



Viewpoints Special Edition

# The Iranian Revolution at 30

*The Middle East Institute  
Washington, DC*





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***Viewpoints* Special Edition**

# **The Iranian Revolution at 30**

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## Viewpoints: 1979

The year 1979 was among the most tumultuous, and important, in the history of the modern Middle East. The Middle East Institute will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of these events in 2009 by launching a year-long special series of our acclaimed publication, *Viewpoints*, that will offer perspectives on these events and the influence which they continue to exert on the region today. Each special issue of *Viewpoints* will combine the diverse commentaries of policymakers and scholars from around the world with a robust complement of statistics, maps, and bibliographic information in order to encourage and facilitate further research. Each special issue will be available, free of charge, on our website, [www.mideasti.org](http://www.mideasti.org).

In the first of these special editions of *Viewpoints*, we turn our attention to the Iranian Revolution, one of the most important — and influential — events in the region's recent history. This issue's contributors reflect on the significance of the Revolution, whose ramifications continue to echo through the Middle East down to the present day.



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*Viewpoints*: The Iranian Revolution



March

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# The Iranian Revolution at 30

A Special Edition of *Viewpoints*

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## Dedication

*Andrew Parasiliti*

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It is only fitting that “The Iranian Revolution at 30” begin with an introductory essay by R.K. Ramazani and that this project be dedicated to him. For 55 years, Professor Ramazani has been a teacher and mentor to many scholars and practitioners of the Middle East. His body of work on Iran is unrivalled in its scope and originality. Many of his articles and books on Iranian foreign policy are standard works.

For over a quarter century, Dr. Ramazani also has written with eloquence and conviction of the need for the United States and Iran to end their estrangement and begin direct diplomatic talks. Ramazani has no illusions about overcoming three decades of animosity, but he believes that reconciling US-Iran differences is vital to resolving America’s other strategic challenges in the Middle East — including in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — and to bringing sustainable peace and security to the region.

Professor Ramazani’s service to both the Middle East Institute and to the University of Virginia has been recognized time and again. As one of Dr. Ramazani’s former students, and as a former director of programs at MEI, I can personally attest to his deep commitment to both institutions. His life-long contribution to the Middle East Institute was recognized at MEI’s Annual Conference in October 1997, when he was presented with the Middle East Institute Award. Currently, Dr. Ramazani serves with distinction on *The Middle East Journal’s* Board of Advisory Editors. At the University of Virginia, his teaching and scholarship embodied Thomas Jefferson’s precept for the University that “Here we are not afraid to follow truth, wherever it may lead, nor tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it.”

It is in that spirit that this volume is dedicated to R. K. Ramazani.



*Andrew Parasiliti is Principal, Government Affairs-International, at The BGR Group in Washington, DC. From 2001-2005, he was foreign policy advisor to US Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE). Dr. Parasiliti received a Ph.D. from the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, and an MA from the University of Virginia. He has served twice as director of programs at the Middle East Institute.*

### **A Chronology of Dr. Ramazani's articles in *The Middle East Journal***

"Afghanistan and the USSR," Vol. 12, No. 2 (Spring 1958)

"Iran's Changing Foreign Policy: A Preliminary Discussion," Vol. 24, No. 4 (Autumn 1970)

"Iran's Search for Regional Cooperation," Vol. 30, No. 2 (Spring 1976)

"Iran and The United States: An Experiment in Enduring Friendship," Vol. 30, No. 3 (Summer 1976)

"Iran and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," Vol. 32, No. 4 (Autumn 1978)

"Who Lost America? The Case of Iran," Vol. 36, No. 1 (Winter 1982)

"Iran's Foreign Policy: Contending Orientations," Vol. 43, No. 2 (Spring 1989)

"The Islamic Republic of Iran: The First 10 Years (Editorial)," Vol. 43, No. 2 (Spring 1989)

"Iran's Foreign Policy: Both North and South," Vol. 46, No. 3 (Summer 1992)

"The Shifting Premise of Iran's Foreign Policy: Towards a Democratic Peace?" Vol. 52, No. 2 (Spring 1998)

"Ideology and Pragmatism in Iran's Foreign Policy," Vol. 58, No. 4 (Autumn 2004)



**Former MEI President Roscoe Suddarth presents Dr. Ramazani with the 1997 Middle East Institute Award.**

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# Understanding Iranian Foreign Policy

*R.K. Ramazani*

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Understanding Iran's foreign policy is the key to crafting sensible and effective policies toward Iran and requires, above all, a close analysis of the profound cultural and psychological contexts of Iranian foreign policy behavior.

For Iran, the past is always present. A paradoxical combination of pride in Iranian culture and a sense of victimization have created a fierce sense of independence and a culture of resistance to dictation and domination by any foreign power among the Iranian people. Iranian foreign policy is rooted in these widely held sentiments.

## *THE ROOTS OF IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY*

Iranians value the influence that their ancient religion, Zoroastrianism, has had on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. They take pride in 30 centuries of arts and artifacts, in the continuity of their cultural identity over millennia, in having established the first world state more than 2,500 years ago, in having organized the first international society that respected the religions and cultures of the people under their rule, in having liberated the Jews from Babylonian captivity, and in having influenced Greek, Arab, Mongol, and Turkish civilizations — not to mention having influenced Western culture indirectly through Iranian contributions to Islamic civilization.

At the same time, however, Iranians feel they have been oppressed by foreign powers throughout their history. They remember that Greeks, Arabs, Mongols, Turks, and most recently Saddam Husayn's forces all invaded their homeland. Iranians also remember that the British and Russian empires exploited them economically, subjugated them politically, and invaded and occupied their country in two World Wars.

The facts that the United States aborted Iranian democratic aspirations in 1953 by overthrowing the government of Prime Minister Muhammad Musaddeq, returned the autocratic Shah to the throne, and thereafter dominated the country for a quarter century is deeply seared into Iran's collective memory. Likewise, just as the American overthrow of Musaddeq was etched into the Iranian psyche, the Iranian taking of American hostages in 1979 was engraved into the American consciousness. Iran's relations with the United States have been shaped not only by a mutual psychological trauma but also by collective memory on the Iranian side of 70 years of amicable Iran-US relations.



*R.K. Ramazani is Professor Emeritus of Government and Foreign Affairs at the University of Virginia. He has published extensively on the Middle East, especially on Iran and the Persian Gulf, since 1954, and has been consulted by various US administrations, starting with that of former President Jimmy Carter during the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979-1981.*

In spite of these historical wounds, Iranians remember American support of their first attempt to establish a democratic representative government in 1905-1911; American championing of Iran's rejection of the British bid to impose a protectorate on Iran after World War I; American support of Iran's resistance to Soviet pressures for an oil concession in the 1940s; and, above all else, American efforts to protect Iran's independence and territorial integrity by pressuring the Soviet Union to end its occupation of northern Iran at the end of World War II.

#### A TRADITION OF PRUDENT STATECRAFT

Contrary to the Western and Israeli depiction of Iranian foreign policy as "irrational," Iran has a tradition of prudent statecraft that has been created by centuries of experience in international affairs beginning with Cyrus the Great more than 2,000 years ago.

To be sure, Iran has made many mistakes in its long diplomatic history. In the post-revolutionary period, and particularly in the early years of the Islamic revolution, Iran's foreign policy was often characterized by provocation, agitation, subversion, taking of hostages, and terrorism. Most recently, Iran's international image was tarnished by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's imprudent rhetoric about Israel and the Holocaust in disregard of the importance of international legitimacy and the Iranian-Islamic dictum of *hekmata* (wisdom).

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**In attempting to negotiate with Iran, pressures and threats, direct or indirect, military, economic or diplomatic, can prove highly counterproductive.**

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Yet it is also important to acknowledge instances where post-revolutionary Iranian foreign policy has been moderate and constructive. Ahmadinejad's predecessor, President Mohammad Khatami, vehemently denounced violence and terrorism, promoted *détente*, pressed for "dialogue among civilizations," improved Iran's relations with its Persian Gulf neighbors, reversed Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's *fatwa* against author Salman Rushdie, bettered relations with Europe, softened Iran's adversarial attitude toward Israel, and, above all, offered an "olive branch" to the United States. His foreign policy restored the tradition of *hekmata* (wisdom) to Iran's statecraft.

#### LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

There are valuable lessons to be learned by countries that deal with Iran, especially those powers that are quarreling with Iran over the crucial nuclear issue.

First, Iran's statecraft is inextricably linked to the expectation of *respect*. In attempting to negotiate with Iran, pressures and threats, direct or indirect, military, economic or diplomatic, can prove highly counterproductive. When the United States says "all the options are on the table" in the nuclear dispute, for example, Iran views this as a threat of military force that must be resisted. Or when the six powers issued their joint proposal to Iran for discussion, as they did in Geneva on July 19, 2008, with an August 2 deadline for an Iranian response, Iran understood it as an ultimatum that could

be followed by the imposition of greater sanctions.

While Iran's reaction to the Geneva meeting, which included the United States for the first time, was generally positive, Iranian leaders said enough to demonstrate that they expect respect and reject threats. In addressing the Iranian people on the critical nuclear issue on July 17, 2008, the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i, rejected threats from the United States, saying that "[t]he Iranian people do not like threats. We will not respond to threats in any way." Yet he specifically praised the European powers because "they respect the Iranian people. They stress that they respect the rights of the Iranian people."

Following Khamene'i, on July 28, 2008 President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told the anchor of NBC Nightly News, "You know full well that nobody can threaten the Iranian people and pose [a] deadline they expect us to meet." He rejected the August 2 deadline on the same day and said on August 3, "Iran has always been willing to solve the long-standing crisis over its disputed nuclear program through negotiations." Reportedly, Iran would make its own proposal in its own time, perhaps on August 5.

Second, Iran's interlocutors would benefit significantly if they also understood Iran's *negotiating style*. Created, molded, and honed by long diplomatic experience, Iranian diplomats combine a range of tactics in dealing with their counterparts: testing, probing, procrastinating, exaggerating, bluffing, *ad-hocing*, and counter-threatening when threatened.

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Third, foreign powers such as the United States should recognize the fierce sense of independence and resistance of the Iranian people, regardless of political and ideological differences, to direct or indirect pressure, dictation, and the explicit or implied threat of force. With these points in mind, American leaders can still draw creatively on the historic reservoir of Iranian goodwill toward the United States to craft initiatives that will be well received in Iran.

