end of the 19th century, however, the most significant division has been between the Ilkhani and Hajji Ilkhani, two tribal factions from which the paramount chiefs are selected. The term Bakhtiari refers also to the region through which the confederation ranges, stretching southward from Lorestan to Khuzestan and extending westward from Esfahan to within 50 miles of the Iraqi border, some 20,000 square miles (see figure 3). Their summer encampments, to which they probably migrate in late April, lie around Chahar Mahall va Bakhtiari (32-00N 50-00E) and Zard Kuh (35-39N 50-23E). They are traditionally pastoral nomads, planting crops in their winter and summer encampments which are harvested on their return. The winter encampments lie in the low hills along the narrow fringe of the northeast Khuzestan plain; intermontane valleys provide their summer pasture. The broad valleys at the western edge of the central plateau form summer pastures for some of the nomadic tribes as well as a permanent habitat for the sedentary village population. Permanent settlements are located throughout the region, except at the highest elevations.

(2) Social structure and dynamics

(U) The Bakhtiari are a hierarchical and segmented confederation. The basic unit of the society is the family. Next, ascending the hierarchy, are the white beards (rish safid), the headmen (kalantars), the chiefs (khans), and the paramount chiefs (ilkhans). Loyalty is strongest at the bottom and weakest at the top of the pyramid. Each of these groups is highly fractious and, at any level, male members may and do contend with the leader of the group. Although certain families have maintained themselves in influential positions, the role of leader is not necessarily inherited by sons from their fathers. Authority is retained by the leader's success in rewarding members of his group and in defending the group from rival groups at the same or at another level in the confederation hierarchy. Alliances and antagonisms among and between groups are transitory and today's ally may be tomorrow's enemy. If any feature, beyond an adherence to Shi'a Islam, unites all Bakhtiariis, it is an antagonism to the central authority (which might intrude on traditional Bakhtiari customs and privileges) and a resultant desire for internal autonomy.

(U) As noted, the Bakhtiari are pastoral nomads, herding sheep and goats and planting crops at each of their two seasonal encampments, harvesting the crops when they return. This traditional pattern is increasingly giving way in the face of modernization. In 1978, it was estimated that about 40 percent of the confederation lived in settled communities. In addition, the traditionally

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wealthiest families of the great khans live in the cities, especially Tehran, and educate their children abroad. The urban, educated, and wealthy Bakhtiari tend to be resented by the rural and nomadic elements of the confederation, the latter claiming that the former live ostentatiously and have little interest in the welfare of the confederation, and that the urbanized have abdicated their traditional obligations as khans. In addition, urbanized elements have redirected their loyalties from the family to the nation.

(3) Political organizations and key leaders

(U) No political parties can be identified within the Bakhtiari and traditional custom would work against the formation of such parties. However, individual Bakhtiari have played political roles in Iran. General Teimur Bakhtiar, until his exile in 1962, had served as military governor of Iran and later as head of SAVAK. He was assassinated in 1970. The Shah's last Prime Minister was Shahpour Bakhtiar, who is in exile abroad and attempting to organize a movement against Khomeini's government. Abbas Gholi Bakhtiar is another prominent tribal leader who served in Shahpour Bakhtiar's cabinet.

(4) Mutual sympathies and antipathies among groups

(U) Traditionally, the Turkic-speaking Qashqai have been enemies of the Bakhtiari, as have the neighboring Lori-speaking tribes.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) Shahpour Bakhtiar alleges that a close relationship exists between elements of his exile anti-Khomeini movement and the Sadarjaf and Naqshabandi factions of the Kurds, a coalition of the Baluchi, the Bakhtiari, the Fazali and Kaabi tribes of the Khuzestan Arabs, the Bovir Ahmadi (a Lori tribe), and the Qashqai inside Iran. Bakhtiar does admit, however, that the allegiance of the tribes inside Iran is maintained by a continual influx of money and supplies. Reportedly, the Qashqais have been slow to offer a firm commitment to participate in military actions. The former Prime Minister hopes that the Democratic Party of Kurdistan will remain neutral during any planned uprising.

(5) Sympathies and antipathies among leaders within each group

(U) There is no concrete information available to document mutual sympathies or antipathies between or among any leaders of the Bakhtiari. Although Abbas Gholi Bakhtiar served as Minister of Industries and Mines in the cabinet of Shahpour Bakhtiar, the familial and political relationship between the two is not known. As already stated, historically, Bakhtiari are contentious at all levels of the traditional hierarchy. Moreover, alliances and antagonisms are customarily transitory, so long-term clan factionalism or generations-long family blood feuds are not characteristic.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) Shahpour Bakhtiar reportedly has a central military staff planning anti-Khomeini actions and has appointed at least two subordinate military commanders: General Azzizollah Palizban, a Kurd who is responsible for Kurdistan and western Iran, and General Abdol Ali Zandieh, in charge of Baluchistan and eastern Iran.

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(U) A potential rival to Bakhtiar for leadership of the exiles is General Gholam Ali Oveisi, the martial law administrator of Tehran under the former Shah.

