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securely in the driver's seat, and seem likely to remain in power.

During the past four years, Khomeini has weathered an inconclusive border war with Iraq, an exodus of middle-class technocrats, political factionalism, a stricken economy, and a terrorist campaign by the leftist Mujahedeen-al-Khalq that took the lives of several senior government officials.

Systematic repression of dissent—there have been 4,500 documented executions since Khomeini took power in 1979—has been vital to the regime's survival. Another key: effective "state-building." Khomeini quickly replaced the Shah's bureaucrats with loyalists; he established new quasi-governmental organizations, such as the 150,000-man Revolutionary Guards and thousands of neighborhood watch committees. His Islamic Republican Party controls the *Majlis* (parliament); the nation's network of 100,000 mullahs oversees everything from the revolutionary courts to the writing of school textbooks.

Now the regime is showing signs of pragmatism. Khomeini has promised to ease up on repression. His regime has abandoned its policy of slashing oil exports to reduce dependence on foreigners. Oil sales have more than tripled since last year; the economy is beginning to recover from 40 percent unemployment and 70 percent annual inflation.

Sciolino sees few threats to Khomeini's rule. Teheran's policy of "neither East nor West" has kept the superpowers at bay; trade with the Third World has increased. The war with Iraq seems to be turning in Iran's favor; it will shore up national unity as long as it lasts.

Even the death of the 83-year-old Khomeini probably will not topple the revolutionary regime. An heir-apparent, Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, has already been named, and a special council of mullahs will pick a replacement if Hussein's leadership falters. Sciolino adds that Westerners should not count on an early transition. Longevity is a family trait: The Ayatollah's older brother is 98.

India's Sikhs

"Sikh Power" by Kushwant Singh, in *across the board* (June 1983), 845 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

In October 1982, several thousand radical Sikhs stormed India's Parliament House in New Delhi, killing four policemen. That incident, writes Singh, former editor of the *Hindustan Times* and a Sikh himself, marks a dangerous escalation of a restive minority's quest for greater autonomy.

The Sikhs first flourished as a religious sect during the 15th century under the Guru Nanak, who offered a casteless, monotheistic alternative to Hinduism. By the 18th century, after long wars with the Moguls to their east, the Sikhs had carved out their own kingdom in the fertile Punjab region of northwest India. They enjoyed privileged status after 1849 under the British, who granted them a large measure of autonomy in return for military service. But the creation of Moslem Pakistan in 1947 split the Punjab in two, leaving one million Indians dead and

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A Sikh chief and soldier (c. 1825–50). The Sikhs' proud warrior tradition dates to 1606, when they took up arms after their Guru was executed by the Moguls.

transforming once-prosperous Sikh farmers into landless drifters.

Today, 30 percent of the Sikh population is scattered around the world. Most of the remaining 13 million, two percent of the Indian population, have gathered in the Punjab *Suba* (state). They are again a prosperous people, thanks in part to government irrigation and educational projects that have helped make the Punjab India's breadbasket. Little now distinguishes Sikh males from their Hindu countrymen, says Singh, apart from their beards and their reputation for aggressiveness.

But Sikh discontent has festered, drawing on a tradition of independence and fueled by a new religious fundamentalism paralleling Islamic and Hindu resurgence. The Sikhs are demanding more control over the economic development of their state, an expansion of its territory, and guarantees of continued Sikh control should the sect lose its majority status.

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi made a few minor concessions (for example, banning meat, tobacco, and liquor stores from the Sikh holy city of Amritsar) last February, but has refused to budge on larger issues. If she fails to grant the Sikhs more power over their own destiny, Singh fears, Sikh radical separatists will gain the upper hand in Punjab. That would set the stage for a showdown and, possibly, bloodshed rivaling the Hindu-Moslem carnage of 1947.