#### *THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE UNITED STATES*

The United States should recognize the legitimacy of the Iranian Revolution unequivocally. The United States should also assess realistically Iran's projection of power in the Middle East, particularly in the Persian Gulf, where Iran seeks acknowledgment of its role as a major player. Thirdly, the US administration should reconsider its reliance on more than three decades of containment and sanctions, which have not weakened the regime, but have grievously harmed the Iranian people, whom America claims to support. Finally, the United States should also talk to Iran unconditionally. On the nuclear issue in particular, the United States should take up Iran on its explicit commitment to uranium enrichment solely for peaceful purposes, and President Ahmadinejad's statement that "Iran has always been willing to resolve the nuclear dispute through negotiations."

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# I. The Revolution Reconsidered

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# After the Tehran Spring

*Kian Tajbakhsh*

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Ten years ago, in the summer of 1998, I arrived in Tehran after an absence of more than two decades. Three vignettes describe some of what I experienced and why I decided to stay.

**The Mayor.** I am in a shared taxi with an architect friend who is pointing out some recent developments in the city. We are squeezed in the front passenger seat, three men in the back. The taxi's radio is on, and all are listening intently to the live broadcast of the trial of Tehran's high profile and dynamic mayor, Gholamhosein Karbaschi, the Robert Moses of Tehran, was on trial on thin charges of embezzlement, although most believed it was political retribution for contributing to Muhammad Khatami's 1996 presidential election victory. Judge: "Is it not true that you controlled a number of personal accounts and moved money around them thereby violating financial laws?" Taxi Driver breaks in: "Agghhh! That Karbaschi! He's lining his pockets just like all the others. What has he done for this city all these years? Nothing! Absolutely nothing!"

We break through some gnarled traffic and enter a wide urban highway winding down around several hillocks, all bright green, full of flowerbeds, sprinklers busy, a big clock sculpted into the face in rocks and plants. My architect friend: "This is a brand new road system opened only a few months ago. It has finally connected two parts of the city and eased the flow from the west to the north of the city. The landscaping? Oh that's standard for almost all urban redevelopment." On hearing this, the Taxi Driver broke in again: "Are you kidding me? (so to speak). That Karbaschi is a genius! I should know. I drive all day. Before him this city was a mess, it was unlivable. All these new roads are great and the city has turned a new leaf." Later when I had decided to write a book on urban policy and local government in Iran I always reminded myself that pinning down what ordinary people thought about their city would not be straightforward!

**The Park.** An old friend calls at about 10 pm: "want to go for a spin? You'll see something of the city too." "Well, ye s... but isn't it late?" Friend arrives at 11:30. By midnight we are at Park-e Mellat (the People's Park) the largest in the city. With difficulty we find a parking space, the entire area is jammed with cars and people. "We're going into the park *now*?" (Anyone who lived in New York in the 1980s would understand the incredulity.) But of course we entered — like the hundreds, yes hundreds of large extended families with small children carrying blankets, gas cookers, huge pots of food, canisters of tea. The weather is superb. Families are laying around, children playing ball or bad-



*Kian Tajbakhsh works as an international consultant in the areas of local government reform, urban planning, social policy, and social science research. Dr. Tajbakhsh has consulted for several international organizations such as the World Bank, the Netherlands Association of Municipalities (VNG-Int.) and the Open Society Institute. He received his M.A. from University College, London in 1984, and a Ph.D. from Columbia University, New York City in 1993.*

minton, boys and girls easily straying from their parents, each feeling safe enough with all the “eyes on the street.” The night is warm. Young couples are holding hands on benches slightly out of sight, in the row boats on the little artificial lake. And me? My mouth wide open in disbelief at this idyllic urban scene: a public space supplied by a conscientious municipality and dedicated designers, used civilly and politely by huge numbers of people from many classes. Many, judging by their chadors and rougher clothes, were from the poorer parts of the city — this was a family outing, perhaps the next day was a holiday. “But when — in fact how — would they go to work?” I ask. The city is dotted with smaller parks, just as much used.

**People have nothing else to do!** We decide to see the movie everyone is talking about, Tahmineh Milani’s *Two Women*. But every theater we try is sold out. We have to wait two weeks to get a ticket. “This is amazing,” I say, “such a vibrant cultural life.” “Oh,” M replies, “because of the government restrictions people don’t have anything else to do, so they all pour into the cinemas.” (*mardom tafrih-e digeh nadarand.*) (I do finally see the film — it is powerful and important.) It is suggested instead that we go to the traditional local restaurants in the foothills of Darband. The description seems too good to be true: Persian carpets spread among trees and running streams in a mountain village 20 minutes north of the city, serving Persian food and tea amidst the cool mountain air; elegant women reclining on large cushions and so on. The orientalist in me thoroughly (and unashamedly) awakened, we head off ... to a traffic jam about a mile long. The road entering the village is backed up with cars, some ordinary, some expensive.

We hear that restaurants have waits of over an hour. (The New Yorker in me groans “not here too?”) Defeated we turn back. “I would never have imagined anything like this,” I say. “Oh,” M replies, “it’s because people don’t have any other opportunities for recreation.” Next: the theater. Only a friend who has connections can swing, with great difficulty, some tickets for the first of Mirbagheri’s play cycle. The stately City Theater is full of people who have come to see the plays, some also to see and be seen, a perfectly acceptable objective. I want a ticket for the next play, but we have to join a long waiting list and may not make it. (We don’t in fact succeed.) “That’s the way it is, unfortunately,” M observes, “people just don’t have any other distractions, so they have to come to the theater.”

At this point I fall in love with the city. I decide to find a way to come back and, if possible, stay. So I did move to Tehran, first and foremost for personal reasons. I studied Persian classical music, met my current wife — we now have a little baby girl. I made many deep and meaningful friendships, which means, when we converse I feel that it is *about something*. At the same time, the conversation is always embedded in very human relations, *about* the interaction in ways I never learned in New York. I soon became involved in intellectual debates raging during the reform period, and once or twice got into trouble with the authorities.

Professionally, for the last ten years I have been working, teaching, and researching the newly emerging world of Iranian cities and local governments. Unlikely though it sounds, elected city councils several years ago emerged as a key

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**My mouth wide open in disbelief at this idyllic urban scene: a public space supplied by a conscientious municipality and dedicated designers, used civilly and politely by huge numbers of people from many classes.**

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battleground for new visions for society and governance. I quickly became involved in the work of newly established councils, worked on the laws, was asked for advice (occasionally, I was able to give some), engaged in international public diplomacy, organizing several exchanges between European and Iranian mayors. Most fulfilling was learning about Iran's cities and towns and peoples through traveling to dozens of cities across the country. Only now, ten years on, do I feel I have something to say about the hopes for local democracy that were part of the reform agenda — arguably the most important institutional legacy of the reform period.

Ten years later, the “Long Tehran Spring” is over. What I initially thought was the beginning of the “Spring” when I arrived to stay in 2001, was, in retrospect, the downturn towards its end. What I didn't realize at the time was that the Tehran that I experienced represented for another group of Iranians a negative and unwelcome image of social life. By 1990, with the grueling war with Iraq over, reconstruction was underway. Every Tehrani will tell you that Karbaschi transformed the capital from a morbid monument to the war dead — in the somber idiom of Shi'a martyrdom — into a city in which life was affirmed through parks full of flowers and entertainment, where young couples could, discretely, entwine fingers and feel the pleasures of being alive, bookshops were accessible where one could browse the books, music cassettes, and CDs unavailable in the previous decade; a city which tried to be a more efficient and user friendly place for getting to work, for producing goods and services of everyday and banal use; in which brand new street lights would be efficient as well as a boost to the morale of residents, who could feel that that they were no longer living in a war-affected place. All this was desperately needed, especially by young middle class Tehranis who had lived through a decade of war and were now young university students and wanted to stretch their legs in a city connected to global currents and excitements.

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**These two groups — the urban young middle class and the lower-class war veterans — clashed on the streets of Tehran in the 1990s.**

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But then millions of others had been involved directly in fighting the war, and tens of thousands of poor, mostly rural, families had counted their children among the war dead. They also came to Tehran, because after all, it was also their city. They brought with them a more burdened conscience; conservative, small town beliefs and values; sometimes Puritan morality as a means of honoring the memory of those who had died as well as their own experience; most of those who had volunteered, often without pay, to fight to defend their families, friends and country — and survived — they had suffered a decade of lost education, material progress, and savings.

These two groups — the young urban middle class and the lower-class war veterans — clashed on the streets of Tehran in the 1990s. The former wanted to put the war behind them; the latter surely could not so soon. Besides the memories, there was the sense on one side that the veterans deserved help in return for protecting the country and thus providing the tranquility that it appeared some younger Tehranis now took for granted. On the other side, there emerged a sense of resentment against the affirmative action for the families of veterans, who some viewed as cynically exploiting their status to cash in on free refrigerators and guaranteed college admission. This conflict was daringly portrayed in the film *Glass Agency*. Complicating matters, hostility and resentment latched easily onto the matter of sexuality, especially in

public, and particularly around women. By the end of the post-war decade, the second group had obtained their degrees, gained professional experience in the bureaucracy, and was finally able to demand a seat at the table. Of course, some want the table itself, and are even making a bid for all the other chairs!

So the capital city is one, perhaps the arena in which an important set of challenges for the future of Iran is being played out. The Tehran municipality has been a disappointment, as have all elected local governments, who with the waning of national reform energies, have settled into being another sub-office of the governmental bureaucracy. With significant and ostensibly non-governmental resources, it has missed a chance to be the forum for Tehran's residents. This challenge is at bottom a cultural and a national one — what will be the values that define the nation, who will we be? As yet, the city contains multitudes only numerically. The challenge is to transform the city from the battleground it often feels like, to a canvass on which a moral vision that can accept the conflicting values can form themselves into some kind of pattern that all, or at least most, can recognize and understand. We still occasionally go to the movies, the theater, and the hills. But more and more time is spent inside our homes. What the city needs most is the *élan* I felt that summer ten years ago.

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**The challenge is to transform the city from the battleground it often feels like, to a canvass on which a moral vision that can accept the conflicting values can form themselves into some kind of pattern that all, or at least most, can recognize and understand.**

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# The Iranian Revolution of February 1979

*Homa Katouzian*

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The revolution of February 1979 was a revolt of the society against the state. In some of its basic characteristics, the revolution did not conform to the usual norms of Western revolutions, because the state did not represent just an ordinary dictatorship but an absolute and arbitrary system that lacked political legitimacy and a social base virtually across the whole of the society.