(6) Significant outside support, influence or control

(U) There appears to be no dominant outside support, influence or control over the Bakhtiari as a group.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) Shahpour Bakhtiar has received funds from outside sources. He has stated that the Iraqis have not provided the massive funds he had originally anticipated. In addition to the Iraqi Government, Bakhtiar has been in touch on occasion with other governments, including Saudi Arabia and Israel, neither of which has offered little more than sympathy.

(7) (S/NOFORN) Potential willingness and capability for unconventional warfare against the Soviet Union

(S/NOFORN) No evidence exists that Bakhtiaris are either willing or capable of engaging in unconventional warfare against invading Soviet forces. However, Bakhtiaris are traditionally warlike, both among themselves and against others. Since they have always sought to maintain their traditional customs and privileges, it seems likely that they would resist any group, including the Soviets (or other outside power) that sought to limit or deny them internal autonomy.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON) Former Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar, who alleges that he has an adequate military base from which to launch regular and irregular military action in Tehran, reportedly has given instructions that, when he takes military action against Khomeini, no disturbances are to take place along the Soviet border, lest the Soviets use the disturbances as a pretext to intervene in Iran.

4. ARABIC-SPEAKING GROUPS OF KHUZESTAN

(U) Although Arabs reside in other areas of Iran, only the Arabs of Khuzestan are relevant to the topic under study here.

(1) Name, location, number

(U) Khuzestan is made up of 2,200,000 inhabitants, or 6.5 percent of the total Iranian population. About two-thirds of the Khuzestanis or 1.5 million people, are ethnically Arab, and more than half of these are Shi'a Muslims. The rest adhere to the Sunni sect of Islam.

(U) The Arab population of Khuzestan is dispersed along the eastern and coastal parts of Khuzestan, especially in the Rud-e Kar Kheh Kur valley (31-31N 47-55E) and around the Gulf port cities (see figure 3). The coastal Arabs are predominantly Sunni. Khorramshah (30-25N 48-11E) is the center of Arab influence, and there are large numbers of Arabs living in Abadan (30-20N 48-11E) and Ahvaz (31-19N 48-42E). Most Arabs in Khuzestan continue to speak Arabic, although the use of Farsi has been mandatory in the schools and public media.

SECRET**(2) Social structure and dynamics**

(C) Khuzestani Arabs are primarily unskilled oilfield workers, nomadic herders, sedentary farmers, and fishermen. The traditional economy, based partly on agriculture and partly on herding, was disrupted by the development of Khuzestan's oilfields in the post World War II era. The Shah's effort to stimulate Khuzestan's agricultural development with oil revenues accumulated in the 1960s and 1970s had an additional and profoundly negative effect on the traditional Arab way of life. The establishment of a large irrigated agricultural area south of Dezful (32-23N 48-24E) displaced many Arabs from their ancestral homes, fields, and occupations. Although they were expected to relocate nearby and take jobs at the project, many could not adapt to the new system and abandoned it. The government was compelled to bring in farm workers from other regions.

(C) As a result of better education and improved health, Khuzestani Arabs did demand and still are demanding improvement in their socioeconomic status, including more opportunities for Arabs in the higher echelons of industry, the police, and the military forces.

(3) Political organizations and key leaders

(S/NOFORN) Increased Arab demands for economic equality, greater participation in local government, and the removal of Khomeini's Revolutionary Guards have spawned a number of political groupings, some of which are sponsored by influential local leaders. Shaykh Mohammad Tahir al-Shobeyr Khaghani, the most prominent Arab Sunni cleric in Khuzestan, has become a symbol of Arab dissidence. Shaykh Khaghani supports the Arab Struggler Front, an organization which claims thousands of adherents. Khaghani's support was initially Sunni and tribal but has since extended to Shi'a Arabs of the cities and oilfields. He has been under de facto house arrest in Qom since mid-July 1979. The only other Arab religious leader of comparative stature is Shaykh Karemi in Ahvaz who was a Khomeini-approved member of the constitutional convention.

(S/NOFORN) The Islamic Arab Revolutionary Front, formerly the National Front for the Liberation of Arabistan, is headed by "spokesman" Abdul Jafir al-Kabi. This organization does not have a tribal base and is leftist in orientation.

(S/NOFORN) Leaders of the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party of Iran have had some success in gaining support in the oil-producing areas, and presumably among the Arabs employed there. The organization is partisan, secular, and nontribal.

(C) In response to General Madani's arrest of Arab political activists in July 1979, two terrorist groups, "Black Wednesday" and "Saeqa" (action) were formed to carry on the Arabs' cause. These groups are miniscule in membership and indigenous to Khuzestan.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN) The "Solidarity Union of Ethnic Minorities" in Iran is a political organization embracing the Arabs in Khuzestan as well as Turks and Baluchis in other areas of Iran. As there has been little historical affinity among these ethnic groups the chances that such an umbrella organization will succeed are minimal.

