

# In Iran, Centrifuges – And Centrifugal Forces

by Hugh Fitzgerald



**We think so frequently** of Iran's worrisome threats to many of its neighbors, whether to Israel through its nuclear program or to Sunni Arab states through its relentless push to create a Shi'a crescent from the Gulf to the Mediterranean, using a network of proxies and allies, including the Houthis in Yemen, the Kata'ib Hezbollah militia in Iraq, the Alawite-controlled army of Bashar Assad in Syria, and Hezbollah in Lebanon, that we sometimes forget how threatened the Iranian state is from within.

Part of the threat to Iran's regime comes from a population increasingly disaffected because of the mismanagement and corruption of the government. Protesters raging against the money sent to support adventures abroad chant "Death to Palestine," "Help us, not Gaza," and "Leave Syria alone and deal with Iran." Money sent abroad to support foreign allies

now enrages Iranians, ever more so as the sanctions reimposed by the Trump Administration have sent the economy into free fall, with the revenues from oil sales down by 96%, and the rial having lost more than 90% of its value in just two years. Sixty million Iranians, out of a total population of 83 million, are now living below the poverty line. The unhinged cruelty of the regime, desperate to assert itself against any sign of dissidence, was recently demonstrated by the execution of two of its wrestling champions on trumped-up charges.

But along with all this economic misery leading to political disaffection, there is another internal weakness that must worry the rulers in Tehran. It threatens not only the regime, but the very existence of the country. It is the result of the ethnic divisions within Iran that constantly challenge the rule of the majority Persians. For fewer than half of the Iranian population consists of Persians; there are also Azeris, Baluchis, Kurds, and Arabs, all of whom harbor separatist hopes. This was brought home recently by the hanging of a Baluch separatist. The report on his execution is here: "Iran hangs Baloch militant for killing of two Revolutionary Guards," [Jihad Watch](#).