This became a puzzle to some in the West, resulting in their disappointment and disillusionment within the first few years of the revolution's triumph. For them, as much as for a growing number of modern Iranians who themselves had swelled the street crowds shouting pro-Khomeini slogans, the revolution became "enigmatic," "bizarre," and "unthinkable."

In the words of one Western scholar, the revolution was "deviant" because it established an Islamic republic and also since "according to social-scientific explanations for revolution, it should not have happened at all, or when it did." That is why large numbers of disillusioned Iranians began to add their voice to the Shah and the small remnants of his regime in putting forward conspiracy theories — chiefly and plainly that America (and / or Britain) had been behind the revolution in order to stop the shah pushing for higher oil prices. It was even said that the West had been afraid that economic development under the Shah would soon rob it of its markets.

Before the fall of the Shah's regime, this "puzzle" of the Iranian Revolution was somewhat closed to the eyes of Western observers. All the signs had been there, but they were largely eclipsed by the massive peaceful processions, the solidarity and virtual unanimity of the society to overthrow the state, and the blood sacrifice. They were eclipsed also by the phenomenon of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, every one of whose words was received as divine inspiration by the great majority of Iranians — modern as well as traditional.

It is certainly possible to make sense of Iranian revolutions by utilizing the tools and methods of the same social sciences that have been used in explaining Western revolutions. However, explanations of Iranian revolutions that are based on the application of such tools and methods to *Western history* inevitably result in confusion, contradiction, and bewilderment. As Karl Popper once noted, there is no such thing as History; there



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are histories. The most obvious point of contrast is that in Western revolutions, the societies in question were divided, and it was the underprivileged classes that revolted against the privileged classes, who were most represented by the state. In both the traditional and the modern Iranian revolutions, however, the whole society — rich and poor — revolted against the state.

From the Western perspective, it would certainly make no sense for some of the richest classes of the society to finance and organize the movement, while a few of the others either sit on the fence or believe that it was America's doing and could not be helped. Similarly, it would make no sense by Western criteria for the entire state apparatus (except the military, which quit in the end) to go on an indefinite general strike, providing the most potent weapon for the success of the revolution. Nor would it make sense for almost the entire intellectual community and modern educated groups to rally behind Khomeini and his call for Islamic government.

The 1979 revolution was a characteristically Iranian revolution — a revolution by the whole society against the state in which various ideologies were represented, the most dominant being those with Islamic tendencies (Islamist, Marxist-Islamic and democratic-Islamic) and Marxist-Leninist tendencies (Fada'i, Tudeh, Maoist, Trotskyist, and others). The conflict within the groups with Islamic and Marxist-Leninist tendencies was probably no less intense than that between the two tendencies taken together. Yet they were all united in the overriding objective of bringing down the shah and overthrowing the state. More effectively, the mass of the population who were not strictly ideological according to any of these tendencies — and of whom the modern middle classes were qualitatively the most important — were solidly behind the single objective of removing the Shah. Any suggestion of a compromise was tantamount to treason. Moreover, if any settlement had been reached short of the overthrow of the monarchy, legends would have grown as to how the liberal bourgeoisie had stabbed the revolution in the back on the order of their “foreign [i.e. American and British] masters.”

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The most widespread and commonly held slogan that united the various revolutionary parties and their supporters regardless of party and program was “Let him [the Shah] go and let there be flood afterwards” (*In beravad va har cheh mikhahad beshavad*). Many changed their minds in the following years, but nothing was likely to make them see things differently at the time. Thirty years later, Ebrahim Yazdi, a leading assistant of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in Paris and later Foreign Minister in the post-revolutionary provisional government, was reported in Washington as speaking “candidly of how his revolutionary generation had failed to see past the short-term goal of removing the Shah...”

Those who lost their lives in various towns and cities throughout the revolution certainly played a major part in the process. But the outcome would have been significantly different if the commercial and financial classes, which had reaped such great benefits from the oil bonanza, had not financed the revolution; or especially if the National Iranian

Oil Company employees, high and low civil servants, judges, lawyers, university professors, intellectuals, journalists, school teachers, students, etc., had not joined in a general strike; or if the masses of young and old, modern and traditional, men and women, had not manned the huge street columns; or if the military had united and resolved to crush the movement.

The revolutions of 1906-1909 and 1977-1979 look poles apart in many respects. Yet they were quite similar with regard to some of their basic characteristics, which may also help explain many of the divergences between them. Both were revolts of the society against the state. Merchants, traders, intellectuals, and urban masses played a vital role in the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1909, but so did leading ‘*ulama*’ and powerful landlords, such that without their active support the triumph of 1909 would have been difficult to envisage — making it look as if “the church” and “the feudal-aristocratic class” were leading a “bourgeois democratic revolution”! In that revolution, too, various political movements and agendas were represented, but they were all united in the aim of overthrowing the arbitrary state (and ultimately Muhammad ‘Ali Shah), which stood for traditionalism, so that most of the religious forces also rallied behind the modernist cause, albeit haphazardly.

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**Many of the traditional forces backing the Constitutional Revolution regretted it *after the event*, as did many of the modernists who participated in the revolution of February 1979, when the outcome ran contrary to their own best hopes and wishes.**

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Many of the traditional forces backing the Constitutional Revolution regretted it *after the event*, as did many of the modernists who participated in the revolution of February 1979, when the outcome ran contrary to their own best hopes and wishes. But no argument would have made them withdraw their support before the collapse of the respective regimes. There were those in both revolutions who saw that total revolutionary triumph would make some, perhaps many, of the revolutionaries regret the results afterwards, but very few of them dared to step forward. Sheikh Fazlollah in the earlier case and Shahpur Bakhtiar in the later are noteworthy examples. But they were both doomed because they had no social base, or in other words, they were seen as having joined the side of the state, however hard they denied it. In a revolt against an arbitrary state, whoever wants anything short of its removal is branded a traitor. That is the logic of the slogan “Let *him* go and let there be flood afterwards!”

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# The Iranian Revolution 30 Years On

*Shahrouh Akhavi*

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In assessing the progress of the revolution in Iran, it might be useful to recall how other revolutions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century fared at the 30-year interval. Using their commencement rather than the actual seizure of power as the baseline, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of major 20<sup>th</sup> century revolutions were 1940 for Mexico, 1947 for the Soviet Union, 1964 for China (using the “Long March” as the year), 1975 for Vietnam, 1983 for Cuba (dating its beginning with the attack on the Moncada Barracks), 1984 for Algeria, and 2008 for Nicaragua.



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It was only with Lazaro Cardenas’s tenure (1934-1940) that the early land reforms demanded by the Zapatistas were finally pushed through. Meanwhile, many of the revolution’s leaders had been assassinated. In the Soviet case, Josef Stalin’s grip on power became so suffocating that many argue that by 1947 the promises of the Russian Revolution not only had not been fulfilled, but the country had even retrogressed. For China, 1964 came shortly after the disastrous “Great Leap Forward” of 1958 and the concomitant radical People’s Communes policies, which were harbingers of the coming excesses of the Cultural Revolution launched in 1966. In Vietnam, 1975 marked the pullout of the American military and the unification of the country under the post-Ho Chi Minh (d. 1969) leadership. This marked a major political victory, but economically the country was in a shambles. In 1983, Cuba, despite very impressive achievements in areas such as health care and education, faced a precarious economic situation, thanks in large measure to the American embargo but also internal mismanagement. In Algeria, as 1984 dawned, the state’s reputation was mainly as a leader of the non-aligned movement and of the Group of 77 in the United Nations. But serious economic troubles accompanying the regime’s version of socialism undermined these diplomatic successes. Nicaragua was a seeming exception to these cases, as contested elections took place in 1990, with the Sandinista regime voluntarily relinquishing power to a coalition of bourgeois political parties. In 2006 Daniel Ortega was elected President, marking the return of the Sandinista leader to power. The Citizen Power Councils introduced under his leadership proved controversial, but on the whole the society seemed to be moving away from the politics of violence.

What about the Islamic Republic of Iran? Regionally, it has become a leading power, but this is not due to the efforts of the leadership. It has instead resulted from the American-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, which removed the Iranian government’s two major regional enemies: the Ba’th and the Taliban. So far, Iran’s nuclear program has

rattled the West and Israel, and the Arab states also are unhappy about it. So far, threats from the United States and Israel have not resulted in armed conflict, but internal sabotage through the infiltration of “black ops” detachments and unmanned aircraft strikes are frequently rumored to have occurred or to be in store.

However, it is in internal developments that the Iranian Revolution faces its major shortcomings and failures on its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The ever-widening gap between state and society is no secret to observers. This gap was a serious problem in the late Pahlavi period. Although it was temporarily narrowed in the early post-revolutionary period (due in significant measure to Iraq’s invasion of Iran, which caused regime opponents to “rally to the flag”), it grew dramatically when the Khomeinists launched a *kulturkrieg* against the intellectuals and the universities after June 1981, a struggle that continues today. This has led to serious defections not only on the part of the secular-but-religious-minded intellectuals — such as ‘Abd al-Karim Surush, Akbar Ganji, and Sa‘id Hajjarian — but also by leading thinkers of the traditional seminaries, such as Muhsin Kadivar and ‘Abdallah Nuri among lower ranking seminarians, and Mahdi Ha‘iri (d. 1999), Sadiq Ruhani, and Husayn ‘Ali Muntaziri among senior clerics. As for secular-oriented intellectuals, they too have faced intimidation, though some, such as film directors, have been given a surprising degree of latitude.

The several governments since 1979 have failed in their promises to diversify the economy and thus end the country’s over-dependence on oil. Over time, the economy has performed poorly. The current regime had staked its reputation on improving the lives of the masses, but, if anything, it has proven itself more incompetent than its predecessors. The Khomeinists have reacted by clinging even more tightly to power. The leader, ‘Ali Khamane‘i, in advance of the next presidential elections (now scheduled for June 2009), has tried to pre-empt the outcome by telling the current incumbent, Mahmud Ahmadinejad, to prepare for another term in office. The June 2009 voting will mark the tenth presidential election since 1980, suggesting a degree of institutionalization. But in fact it seems that the pre-determining of the outcome of such elections remains an abiding issue. This is not to suggest that sometimes presidential outcomes do appear to be the result of an open electoral process, but this is the exception (for example, the presidential elections of 1997 and 2001).

