

Iran Is Closer To Imploding
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Although Iran is an Islamic dictatorship that controls its news, certain things are leaking out. The revolts in the Arab world are making them very nervous.

\225 Disloyal Opposition. The opposition leaders during the disputed 2009 presidential election did not mean to undo the Islamic Revolution. The millions who voted for the opposition just wanted a better and less pious president. However, after the government set goons on the peaceful demonstrators in the streets, the world witnessed a major gulf between the opposition and the power elites. The opposition was beginning to look like a revolution against the \223Islamic\224 part of the Islamic Revolution, and was brutally put down by the government.

Now, Tehran\222s chief prosecutor has announced that no opposition leader may leave the country\227and they may all be put on trial for criminal sedition. The majority of opposition figures and people arrested in the streets have been charged with being \223mohareb,\224 or fighting against God.\224 Was the god they were fighting against Ahmadinejad or the Ayatollah?

\225 Islamic or Military Dictatorship? For quite a while, President Ahmadinejad was the fair-haired boy of the clerics\227especially Supreme Ayatolla Khamenei, who declared the election results before anyone had even counted votes. But there are cracks in this relationship. There are credible rumors that the Ayatollah is an opium addict whose addiction has dimmed his mind; and there are even more credible rumors that Ahmadinejad has used state money to maintain a thuggish military force devoted to him. We could well see an openly fascist dictatorship emerging and it is difficult to know how much \223Islamic\224 will be left in this revolutionary government.

\225 The Nuclear Project. The government has been putting out the word that all nuclear physicists from around the world are welcome to work in Iran. How would such hired guns know that they will not be targeted for assassination as quite a few others have been? And how do they know that they will not be held hostage if the government needs to find someone to blame for equipment failures? Russian technicians have already fled the country for that reason; the centrifuges do not work right. And somebody has let loose a complex computer virus against their nuclear program.

\225 No More Bread and Circuses. The Iranian government (mostly under Ahmadinejad\222s initiative) has been buying off the poor with subsidies. Bread, gasoline, and heating fuels have been kept inexpensive through government largess. Now, as sanctions and mismanagement bite their budgets, they are cutting those subsidies. Fuel price increases affect everyone\227none of whom may raise their own prices, which are state-controlled. Truck and taxi drivers and bread sellers are on strike. As people protest, the government sends out their paramilitary goons to beat up merchants who are \223overcharging.\224 An Iranian winter with insufficient heating and cooking fuel and unaffordable (and badly refined) gasoline brought down the late Shah\222s government 30 years ago. Does history repeat?

\225 Islamic Scholarship. The government is shutting down university humanities departments because western literature, history, and sociology are \223un-Islamic.\224 However, they are inviting computer hackers (Wikileaks) to help them spy on their people and solve their computer worm problem.

\225 Culture Wars. All TV cooking shows have been cancelled except for those that teach Iranian cooking. Iranians should not eat \223foreign cuisine.\224 No more Iron Chefs, alas.

\225 Islamic Human Rights. Iran\222s most famous prizewinning filmmaker, Jafar Panahi, in prison for six years for \223insulting the Islamic Republic,\224 is barred from making movies for 20 years. Two young American men are still in prison for supposedly crossing the Iranian border while hiking. A rash of arrests of \223spies for the Zionists\224 and some 80 supposedly \223hardline Christians\224 frighten the already alarmed religious minorities.

\225 Execution Binge. So far this year, more than 80 people (mostly Kurds) have been

executed by hanging after bouts of torture. Fourteen other Kurdish activists are on death row. Life in Iran seems increasingly desperate.

If the brave opposition out there in the streets can get the support of labor unions (particularly oil workers) and the merchants in the bazaar, they can take down this government.

681 words

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