

Four die as Iran purge continues

From Liz Thurgood
in Tehran

After reports of new upheavals in the provinces, a second group of generals has been summarily tried and executed in Iran.

The four generals, responsible for some of the bloodier incidents in recent months, were shot by firing squad yesterday. General Motamedi and his assistant, General Malek, had been found guilty by an Islamic court sitting in secret, of ordering last month's massacre in Qazvin, during which 600 people are believed to have died. The other generals who died were General Parvis Amin Afshar, and General Hossein Hosseini.

Unlike last Thursday's executions, the generals were allowed to write farewell letters to their families before being shot in the courtyard of Ayatollah Khomeini's headquarters as a girls' school in East Tehran.

The Prime Minister, Dr Mehdi Bazargan, is believed to be deeply embarrassed by the executions. Eight hours later, his staff were "still making inquiries".

It was the second time that the Ayatollah's headquarters have neglected to advise the Prime Minister of an impending execution and comes only two days after Dr Bazargan warned that the Islamic people's courts were soon to come under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister's office.

The country's new Chief of Staff, Major-General Mohammad Veli Shahrani, said yesterday that the purge of monarchist officers had not ended.

He also admitted that only 50 per cent of Army deserters had reported back to their barracks.

The executions coincided with reports of a new separatist movement in Baluchistan, south-east Iran. Baluchistan, poor in natural resources and short of water, is considered particularly sensitive because of a similar movement across the border in Pakistan.

Similar reports have emerged from the western province of Kurdistan, where rebel tribesmen, reportedly taking advantage of the country's civil strife, have attacked and occupied several gendarmerie posts. Attempts have also apparently been made to set up a Kurdish people's radio station, and the provincial capital of Sanadaj, young men armed with G-3s are said to have captured the new chief of police.

The Government has warned that independence for Kurdistan is out of the question.

First violence has been reported in Rezaieh (recently renamed Urmieh) where 14 people were killed and five wounded in a fierce battle about the distribution of weapons looted from the local police station.

Ayatollah Khomeini has threatened to crush "the armed bandits" with the same force he used to defeat the Shah. It is not clear whether the forces behind the two separatist movements are genuinely Kurdish and Baluchi, and if there is any foreign backing. A fresh wave of armed robberies has also been reported from the oil cities of Ahwaz and Ahwaz in south Iran.

In Tehran, General Gharani, yesterday acknowledged that the Iranian Armed Forces needed Western expertise. He said Iran cannot do without help abroad. We have between 60-70 F-14 Tomcat jet fighters and many other sophisticated weapons for which we will need spare parts and technical advice.

The new Revolutionary Worker Councils, meanwhile, have taken over offices in the Government and private sectors. One seven-man council has been set up in the country's largest publishing house, Etelaat, and one of its first decisions was to dismiss 20 foreign employees and warn the publisher, Mr Farhad Masoudi, not to set foot inside his property again.

A group of Palestinian and Iranian guerrillas has reportedly been formed to bring the Shah back to Iran, where he would stand trial for the crimes he has committed. The Government has also increased its efforts to corner the Shah.

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Article - Untitled Article

Reuter ~~adds~~ from Washing-
ton: The United States is tem-
porarily closing its consulates
in three Iranian cities—Tabriz,
Shiraz, and Isfahan. But the
Embassy in Tehran will remain
open.

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