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However, dramatic improvements have been shown in literacy; advances in health care are evident, and in principle, women are not barred from high office. In the early 1980’s Khomeini issued a *fatwa* against factory owners who were trying to deny female employees maternity leave and thus sided with women’s economic rights. Recently, it has been noted in the press that the judicial authorities have ruled that, at least for now, the capital sentence of stoning be suspended until exemplary justice becomes not just the norm but the reality, so that its violation would be inexcusable.

Nevertheless, the balance sheet in regard to human rights is strongly negative. An estimated 150 newspapers have been shut down since the revolution, leading public figures are routinely harassed and imprisoned, the authorities arbitrarily reject candidates for office (even those whom they permitted to run in earlier campaigns), and they send armed thugs

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*Akhavi...*

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into people's homes, places of work, classrooms, and open assembly venues to wreak havoc in defense of the absolute mandate of the jurist (*Velayet-e Faqih*). Perhaps, despite certain achievements, it is the fate of all revolutions to suffer Thermidorean reactions, as Crane Brinton once noted.<sup>1</sup> This could be said to varying degrees of the Mexican, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cuban, Algerian, and Nicaraguan revolutions. Although a hallmark of Thermidor is the end of the extreme brutality of the reign of terror and virtue, another characteristic is the return to the authoritarian excesses of the past. For its part, the Iranian Revolution is 30 years old, but it still suffers a plethora of "infantile disorders." Thermidor is "alive and well" in the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is its society that is the loser.

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**The Iranian Revolution is 30 years old, but it still suffers a plethora of "infantile disorders."**

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1. The term "Thermidor" refers to the revolt against the excesses of the French Revolution. See Crane Brinton's classic study *The Anatomy of Revolution*, revised edition (New York: Vintage, 1965).

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# The Three Paradoxes of the Islamic Revolution in Iran

*Abbas Milani*

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The Islamic Revolution of 1979 is an event defined as much by its ironies and paradoxes as by its novelties and cruelties.

It was, by scholarly near-consensus, the most “popular revolution” in modern times — almost 11% of the population participated in it, compared to the approximate 7% and 9% of the citizens who took part in the French and Russian revolutions. As a concept, revolution is itself a child of modernity, in that it revolves around the idea that legitimate power can emanate only from a social contract consecrated by the general will of a sovereign people. Before the rise of modernity and the idea of the natural rights of human beings, “revolution” as a word had no political connotation and simply referred to the movement of celestial bodies. The word took on its new political meaning — the sudden, often violent, structural change in the nature and distribution of power and privilege — when the idea of a citizenry (imbued with natural rights, including the right to decide who rules over them) replaced the medieval idea of “subjects” (a passive populace, bereft of rights, deemed needful of the guardianship of an aristocracy or royalty).

In Iran, despite the requisite popular agency of a revolution, events in 1979 paradoxically gave rise to a regime wherein popular sovereignty was denigrated by the regime’s founding father, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, as a colonial construct, created to undermine the Islamic concept of *umma* (or spiritual community). In Ayatollah Khomeini’s treatise on Islamic government, the will of the people is subservient to the dictates of the divine, as articulated by the Supreme Leader. In this sense, his concept of an Islamic Revolution is an oxymoron and its concomitant idea of Islamic government — *velayat-e faqih*, or rule of the Jurist — is irreconcilable with the modern democratic ideal of popular sovereignty. On the contrary, *velayat-e faqih* posits a population in need of a guardian, much as minors need guardians. The people are, in other words, “subjects,” not citizens. On the other hand, he called the same populace to a revolution — historically, the defiant act of a citizenry cognizant of its ability and right to demand a new social contract. The most popular of all “modern revolutions” then led to the creation of a state whose constitution places absolute power in the hand of an unelected, unimpeachable man, and whose basic political philosophy posits people as subjects and pliable tools of the *Faqih*. If this constitutes the philosophical paradox of the Islamic Revolution, there is also a stark historic paradox evident in its evolution.



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The Islamic Revolution was in a sense a replay of Iran’s first assay at a democratic con-

stitutional government, one that took place in the course of the 1905-07 “Constitutional Revolution.” At that time, a coalition of secular intellectuals, enlightened Shi’ite clergy, bazaar merchants, the rudiments of a working class, and even some members of the landed gentry came together to topple the Oriental Despotism of the Qajar kings and replace it with a monarchy whose power was limited by a constitution (*Mashruteh*). Indeed, the new constitution emulated one of the European models of a liberal democratic polity, one that allowed for elections and separation of powers, yet had a monarch as the head of the state. In those years, the most ideologically cohesive and powerful opposition to this new democratic paradigm was spearheaded by Ayatollah Nouri — a Shi’ite zealot who dismissed modern, democratically formulated constitutions as the faulty and feeble concoctions of “syphilitic men.” Instead, he suggested relying on what he considered the divine infinite wisdom of God, manifest in *Shari’a* (*Mashrua*). So powerful were the advocates of the constitutional form of democracy that Nouri became the only ayatollah in Iran’s modern history to be executed on the order (*fatwa*) of fellow ayatollahs. For decades, in Iran’s modern political discourse, Nouri’s name was synonymous with the reactionary political creed of despots who sought their legitimacy in Shi’ite *Shari’a*.

In a profoundly paradoxical twist of politics, almost 70 years later, the same coalition of forces that created the constitutional movement, coalesced once again, this time to topple the Shah’s authoritarian rule. Each of the social classes constituting that coalition had, by the 1970s, become stronger, and more politically experienced. Nevertheless, they chose as their leader Ayatollah Khomeini, a man who espoused an even more radical version of *Shari’a*-based politics than the one proposed by Nouri. While Nouri had simply talked of a government based on *Shari’a* (*Mashrua*), Khomeini now advocated the absolute rule of a man whose essential claim to power rested in his mastery of *Shari’a*, and for whom Sharia was not the end but a means of power. In the decade before the revolution, some secular Iranian intellectuals like al-Ahmad, imbued with the false certitudes of a peculiar brand of radical anti-colonial politics paved the way for this kind of clerical regime by “rehabilitating” Nouri and offering a revisionist view of Iranian history wherein the clergy emerged as leaders of the all-important, over-determined anti-colonial struggle. It mattered little to these intellectuals that some forms of anti-colonialism — like that of Nouri and his later cohorts — were rooted in pious xenophobia and not progressive nationalism.

Finally, the “Islamic Revolution” and the ultimate creation of clerical absolutism instead of a democratic policy was paradoxical in light of the fact that it took place in the 1970s, when the Third and Fourth Waves of Democracy had begun. The late 19<sup>th</sup> Century witnessed the first democratic wave, and the years after the Second World War and the collapse of the British Empire ushered in the Second Wave. The gradual decline of authoritarian regimes like those of Spain and Portugal, and the lost luster of Soviet totalitarianism embodied the Third and Fourth Waves. Some promised the “End of History,” or at least the End of Ideology, while others celebrated the claim that the age of liberal democ-

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racy was inevitably and irrevocably upon us. But Ayatollah Khomeini fought against this tide of history and erected a pseudo-totalitarian state founded on the divine edicts of God and the absolute wisdom of the *Faqih*. This last, and still lasting paradox of the “Islamic revolution,” will also bring about its end. The century-old coalition for democracy still awaits the realization of its dream.

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# The Revolutionary Legacy: A Contested and Insecure Polity

*Farideh Farhi*

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Islamic Iran will enter its 30th year with almost as much political noise as it generated at its inception. On the one hand, Iran's nuclear program and the confrontation it has engendered are daily reminders of the regional and global dimensions of Iran's revolution. On the other hand, the incessant squabbling among various branches of the government as well as among different political factions point to the fact that, more than anything else, the revolution was about an end to a one-man dominated political system.



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The noise persists because of domestic quarrels over the nature of Iran's relationship to the world, particularly to its sole remaining superpower, as well as to itself. The revolution of 1979 was for most Iranians a double-edged affair, involving aspirations for freedom (*azadi*) and national sovereignty or independence (*esteqlal*). These aspirations continue to shape *and* haunt the Islamic Republic. No matter how one looks at Iran today, there can be no denying that they remain at best partially fulfilled. More importantly, they continue to be played against each other. In the name of external threats, national security, and sovereignty, critical expressions are silenced while unhindered and, at times, unhinged political competition has turned democratic institutions such as elections into instruments of intra-elite rivalry rather than expressions of national will.

The shaping of post-revolutionary Iran through its search for independence is manifestly reflected in its almost pathological insistence on national sovereignty and being treated with respect in the face of international pressures. The haunting comes in the form of "strategic loneliness." Tehran is indeed betrothed to "neither West nor East," as its founder Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini insisted nearly 30 years ago, but does not rest easily in that position.

This does not mean that it is denied a seat at the table. In fact, as recently as July 2008 Tehran was host to the 15<sup>th</sup> annual ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement. But its desire to receive support for its noncompliant posture received half-hearted support from other non-aligned countries worried about their names being too closely identified with a country in direct confrontation with a rather unforgiving superpower. Tehran's right to peaceful nuclear energy is repeatedly reaffirmed as "the basic and inalienable right of all states, to develop [and] research, [the] production and use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes,"<sup>1</sup> but only a few countries such as Cuba, Venezuela, and Syria are willing to condemn the three standing UN Security Council resolutions

1. Final Document of the XV Ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned Movement held in Tehran, July 27-30.

against Iran.

Regional developments — including the removal of Saddam Husayn and the Taliban, challenges facing the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the increased clout of Hizbullah in its domestic environment — have improved the chances of finding natural allies in the region and, as such, have led to enhanced Iranian confidence. Yet Iran continues to wear its independence or non-alignment uneasily. Rather, Iran’s leaders insist on telling their domestic audience and proclaiming to the world repeatedly that Iran is indeed a sovereign nation and a poke in the eye of the powerful. Almost 30 years after the proclaimed “victory” of the Islamic Revolution, the need to reiterate that, “the only path to *victory* is through resistance and steadfastness” persists.<sup>2</sup>

Why this is so certainly has much to do with the external pressures that continue to be exerted on Iran in order to contain its regional influence. It is true that the United States has never been able to come to terms with the loss of one of its most important pillars of support in the region, and US policies since the revolution have aimlessly and not very effectively vacillated between containment and regime change, with occasional minor and unsuccessful forays into engagement. But the reality is that Iran also remains conflicted internally over the direction of the country because, along with its anti-Americanism, the revolution also brought into existence a polity based on contestation and pluralism, regulated through a system of controlled and yet competitive elections.

