

LETTERS TO THE TIMES



TAYLOR JONES, Augusta, Ga.

President Mohammad Khatami

Iran Policy

■ The report on Iran by Robin Wright (Opinion, Feb. 27) was fine, but she only paid passing reference to the third force, the "guardians of the revolution," ostensibly under orders of the conservative clergy. The problem with them can succinctly be explained by an analogy in the sequel to Orwell's "Animal Farm," where the guardian dogs terrorize both the ruling and servant animals.

The collective "guardians of the revolution"—Basij, Pasdaran and Hezbollah—are out of control, and followers of both liberal [President Mohammad] Khatami and conservative [Ayatollah Ali] Khamenei fear them, even for their lives. An understanding of this danger will aid us in formulating policy toward Iran.

RICHARD N. FRYE
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■ With the result of the recent national election in Iran overwhelmingly defeating the hard-line clerics, this would be the perfect opportunity for the U.S. government to attempt to normalize relations with Iran for several reasons—the large numbers of Iranians living in the U.S., particularly California, and also to blunt any further aggression by Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

GARY TRAXLER
Oxnard

Scientologists in France

■ So the French want to disband the Church of Scientology (Feb. 29). Which of the other 172 "sects" on the French list will be next? The French action is a blatant human rights violation that is opposed by many religious and human rights groups. The French government claims the right to dissolve religious organizations that have never been charged with a crime and never provided with due process of law. Apparently the French want the government to protect them from "false" and "dangerous" religion.

I used to think that Europeans were cynical about politics and would not trust their politicians to tell them which religions were good or bad for them. Maybe times have changed.

ALAN J. REINACH, Director
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■ As a Scientologist who left France 10 years ago because of my country's totalitarian bent, I know that discrimination there against religions such as mine (not to mention Jews, Baptists, Mormons, Muslims and others) is fomented primarily by an irresponsible media. While I am fortunate enough to have a loving (non-Scientology) family whom I visit every year, many of my Scientology friends still living in France must constantly reassure their families that they are OK after the latest wild stories and preposterous accusations appear. And some have even lost their jobs simply because of their religion. These are real people—among the most decent I know—and this is real intolerance that is affecting every aspect of their lives. Religious discrimination and bigotry are alive and well in my country.

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