

revolution

Spiritual Vacuum

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Officially, there are 1.1 million drug addicts in the nation of Iran. It is in fact illegal to say there are more. But in a recent international conference on addiction, a spokesperson for Iran's Interior Ministry publicly admitted the number is more like 10 million, or around 1 in 7 Iranians. With a cheap and plentiful supply of narcotics from across the border in Afghanistan (responsible for 93% of the world's opium), the disillusioned youth in Iran have proved a fertile breeding ground for a massive epidemic. Though possessing and using narcotics is illegal, the dangers posed by the rapid spread of the AIDS virus have forced the government to launch an emergency campaign to distribute free needles throughout the country. At the same time, billions are being spent to construct a massive wall between the Iranian and Afghan border which is 13 feet high and 16 feet wide.



The wall has become somewhat symbolic of Iran's futile attempts to protect its citizens from outside influence. No matter what they do, they only succeed in increasing the demand for whatever

it is they have most recently outlawed. One begins to get the feeling that a majority of the social problems in Iran are actually silent protests against the government's oppressive restrictions of personal freedom. While Iran's young people may not be allowed to march in the streets, they have found other ways to voice their discontent with the current regime, which are far more difficult to control.

Point of No Return

Following the 1979 revolution, the Mullahs established a shadow government called the Guardian Council which essentially ran the country. In every way, this was the revolution: religion and the state were now in sync. But what