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To be sure, Iran continues to demonstrate amply that the presence of meaningful intra-elite struggles for power is not sufficient to make democracy sustainable, even if transfers of power occur through elections. The absence of rule of law and corruption among the elite have in fact turned political contestation into instruments that undermine democratic institutions such as elections, which are transformed into mechanisms of intra-elite competition rather than an expression or projection of popular will. Nevertheless it is significant that this political competition continues to keep the aspirations of the revolution alive and part of Iran’s contemporary political discourse.

Thirty years after the revolution, Iran is not a consolidated democratic state as the revolution promised. Neither is it a consolidated authoritarian one. And in this unconsolidated authoritarian environment, the search for national sovereignty and independence is a revolutionary legacy that cannot be simply wished away. This is so not merely because the idea still occupies the minds of a good segment of the Iranian elite. It is more so because it is a frame that can be utilized as a driving force for a more assertive security-oriented and nationalistic disposition that is then used as a means to silence or sideline domestic rivals by accusing them of being members of a fifth column or soft on enemies.

It should be noted, however, that in Iran’s contested political environment, this security orientation is merely a policy al-

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2. Ayatollah ‘Ali Khamene’i, speech given to Iranian officials on July 30, 2008.

ternative framed by the historical aspiration for complete independence. As witnessed during the presidencies of both 'Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mohammad Khatami, this policy alternative can be tempered or even partially abandoned in the direction of a more conciliatory approach, emphasizing dialogue and détente, but only if the Islamic Republic does not feel directly threatened. As such, in its rightward or security-oriented reaction to the external threats of the past few years, the Islamic Republic is not acting any differently than other countries with contested political environments.

On revolutionary Iran's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it must then be considered truly unfortunate that Washington's aggressive interest in isolating Iran came after several years of attempted conciliatory foreign policy on the part of Khatami's government. In Iran's contested political environment, the failure to show results effectively paved the way for the ascendance of the belief that the more conciliatory foreign policy practiced during the reformist era was perceived as weakness by "enemies" and led to calls for more, not fewer Iranian concessions. Hence, the common refrain among current decision-makers in Iran these days that enemies only understand the language of power and strength. The reality, though, is that despite the contemporary currency or pretense of a muscular foreign policy, Iran's politics remain underwritten by both contestation and insecurity.

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# The Iranian Revolution at 30: Still Unpredictable

*Charles Kurzman*

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How is it possible that the Islamic Republic of Iran has lasted 30 years? Some of the revolutionaries themselves are probably surprised by this longevity. In 1979, they wrote a constitution that enshrined Imam Ruhollah Khomeini as the leader of the Islamic Republic. Surely they didn't expect him to live another 30 years, past age 100, but their insistence on Khomeini's unique characteristics made it unlikely that anybody else would be qualified to succeed him.



Sure enough, after Khomeini's death, the constitution had to be rewritten to allow Hojjat al-Islam 'Ali Khamene'i to serve as head of state. He did not have the scholarly credentials to serve as a top-ranking cleric (*marja'-e taqlid*), much less to overrule other top-ranking clerics, as Khomeini had been constitutionally permitted to do, yet the Islamic Republic survived.

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Most international observers didn't expect the Islamic Republic to last this long. They have been talking about the regime being in crisis since the first year of the revolution, and with good reason. The regime has weathered innumerable crises, from the assassination of much of the top leadership in 1981 to Khamene'i's recent stare-down with President Mahmud Ahmadinejad over interim cabinet ministers.<sup>1</sup>

The most ardent supporters of the Islamic Republic have encouraged this discourse of permanent crisis. Every month, hard-line propagandists denounce some new, unpleasant economic or political development as an indication of a global conspiracy against Islam that must be prevented at all costs from undermining the Iranian people's fervent support of their Islamic Republic. All opposition figures, even the mildest liberals, are said to pose an imminent threat to the survival of the regime. If the regime is so easily threatened, it seems hard to imagine how it could have survived so long.

Of course, paranoids are sometimes correct. The Islamic Republic of Iran has faced and survived a concerted campaign for "regime change" by the world's greatest superpower, the United States. In late 1995, Newt Gingrich, then the Speaker of the US House of Representatives, insisted on \$18 million for "covert" operations against the Islamic

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1. According to political scientist Farideh Farhi, Ahmadinejad tried to keep several interim appointees past the constitutional limit of three months, in order to avoid having them rejected by parliament — Khamene'i told him to obey the constitution.

Republic.<sup>22</sup> If journalist Seymour Hersh is to be believed, the Bush Administration increased this funding to \$400 million in late 2007. Thus far the American campaign has stopped short of invasion, but it would not be surprising to discover when relevant US government documents are declassified that some funding found its way to the secessionist groups responsible for recent terrorist attacks in Iran's farthest provinces. The Islamic Republic has survived this too.

In addition, the Islamic Republic has survived the failure of some of its most cherished goals to come to fruition. For example, it failed to export its revolution to other Muslim societies, despite the wave of international Islamic support that Khomeini enjoyed for having overthrown the Shah. Muslim activists visited Iran from around the world, eager to replicate the miracle of the Islamic Revolution back home. Within a decade, these activists viewed their trips with embarrassment. It is difficult now to imagine that many Sunni Muslims once looked on the Iranian experience as a model to reproduce. I recall walking past the Iranian community center in Sarajevo some years ago and seeing posters of an aged Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, Chairman of the Guardian Council — showcasing a distinctly un-hip spokesperson for the Islamic Republic. “Have you even been in there?” I asked a devout young Bosnian Muslim. He scrunched up his face at the absurdity of the suggestion. Iran had provided crucial weapons to keep Sarajevans from being slaughtered in the civil war a few years earlier, but even that did not win the Islamic Republic many fans.

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**Khomeini prepared Iranians for the change in a famous open letter of 1988 that identified the interests of the Iranian state as the primary obligation of Islamic faith, above such secondary obligations as prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage.**

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The Islamic Republic also failed to overthrow Saddam Husayn, a goal to which it devoted several years and tens of thousands of martyrs in the late 1980s. Numerous regimes have fallen as a result of lesser military misadventures, but the Islamic Republic survived. Even more galling than their failure to depose Saddam, Iranians watched the United States make quick work of the Iraqi military in the wars of 1991 and 2003.

The Islamic Republic even was forced to acknowledge the failure of Islamic governance, one of its primary reasons for existence, with the formation of the Council for the Discernment of the Expediency of the System, more commonly known as the Expediency Council. The purpose of the Council, as stipulated in a constitutional amendment in 1989, is to overrule the Guardian Council when necessary for the interests of the state. Since the Guardian Council's constitutional role is to assess the Islamic propriety of parliamentary legislation, the Expediency Council's oversight of the Guardian Council means that judgments about Islam no longer have the final word. Expediency — *maslahat*, in Persian, meaning public welfare — has the final word. In Asghar Schirazi's account of the constitution of the Islamic Republic, this amendment was not the first time that the principle of public interest was permitted to trump acknowledged Islamic principles, but it was the first time that this move had been announced and permanently institutionalized. Khomeini prepared Iranians for the change in a famous open letter of 1988 that identified the interests of the Iranian state as the primary obligation of Islamic faith, above such secondary obligations as prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage. The Islamic

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2. The funding was publicized before it was signed into law.

Republic has survived this official downgrading of its commitment to Islamic principles.

It also has survived the failure of its promotion of popular piety. A 1975 survey found that 56% of Iranians attended communal prayers at least once a week; by 2000, the rate had declined to 40% (among young adults born after the revolution, the rate was 31%). The same poll in 2000 found that less than half of the sample felt that the religious establishment gives answers to social problems — one of the lowest ratios in any of the 14 Muslim societies polled by the World Values Survey over the past decade. This survey and others show that Iranians are generally devout, but their devotion seems to be more personal than political, contrary to the efforts of the Islamic Republic.

In sum, Iran has become just another partly-industrialized, partly-democratic, partly-corrupt Third World country that has unusually tense relations with the United States and Europe. Its Islamic Republic has survived in part because regimes often survive for decades after their initial mandate and ideals have disappeared. When offered an alternative, such as the reform movement that held such promise in the late 1990s, a large majority of Iranians displayed an eagerness for political change. Even then, Iranians were hardly revolutionary — in 2000, the Iranian sample for the World Values Survey rated their own political system relatively positively, averaging 5.84 on a scale of 1 to 10. Among young adults, the average for the survey was virtually the same (5.76).

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**Iran has become just another partly-industrialized, partly-democratic, partly-corrupt Third World country that has unusually tense relations with the United States and Europe.**

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I published a book several years ago arguing that the Iranian Revolution had been inherently unpredictable. There are no prerequisites for revolution that would allow us to anticipate its occurrence — it can happen at any time, whenever dissatisfied people come to believe that their compatriots will join them in protest. Soon after the book was published, a colleague asked me whether I would help make a new revolution in Iran. You never know when an entrenched dictator might be overthrown, he told me excitedly, citing my book as evidence. Khamene'i could go the way of Romania's Ceausescu, who was abandoned and executed in a matter of weeks after a relatively minor event triggered a massive uprising. Apart from the ethical problems of the proposition — who am I to get involved in Iranian politics? — I drew a different conclusion. Revolutions may occur at any moment, but they are very rare. Betting on a regime's survival is almost always a safer wager than betting on it being overthrown. And if my bet is wrong, and the regime is overthrown, then that only confirms my analysis that revolutions are unpredictable.

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# The Islamic Revolution Derailed

*Hossein Bashiriyeh*

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The execution of the original project of the Islamic Revolution in Iran has been repeatedly deferred for various reasons. More recently it is the increasing secularization of society under theocratic rule that is hindering the implementation of the original project despite a monopolization of political power by core elite factions. No doubt the clerical and non-clerical fundamentalist groups and cliques have more or less dominated the political scene since the revolution, but the ideological aim of the revolution was not just to usurp political power at any price but to try to build an “Islamic” state and society. It is something to use religion as a political tool for capturing power, but quite another to seek to implement the principles of that religion. More often however, in real life, the weapon of religion proves to be very useful for gaining power, although its principles create trouble for “religious” politicians.



