

Potential Ethnic Conflicts In Iran

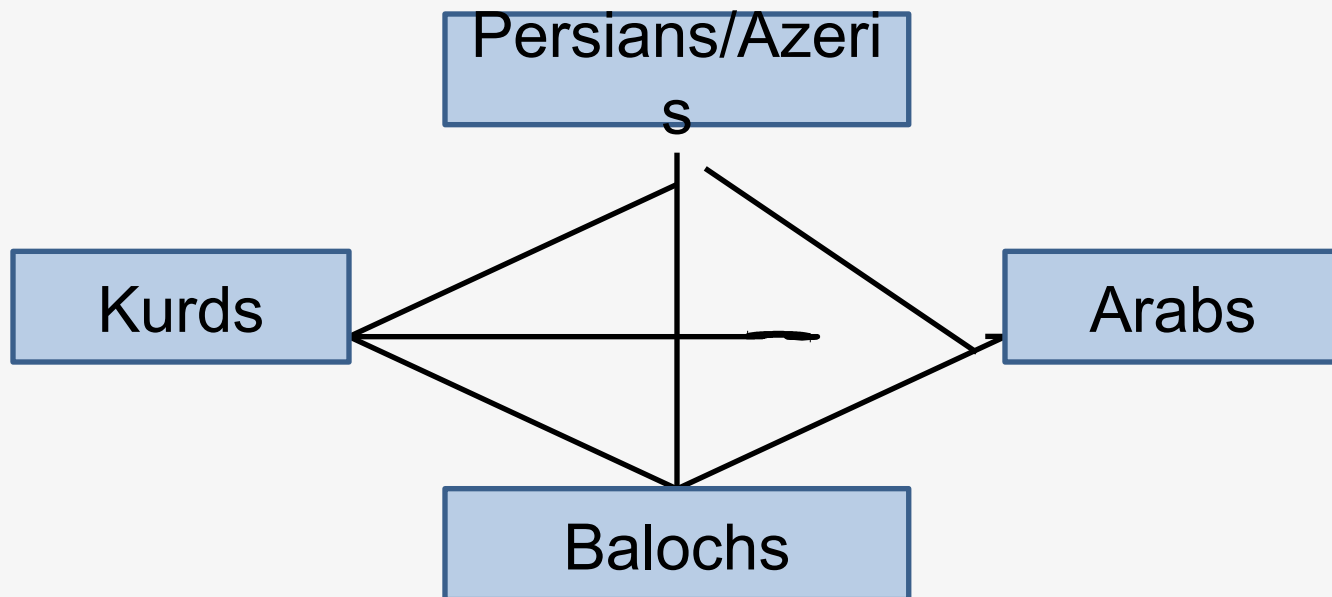


17.523 Ethnic Conflict In World
Politics

Matthew Houston

Possible Conflicts

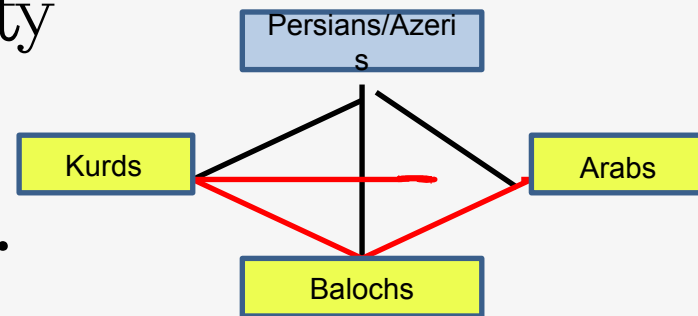
Focusing on the Persian/Azeri alliance, the Kurds, the Arabs, and the Baloch, there are 7 potential conflicts.



Conflict Between Minority Groups

Conflict between minority groups (Kurds, Arabs, and Balochs) is unlikely.

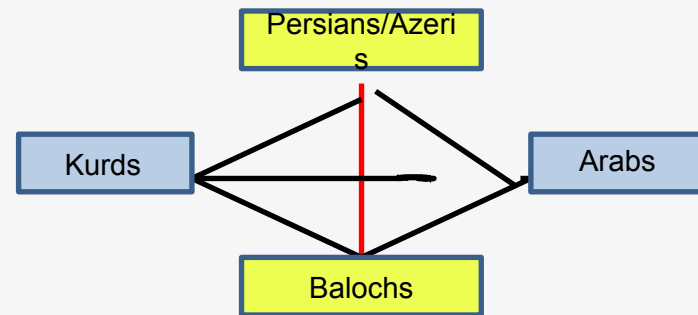
These groups are geographically isolated, electorally insignificant, and don't compete for resources.



Persian/Azeri-Baloch Conflict

Balochistan is one of the least developed regions in Iran—
Unemployment is rampant.