SECRET**(4) Mutual sympathies and antipathies among groups**

(C) The Khuzestani Arabs are sympathetic to the demands for political and cultural autonomy articulated by Shaykh Khaghani. These include increased government investment of oil revenues "on the people of Khuzestan"; a larger representation in the national cabinet; a preference for Arabs seeking positions in local administration; and the use of Arabic as an official language in the schools. Most Arabs share Khaghani's contempt for the arrogant and arbitrary behavior of Khomeini's "Guardians of the Revolution" and the anti-Arab proclivities of Admiral Ahmad Madani, the regime's controversial provincial governor. Despite Admiral Madani's harsh measures, some local shaykhs and tribal leaders ostensibly support the government.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN) The Islamic Arab Revolutionary Front, which has links with both Iraq and extremist factions in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), supports self-determination and possibly secession, whereas Khaghani's Arab Strugglers Front has taken a moderate approach in seeking "lawful Arab rights" within the present regime. Although the Arab population sympathizes with the aims of indigenous terrorist groups, it will not support their activities given the apparent impossibility of achieving desired goals in the short term. Nevertheless, Arab grievances over labor conditions, unemployment, and economic confusion have contributed to disturbances and sabotage in the Khuzestan oil fields and transport sectors. Even the moderate Shaykh Khaghani threatened to interfere with oil production if Arab demands were not met.

(5) Sympathies and antipathies among leaders within each group

(C) Although they share some of the same long-term goals, Arab leaders prefer to act independently of one another. There is no evidence that Shaykh Khaghani and Abdul Jafir al-Kabi have coordinated their activities against Madani and the Revolutionary Guards. Shaykh Khaghani, whose basis of support is essentially tribal and religious, has a parochial outlook and moderate political views. Al-Kabi, on the other hand, propounds secular and radical political views which are similar to those held by other Iranian leftists. Most of the remaining tribal leaders have divided their support between Shaykh Khaghani and Governor Madani. Lesser tribal shaykhs under Madani's patronage act as intermediaries with the government in return for the preservation of limited powers in their domains.

(6) Significant outside support, influence or control

(U) The present-day Khuzestani Arabs have historically strong cultural and kinship ties to Arabs in Iraq and the Gulf states. The cultural ties are reinforced by Arabic language radio and other information media emanating from these countries.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN) The Islamic Arabic Revolutionary Front actively solicits outside domestic and foreign support. The organization hopes to open contacts with dissident Kurds and Iranian leftist groups, and already receives considerable support from Iraq.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN) There is evidence that the Baghdad government is itself arming the Khuzestani Arabs. The latter have numerous links to the Iraqi side of the border which has been used traditionally as a channel for the

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movement of arms. (Some weapons presumably have been stolen from Iranian military bases in the area and others have been smuggled into Khuzestan via the Gulf coast.)

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN) Tehran has expressed concern about possible Afghan, Libyan, and Palestinian activities among the Arab tribes.

(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN) Moscow has been criticized for using minority language broadcasts to proselytize among the tribes.

(7) (S/NOFORN) Potential willingness and capability for unconventional warfare against the Soviet Union

(S/NOFORN) The Khuzestani Arabs lack the coherent leadership and tribal unity necessary to amass an indigenous force to counter invading Soviet forces and lines of communication. Madani has been successful in disarming many terrorist groups and arresting or exiling potentially dangerous tribal leaders and dissidents.

(C) Khuzestani Arabs are capable of harassing an invading army by committing isolated acts of sabotage similar to those which disrupted oil and gas production in July 1979.

5. CONCLUSIONS

(S/NOFORN) Much of the information desired to assess the willingness and capability of the tribes and ethnic groups to engage in unconventional warfare against invading Soviet forces and lines of communication is not available. Some inferential judgments, however, may be made.

(S/NOFORN) The various non-Persian tribes and ethnic groups of western Iran have long histories of dissidence against the central government in Tehran. At times, this opposition has escalated into large-scale armed rebellion. In general, tribes and ethnic groups are most hostile to interference in their traditional way of life and in their particular area of control and seek varying degrees of autonomy. But few coordinated efforts, across tribal or ethnic groups, for common goals have been made.

(S/NOFORN) Thus, a potential willingness to oppose invading Soviet forces probably exists in all groups previously described. Several, such as the Azarbayjanis and the Shahsavan, have had negative historical experiences with the Soviet Union. But statements or opinions of tribal and ethnic leaders concerning the Soviet Union today are generally not known.

(S/NOFORN) The capability of potentially hostile tribal and ethnic elements to engage in unconventional warfare against invading Soviet forces is extremely limited. They could not be expected to achieve sufficient unity to coordinate oppositionist efforts over a wide area or pose a military threat to advancing Soviets. They could, however, by their limited harassment capabilities, marginally delay these advances. Only the Kurds, perhaps, might have adequate firepower and combat experience to inflict some degree of significant damage on Soviet forces and lines of communication.

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(S/NOFORN) More detailed and current data on leaders, political attitudes, and military capabilities are needed to make accurate assessments on tribal unconventional warfare potential.

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