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The original project of the Islamic Revolution as laid out in Ayatollah Khomeini’s works and speeches aimed at a thorough Islamicization of politics, state, society, culture, law, and economy. However, the revolution was derailed from this projected course for a number of reasons including power struggles, internal conflicts, inability of core Islamic elites to establish their hegemony, the war with Iraq, attempts at postwar reconstruction, and the ascendancy of reformist or moderate factions.

The period of the Provisional Government led by Mehdi Bazargan (1979 to early 1981) was marked by an uneasy alliance between extremist-Islamic and moderate-liberal factions. The former favored a fusion of religion and politics and a theocratic state ruled by the clergy, while the latter advocated liberal democracy and separation of religion from government. The dual and somewhat contradictory nature of the constitution adopted in 1979 reflected that uneasy alliance. The specific conditions under this situation led to a transition to theocracy rather than to democracy.

Between 1981 and 1988, the ruling elite was much more unified, but the government was preoccupied with the war effort requiring ad hoc policies and decision-making. Although the project of Islamification continued, there were other more urgent issues for the government to attend to. As before, the clerical ruling elite differed over a number of important issues ranging from cultural and economic policies to how to interpret the laws of Islam. The clerical-fundamentalist rightist faction, which predominated in the Council of Guardians, supported capitalist economic policies along with strict cultural

and social control. The clerical Left, which had the majority in the Third Majlis, supported state control of the economy and limited cultural and social freedom. Given the war conditions, Ayatollah Khomeini had to shift his support from the right to the left and back again.

The postwar reconstruction period (1989-97) witnessed yet another derailment from the original course of the Revolution and the virtual marginalization of the core fundamentalist elite. As a result, the first signs of fundamentalist opposition to the regime appeared in this period. While the traditionalist rightist factions were dominant in the Council of Guardians and the Majlis, a new modernist rightist faction emerged and dominated the executive. The Kargozaran (Reconstructionists) supported and implemented neo-liberal policies of privatization and during the Fifth Majlis elections competed with the Traditional Rightists. Neo-liberal policies paved the way for a degree of social secularization and liberalization, which was obviously disliked by the fundamentalist and extremist factions.

At the same time, the end of war mobilization and neo-liberal policies led to a decrease in state subsidies, greater unemployment, working class unrest, higher inflation, a decline in ideology, the political activation of various social forces, such as intellectuals, journalists and students, and the outbreak of a number of popular mass rebellions (especially in Mashad, Islamabad, and Qazvin). All this paved the way for the victory of the reformist factions (the older leftist factions and a number of newly rising new middle class political parties) who supported Mohammad Khatami in the 1997 presidential elections.

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**From the perspective of the core fundamentalist elite, the period of the reformist government (1997-2005) was the sharpest deviation from the supposedly original project of the Revolution.**

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From the perspective of the core fundamentalist elite, the period of the reformist government (1997-2005) was the sharpest deviation from the supposedly original project of the Revolution. During this period, the reformist parties succeeded in gaining control of the executive and the Parliament in three consecutive elections (1997 presidential, 1999 parliamentary and 2001 presidential elections). On the other hand the core elite retained control of the Office of Leadership, the Council of Guardian, the Council of Expediency, the Judiciary, and the Revolutionary Guards. In the conflict that ensued between the two blocs, the Council of Guardians vetoed 111 out of 297 bills passed by the reformist Sixth Majles in support of civil liberties, political participation, women's rights, ban on torture, press freedom, labor rights, public welfare policies, and so on.

However, no structural change in the political system occurred during this period for a number of reasons. First, there was not much real elite ideological disunity; the hegemonic elite faction continued to control the system. Second, the reformist factions failed to develop strong social organizations despite widespread popular support. The nascent civil society, rising after a long period of social atomization, was itself under constant pressure from the hegemonic factions. Third, the armed forces were united and loyal to the hegemonic faction in power.

The inability of the reformist Khatami government to bring about change led to increasing disillusionment and dis-

satisfaction among its mainly urban educated middle class popular support base, especially intellectuals, students and government employees. Meanwhile, the right-wing, hard-line factions associated with the core elite were seeking to mobilize the lower classes in town and country, promising them better living conditions than the reformists had been able to provide. Already in 2003, they had managed to win in the city council elections and replace the fractious reformists. The core elite dominant in the Office of Leadership and the Council of Guardians had already made its mind not to let the main reformist parties enter the Majlis again.

#### *TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ORIGINAL PROJECT?*

The presidential elections of 2005 ensured the complete ascendancy of the core elite factions and the ousting of the reformists from the political system. This marked the first time that a high degree of structural and ideological unity within the ruling elites had emerged since the revolution. All three branches of government as well as the major clerical institutions were now occupied by a coalition of conservative, hard-line factions. The degree of harmony between the executive and the legislative branches of government was unprecedented. A new configuration of revolutionary extremist factions came into existence, forming a “Third Force,” i.e. the Abadgaran coalition, clearly distinct from the older conservative factions. The political presence of the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) and the Basij militia as part of the social base of the new political elite has been quite noticeable since. Deputies with backgrounds in the IRGC won a third of the parliamentary seats. Extremist and ultra-conservative groups such as the Hojjatiyeh and Haqqani Seminary School factions as well as the Ansare Hezbollah and Society for the Defense of Revolutionary Values supported the new elite configuration. To a considerable degree, a militarization of theocracy has since taken place with the increasing political involvement of the Revolutionary Guards and Basij.

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**But power consolidation, elite unification, and the attempt at reconsolidation of the revolution and implementation of its project are taking place under socio-cultural conditions and circumstances very much different from those existing in the early years of the Revolution.**

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The positions and policies adopted by the new ruling group since 2005 can be described as attempts to implement the will and testament of Ayatollah Khomeini, which clearly embodies the original project of the Islamic Revolution. The new policy positions such as attempts at the disruption of neo-liberal economic policies and the banking system, increasing cultural control, restrictions imposed on civil society, and greater militancy in foreign policy can be interpreted as attempts to implement the original project of the revolution.

But power consolidation, elite unification, and the attempt at reconsolidation of the revolution and implementation of its project are taking place under socio-cultural conditions and circumstances very much different from those existing in the early years of the revolution. The major difference lies in the demise of the politically mobile and active mass society of the 1980's and the rise of an immobile and passive mass society resulting from growing anomie and a widening gap between public opinion and the official ideology. Various factors have been responsible for the erosion of ideology and

the development of a passive and anomic mass society, including the increasing secularization of society, the conclusion of the war with Iraq, the new turns in economic policy, and the disappointing results of the Reform Movement.

Some field research and surveys recently carried out by a number of public and private research organizations clearly demonstrate the widening gap between official-religious ideology and public opinion and practices. In particular, the National Survey of Values and Attitudes conducted by the Ministry of Islamic Guidance, on the basis of a sample of 16,824 people, found:

- a decline in religious beliefs and practices especially among the new generation;
- growing secularization of private life;
- increasing use of cultural products prohibited by the ruling clergy;
- growing political distrust and cynicism;
- decline in the feelings of social solidarity; and
- widespread feelings of political inefficacy;

Thus the most important characteristic of the present time can be described as an increasing secularization of society under a theocratic regime, the most unfavorable grounds for the implementation of the revolutionary project. It seems that the social secularization trend is expanding as a result of increasing development in terms of education, communication, and modernization. Thus, like all ideological revolutionary projects, the Islamic ideological project has found it very difficult to reconstruct culture and identity in a society undergoing a fast process of change and secularization.

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# The Revolution's Mixed Balance Sheet

*Fereshtehsadat Etefaghfar*

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Each year during the anniversary of the revolution, which in Iran is called *Dahe-ye Mobarakeh Fajr* (The Sacred Ten Days), the Islamic regime leaves no doubt in Iranians' minds about the causes of the Islamic Revolution. The ten-day celebration starts on January 31, the day that the late Imam Khomeini flew from Paris to Tehran and ends on February 10 when the powerful Pahlavi regime was destroyed by a huge popular uprising. Among many national and international events, including the arrival of hundreds of foreign visitors to Iran to observe the general mood of happiness and excitement, the Islamic leaders are full of praise for the Iranian people because they have successfully strived towards achieving the revolution's objectives. But many Iranians, particularly the younger generations, do not necessarily agree that the revolution's objectives have been attained.



*Dr. Fereshtehsadat Etefaghfar, Lecturer, Islamic Azad University, Shar-e Rey Branch*

The principal motto of the revolution was *Esteghlal, Azadi e Jumhury Islami* (independence, freedom, and the establishment of an Islamic republic). Based on that, Iranian leaders regard the main objectives of the Revolution as fulfilled. After all, Iranians were opposed to the ex-Shah's close ties with the West and in particular with the United States and Israel. They wanted a regime which was much more independent of the United States. They also demanded freedom and opposed the ex-Shah's autocratic and repressive style of government. Finally, they believed that Islam was capable of delivering a more humane, egalitarian, and democratic political system; hence they supported the idea of an Islamic Republic as opposed to the Shah's dictatorship.

But is present Iranian society more open and more democratic than during the Pahlavi period? Opponents of the Islamic Republic, particularly the royalists, perceive the current regime to be undemocratic, authoritarian, and brutal. They condemn its human rights record as one of the worst in the world. In contrast, the leaders of the Islamic Republic and their supporters boast about Islamic Iran's democratic achievements as well as its human rights record. Apart from the Islamic Revolution's "achievements" or "failures" there are other areas where the same dispute arises. Among the most intensely disputed issues are female participation and women rights. Again, opinions are deeply divided between the opponents and supporters of the regime. Some women's rights campaigners maintain that Iran has actually moved backward.

One mistake which both the supporters and the opponents of the Islamic Revolution make is that they do not consider the changes in the context of Iranian society. Instead,

they maintain a purely political orientation. Any changes, including democratic changes or changes in the status of women, must be considered within the social background of Iranian society itself. One of the most impressive achievements of the revolution has been the spread of the education. On the eve of the revolution in 1979, there were some 100,000 students attending the country's universities, out of which 17.5% were females.<sup>1</sup> Thirty years later, the number has reached 2 million. What is even more impressive is the rise in the number of female students. In some subjects, such as Arts and Social Sciences, there are more female students than males. In total, female students have exceeded the number of male students by 54% to 46%.<sup>2</sup> However, the country suffers from chronic unemployment, particularly among university graduates; and admittedly, female graduates find it more difficult than their male counterparts to find employment.