A strong nationalist movement has participated in almost constant violence against the Iranian



Baloch extremists
(www.balochwarna.com)

Persian/Azeri-Baloch Conflict

Pakistan supports Iran's repression of the Baloch and has participated in military crackdowns.

In 2007 Iran built a military base in Balochistan emphasizing the violent character of the Baloch-Persian/Azeri conflict.

Potential for Violent Conflict: High



Low



Medium

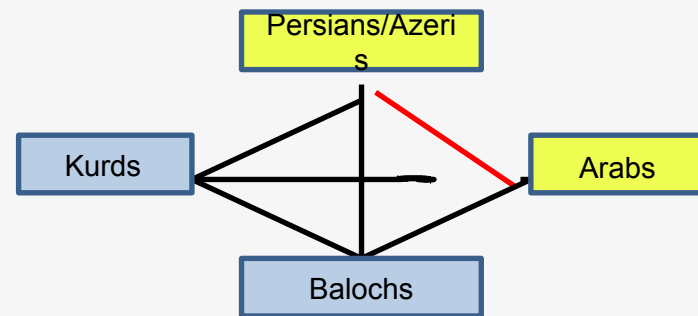


High

Persian/Azeri-Arab Conflict

Although Arab nations tend to distrust Iran, Iranian Arabs enjoy good relations with the Persians and Azeris.

Cultural similarities including a shared religion and strong family loyalties, further strengthen ties



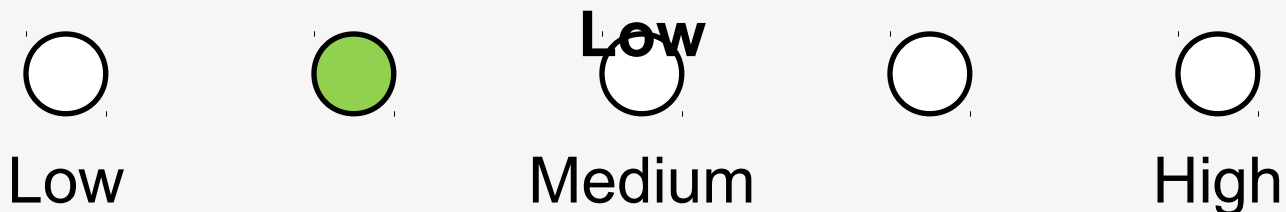
Iranian Arab members of Iran's military
(www.skynews.com *Iran's Military Might Photo Gallery*)

Persian/Azeri-Arab Conflict

External pressures, especially from Arabs in Iraq, have increased tensions since Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Iranian Arabs occupy oil rich territories, which has caused tension in the past and will likely continue to do so in the future.

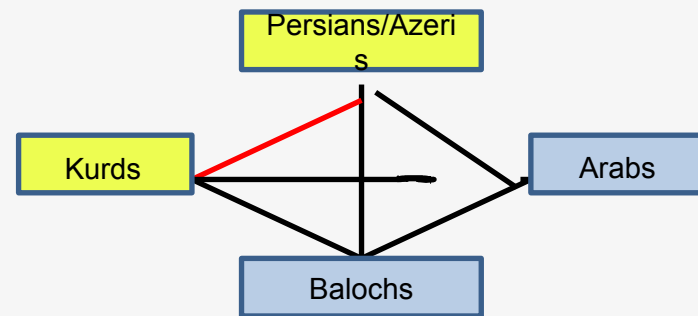
Potential for Violent Conflict: Medium-



Persian/Azeri-Kurdish Conflict

Iran's Kurds are active participants in the political process and are often associated with the reform movement.

Differential modernization exists with the Kurds living primarily in rural



*Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan's Logo
(www.pdki.org)*

Persian/Azeri-Kurdish Conflict

Historically the Kurds have become violent when the central government is weak or threatened.

International pressures are mixed. The United States desires regional stability and is unlikely to support a Kurdish rebellion. Israel is rumored to have programs designed to exploit ethnic fissures between the Kurds and Iran's government.

Potential for Violent Conflict: Medium-High

Factor	Level
Iran's government	Low
United States	Medium
Israel	High

Persian-Azeri Conflict

The Persian Azeri alliance has been stressed, by cultural differences between the two groups (language and history).

This stress has been evidenced by several riots.

However, strong Azeri integration into Iran's government makes violent conflict unlikely.

Potential for Violent Conflict: Medium-



Low



Medium



High

Religious Considerations

Within Iran religious affiliation is highly correlated with ethnic conflict.

Both groups with a high potential for violence (The Kurds and The Balochs) practice Sunni Islam; while, the predominantly Shiite Arabs enjoy a relatively peaceful relationship with the Persian/Azeri block.

As such it is likely that reducing ethnic violence in Iran will involve a

Questions
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