Nevertheless, given that more than half the country's graduates are female, there must be a large number of women who manage to find employment in the tight Iranian job market despite the various social, traditional, and legal barriers and forms of discrimination. In other words, as a leading female Iranian sociologist has argued, "the younger generation Iranian female university graduates have managed to break a number of traditional as well as institutional barriers against the women."<sup>3</sup>

A similar analysis can be offered on the more sensitive issue of Iran's human rights record and democratic development. Islamic Iran's record on human rights and civil society standards are far from ideal. In both areas, Iran lags behind neighbors such as Turkey and Pakistan, let alone countries such as India, Japan, and those in the West. But at the same time, Iran compares very favorably with many of the countries in the region, such as Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf states, Iraq, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and others.

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**Is present Iranian society more open and more democratic than during the Pahlavi period?**

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More relevant still is the comparison with pre-revolutionary Iran. It is true that the Islamic authorities close newspapers at their will, without much respect for legal procedures. But the degree of press freedom which Iran enjoys today is unprecedented. There are a few daily newspapers that can broadly be described as independent from the government. They criticize the hardline Ahmadinejad policies on almost every important domestic as well as international issue. This is indeed an unprecedented development in Iran and must be regarded as one of the most important achievements of the Islamic Revolution. By the same token, while it is true that elections in Iran in comparison to those held in developed countries cannot be described as free and fair, they represent substantial progress over those held during the Pahlavi era. The same is true for many other aspects of modern political development, such as freedom of expression, rule of law, and checks and balances on the state.

In short, while there are serious shortcomings on a number of fundamental sociopolitical issues, there can be little doubt that there have been impressive achievements as well. However, it remains to be stated that the Islamic Revolution should have achieved far more during the past three decades.

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1. *Ministry of Science and Higher Education Statistical Year Book, 1978-79.*

2. *Ministry of Science and Higher Education Statistical Year Book, 2007-08.*

3. Jaleh Kazemi, "On the Achievements of the Iranian Female Graduates," *Goftego*, Vol. 47 (July 2007).

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## Between Pride and Disappointment

*Michael Axworthy*

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The term revolution has become a cliché — it is in such common usage that we have forgotten it started its linguistic life as a metaphor. The metaphor was that of a wheel turning upon its axis. The idea, derived from that, is of sweeping change, reminding perhaps of the older, medieval idea of the wheel of fortune (to be found on the tarot card with that name, for example); bringing the mighty low and raising the lowly up on high. Like earlier revolutions, this is precisely what the Iranian Revolution did — it raised some up, some dramatically, who had been socially lowly before; and it brought many down, some catastrophically, who previously had enjoyed privileged positions. This is what Dickens meant when he wrote of the French Revolution that it was the best of times, and the worst of times. In consequence, the Iranian Revolution prompts extreme opinions from its critics and defenders. Is it possible to strike a balance between such widely varying experiences?

When Ayatollah Khomeini returned from Paris to Tehran on February 1, 1979, he was greeted by enormous crowds, and a few months later, a referendum gave overwhelming support for his project of an Islamic republic. For those short few months of euphoria after the Shah's departure, the revolution was genuinely a popular revolution, and appeared to be an authentic expression of the people's will. But within a short time, as the reality of what Khomeini intended under the heading of the Islamic Revolution began to emerge, many became disillusioned. Within the country, many middle class supporters fell away, as newspapers were closed down, women's rights were curtailed, and liberal politicians were marginalized and exiled. Outside the country, initial support for the removal of the Shah's regime fell away, as the execution of the former Shah's courtiers and officers continued week after week.

Since then, for critics of the revolution, the record has grown only blacker. In the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), Iranian casualties were enormous, partly because young conscripts were sent in waves in attacks on entrenched Iraqi forces that were normally better equipped. At the end of the war, thousands of political prisoners were murdered in prison. In more recent years, after an experiment with reform (1997-2005), the hardline elements of the regime have re-imposed the rigidities of the revolution's youth, limiting and eroding ever more skillfully the democratic elements in the constitution. The economy is weak, unemployment is high, and hundreds of thousands of young Iranians leave the country each year (including some of the most intelligent and well educated), to join the millions that have left since 1979. Accusations of corruption are common,



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and feature in politics. The regime continues to abuse human rights and to bully and intimidate those who bravely still try to defend them, including dissidents like Akbar Ganji and the Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi. The regime has such a bad image in the West that almost anything can be laid at its door. For some, it is the prime supporter of terrorism in the world, an agent for destabilizing the Middle East as a whole, the hidden hand behind the insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan, and on track to acquire nuclear weapons. Not all these accusations are fair or well-judged, but the extremism of some of Iran's politicians seems to legitimate them.

For some Iranians at least, there is another side to the story. The revolution gave many people opportunities that would probably never otherwise have come their way. It removed one elite and replaced it with another. It placed many clergy in powerful positions, and reconfirmed their authority as a class — an authority that had been steadily eroded over the previous hundred years as their responsibilities as teachers, arbitrators, and judges had been removed by Westernizing reforms. The influential bazaar traders and artisans, often very pious and closely linked as an urban elite with the clergy, also benefited greatly from the revolution; in fact, some have suggested that the country has been largely run for their benefit. But others benefited too. Pious families from poor backgrounds, if they were lucky, might find that the regime trusted their fathers and sons and put them in good jobs. This was particularly the case for some veterans from the Iran-Iraq War. This phenomenon was also facilitated by the success of the regime in spreading education, finally, to all — even to the remotest villages and to women.

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**Many Iranians, and even some exiles that bitterly oppose the Islamic regime, acknowledge that Iran, finally, has achieved real independence.**

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For women the outcome of the revolution has been particularly paradoxical. Khomeini's imposition of the veil meant that Iranian fathers felt able to let their daughters go to school. Those girls fed through the system and took to their educational opportunities to such an extent that over 65% of university entrants are now female, and many Iranian universities humanities classes are 80% or more female. Many of these educated women go on to take important jobs in the Iranian economy. Indeed, Iranian women are more active and visible in offices and businesses than their counterparts almost anywhere else in the Middle East (though many women graduates struggle, like other young Iranians, to find jobs). So women suffer restrictions in the dress code and at law (particularly over divorce and child custody), and are still kept out of many more important jobs, especially in government and in politics; but overall their position has improved in important ways since the revolution. Despite the many necessary caveats, the development in the social and economic role of women and their progress in education, in a country with a strong and deep-seated cultural respect for learning and intellectual attainment, is one of the positive aspects of contemporary Iran.

Despite the many failures, disappointments, and disillusionments since the revolution — especially with respect to economic development, given that large numbers of Iranians still languish in poverty — many Iranians, and even some exiles that bitterly oppose the Islamic regime, acknowledge that Iran, finally, has achieved real independence. To appreciate the importance of this achievement to Iranians, one has to have some sense of the past humiliations heaped on Iran in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Britain and Russia, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Britain and the United States (most notably, the British

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and American-inspired coup that removed the nationalist and constitutionalist Prime Minister Muhammad Mossadeq in 1953). An important part of the revolution was the feeling that the country needed once and for all to rid itself of foreign influence and manipulation. In the Iran-Iraq War (the significance of which in the contemporary Iranian psyche can hardly be overstated), imposed on Iranians by the Iraqi invasion of September 1980, that determination was tested almost to destruction. But (despite feeling with some justification that it was not fighting just Iraq, but almost the whole world) Iran emerged from that war undefeated, with her borders upheld. There was, and is, a pride in this accomplishment, irrespective of support for the regime, or an objective judgement about whether the regime ran the war sensibly.

The revolution and the Iran-Iraq War put Iran in a different place, and that is something separate and more important than the foolish confrontational populism of Mahmud Ahmadinejad or the cynical manipulation of politics by the ruling clique. If the West is to resolve its problems with Iran, whatever the difficulties of dealing with the regime, its representatives will have to recognize that Iran has grown up, and accord it the respect that they would give other serious interlocutors. If applied seriously and consistently, in public utterances as well as in private, that respect alone could help enormously to improve the situation for the better.

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**If the West is to resolve its problems with Iran, whatever the difficulties of dealing with the regime, its representatives will have to recognize that Iran has grown up, and accord it the respect that they would give other serious interlocutors.**

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## II. Inside Iran

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# Women

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# Women and 30 Years of the Islamic Republic

Nikki R. Keddie

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To write briefly about women in Iran since 1979 (and say something different from what is in my recent books *Modern Iran* and *Women in the Middle East* and my article on women in the December 2008 issue of *Current History*) is a challenge. Here I will stress the importance of the “two cultures” of 20<sup>th</sup> century urban Iran, the popular-bazaar culture and the educated elite culture, regarding women, and also the reasons for the unfortunate, but not unique, association of governmental reforms regarding women with autocratic rulers seen as tools of the United States.

As in most countries, early and even later proponents of women’s rights in Iran came overwhelmingly from among the elite and educated, and saw popular class women more as students for their practical and academic classes than as colleagues. Unveiling, like other women’s rights, was primarily advocated by a few elite women until it was decreed by Reza Shah in 1936, and was traumatic for many.

The modernization of women’s rights and government activities about women began under the Pahlavi shahs (r. 1925-1979). This comprised the opening of education at all levels and of some professions to women, and, most dramatically, under Muhammad Reza Shah with pressure from women’s groups, votes for women and major legal reforms in the 1967/75 Family Protection Law (FPL).

The association of such measures with autocratic shahs and elites and with unquestioning imitation of the West provided fertile ground for a counter-movement based in part (like much of US conservatism) on literalist religion, which claimed that an unequal status and rights for women was based both in nature and in religious texts. In order to express solidarity with the popular class and religious opponents of the Shah, secularists and leftists joined the opposition in large numbers, and many donned *chadors*. They thought Khomeini would not exercise real power and that more secular leaders would win out. However, once Khomeini took power in 1979 many of the recently achieved rights for women were reversed. The legal situation was more complex than the simple pronouncement that the FPL was abrogated and the *Shari’a* restored would suggest, but still was destructive of women’s recently won rights.

Many popular class women had not benefited from the Pahlavi reforms and some resented the forced changes in behavior that they involved. Before and right after the



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1979 revolution, Western feminists were prominent in attempts to protest Khomeini's attempts at revealing and limiting women's legal rights, but these women did not know enough about Iran to accommodate the views of those women who did not advocate wholesale Westernization. Regarding women's status as on other matters, the deep class division in religio-political outlook remained strong. To some degree it still does, though more women have become urbanized and educated and want more freedoms.

The very efforts of the government to involve women in defense during the Iran-Iraq war, to educate girls at all levels, and, after 1989, to promote family planning and reduce births helped awaken many girls and women to new ideas. Women also increasingly resisted reversals in women's rights. What were formerly only elite ideas about gender and women's rights spread to the popular classes, sometimes in the form of what has been called "Islamic feminism." Several women began to give gender egalitarian interpretations of the Qur'an and Islamic traditions in place of the dominant conservative interpretations.

In broad terms, the decade before Khomeini's death in 1989 was a period of strengthening Khomeinism, while 1990-2000 was a period of pragmatism and some reform under presidents Rafsanjani and Khatami, with partial agreement and partial resistance from Supreme Leader 'Ali Khamene'i. Restrictions on girls' and women's public behavior and dress and on the press, including a renewed women's press, were gradually loosened, especially in the better-off neighborhoods of big cities. A recrudescence of conservatism, especially enforced in the streets by popular class men and their organizations, has come since about 2001, and increased after the election of President Ahmadinejad in 2005, who represents a new generation of Neo-conservatives with deep ties to the veterans of the Iran-Iraq War and the Revolutionary Guards. Many young elite women turned to personal and sexual means of defiance. However, there also was a spread of ideas of women's rights beyond the elite, especially in the innovative campaign for a million signatures for women's legal equality which brought educated women into the homes of popular class women to discuss their problems. The government has recently arrested several of the women prominent in this campaign, and has, notoriously, invaded the offices of Shirin Ebadi, the Nobel Prize winning activist for women's, children's, and human rights.

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**Many young elite women turned to personal and sexual means of defiance.**

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Scholars of Iranian women's history found that even before any Western impact was important, many women were far more politically active behind the scenes than outsiders realized. This is noted in several books, including the comprehensive books by Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth Century Iran*, Janet Afary's *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran* (2009), and in the three books on Middle Eastern women I wrote or co-edited. Some elite women made the mistake of not taking advantage of Iranian traditions and thinking the West had to be imitated in everything from dress to drinking. Currently many young women think they are imitating the West (which they know only from the media) and defying Iran's rulers by being, in private, sexually promiscuous, partaking in drugs and drinks popular in the West, and provoking the conservatives. Politically active women doubt that these behaviors can bring positive changes for women, particularly as they provoke not only the government and right-wing enforcers, but also many women who

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disapprove of such behaviors.

The current economic crisis in Iran, which is based both in governmental mismanagement and the fall in oil prices, exacerbated by international sanctions, has increased popular resistance. If change is to come to Iran, economic discontent, which undermines popular support for Ahmadinejad, will be a major reason. It seems important not to encourage extreme behaviors that, as Pardi Mahdavi's *Passionate Uprisings* shows, do not even bring happiness to those who indulge in them and alienate many others. Instead, women and men of all classes who want change should unite around a candidate for the presidential elections who promises to reverse the crackdowns on women, young people, strikers, and reform publications that have characterized recent years; and both women and men need to promote programs that meet the needs of ordinary people.

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**If change is to come to Iran, economic discontent, which undermines popular support for Ahmadinejad, will be a major reason.**

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# Women and the Islamic Republic: Emancipation or Suppression?

*Fatemeh Etemad Moghadam*

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This essay focuses on the differences between the pre- and post-revolutionary periods in legal interpretations regarding the treatment of female sexuality in marriage and its implications for the freedom of labor and the autonomy of women. I argue that under the monarchy, the theoretical commoditization of female sexuality in marriage was treated as negotiable and modifiable. By contrast, the Islamic Republic has treated the issue as non-negotiable and has reinforced it through the enhancement of women's entitlements in marriage. This reinforcement, combined with a growing emancipation in economic, political, and social aspects, has thus given rise to contradictions and increased female activism unparalleled in the region.



*Dr. Fatemeh Etemad Moghadam, Professor of Economics, Hofstra University*

The source of this contradiction can be found in the ambiguity in early Muslim tradition influenced by nomadic tribal customs (allowing women power and control) versus urban merchants (secluding and treating women as property). In essence a Muslim marriage (*aqd*) is a sale contract. The man makes the offer (*ijab*) and the woman accepts (*qabul*). The object of sale is female sexuality and reproductive labor. In exchange the woman receives a dower (*mahryyeh*) and financial support (*nafaqeh*). If capable of meeting the financial obligations, a man may practice polygamy. The marriage contract also may include additional provisions that should be agreed upon by the two sides. This commoditizing contractual aspect can be attributed to the merchant tradition.

By contrast, early traditions encompassed autonomous aspects that may be attributed to nomadic influence. According to these traditions, woman has the right to own and inherit property independently and no prohibitions exist for participation in the labor market. Moreover, the Qur'an explicitly states that working women are entitled to fair wages. Indeed, the Prophet's first and highly revered wife, Khadija, was a merchant; and his granddaughter, Zaynab, publicly challenged Caliph Yazid. It can be argued that Islam allows for the involvement of women in public life as well as the market.

A woman and her sexuality, however, are not separate. Therefore, the theoretical sale of sexuality, the provision of autonomous rights, and the exemplary lives of revered women create ambiguity in the rights and autonomy of women and allow for interpretations ranging from near complete ownership and control (a common practice in pre-modern urban areas), versus a purely symbolic treatment of ownership of sexuality and an emphasis on autonomy and public participation. An important development of the

modern era has been a growing tendency to perceive women as agents who possess potential or actual labor that can positively contribute to public life and society at large.

This perception of women as productive labor became pronounced in the 1960s and 1970s. Iran's official government documents explicitly referred to women as "a relatively untapped supply of labor" that should be utilized for development. Government policies aimed at removing or revising the traditional barriers to education and labor market participation. The reforms modified the legal commoditization of female sexuality. Prohibition of child marriage, as well as equal parental rights in child custody undermined a father's ownership of his children and by extension that of his wife's reproductive labor. Limitations on polygamy, the modification of a man's unilateral right to divorce, and improvements in women's rights to divorce altered the commoditization of sexuality in marriage. Furthermore, the enfranchisement of women, along with their growing participation in the public space, labor market, and education constituted a trend toward the emancipation of women.

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**An important development of the modern era has been a growing tendency to perceive women as agents who possess potential or actual labor that can positively contribute to public life and society at large.**

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By contrast, the post-revolutionary changes have reinforced legal commoditization. The return of child custody to the father, the legalization of child marriage, the shift from an obligatory to the voluntary and contractual limitation on polygamy, the confirmation of men's unilateral right to divorce, and the increased difficulties for women to obtain divorce have reinforced the male ownership of female sexuality. As compensation, however, new provisions such as inflation adjustments for the *mahryyeh* and an emphasis on the legal rights of married women to *nafaqeh* are aimed at guarding the sale and upkeep values of female sexuality.

There also has been an explicit recognition of the productivity of female labor at home and the introduction of entitlements for household labor. Arguing that a marriage contract does not require women to perform household labor, that *mahryyeh* and *nafaqeh* are compensations for female sexuality and reproductive labor only, and that child-raising and household labor are the primary responsibilities of a married woman, new entitlements have been introduced. Post-Revolutionary marriage contracts include a stipulation of a divorcing to share up to 50% of the wealth accumulated by the husband during the marriage. The acceptance of this condition by the husband is voluntary: If the condition was not included, at divorce the woman is entitled to the wage-equivalent (*ojrat-ol-mesl*) of the household labor performed during the marriage. These entitlements, however, apply only if a man initiates the divorce and, in practice, are far less than the 50% limit or the forgone wages.

As justification, the ruling clergy argue that the traditional marriage contract does not provide financial rewards for household activities, and therefore they are a part of the new reforms. It is worth noting that *nafaqeh* and the new entitlements are used as justifications for maintaining the law that requires the husband's permission for a married woman to work outside the home. While this law predates the Revolution, since then its enforcement has been strengthened. It

is argued that men pay *nafaqeh* and *ojrat-ol-mesh*; therefore, they are entitled to control over women's time. Thus, a married woman is not a full owner of her labor and has legal constraints on her participation in the labor market.

The Revolution brought masses of women to the streets and encouraged them to be politically active. Initial attempts to force women out of the labor market proved impractical and were faced with resistance. While secular women view forced veiling as an infringement of their freedom, veiling undermined family opposition to female participation in public space for many women from religious families. Today the gender-gap in education has been substantially reduced, and in recent years 60% of all university graduates have been females. Compared to the pre-revolutionary period, the official data do not show a significant increase in women's share in the labor force. But they indicate that the participants have much higher education and skills and are involved in wide-ranging professional, managerial, and entrepreneurial activities. There are also indications that the official data underestimate women's participation rates, and that there is a large and unaccounted female informal economy that includes educated and professional women

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**In comparison to the pre-revolutionary period, Iranian women have substantially increased their levels of education, economic power, political awareness and participation, and overall presence in public space.**

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In summary, in comparison to the pre-revolutionary period, Iranian women have substantially increased their levels of education, economic power, political awareness and participation, and overall presence in public space. Legally, however, their subservience to male dominance within the family has increased. It is worth noting that the legal reforms under the Shah were based on new interpretations of Islamic law and were sanctioned by a group of the '*ulama*', although opposed by Ayatollah Khomeini and some other members of the clergy. Today a segment of the '*ulama*' believe that even far-reaching and sweeping egalitarian gender legal reforms are not contrary to Islam ([www.we-change.org](http://www.we-change.org)). So far, however, despite concessions and compromises on some other aspects, the ruling clergy has treated the legal commoditization of female sexuality as non-negotiable. Thus, the original Islamic ambiguity in women's status evolved into a contradictory and inherently unstable development of emancipation and legal subordination.

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# Where Are Iran's Working Women?

*Valentine M. Moghadam*

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The Iranian Revolution and its aftermath have generated many debates, one of which pertains to the effects on women's labor force participation and employment patterns. For over 20 years, Iran-born scholars have debated the extent of women's post-revolutionary marginalization, emphasizing the impact of ideology or economic policy. For some, Islamization led to women's labor marginalization, while others have argued that Islamization — and its attendant sex segregation — actually benefited women, in that conservative families allowed their daughters to be educated and to seek work. The fact is that 30 years after the revolution, women constitute only 15% of the formal sector paid labor force (that is, those entitled to paid holidays, maternity leave, pension, and other provisions of labor law). According to the results of the 1385/2006 Iranian census, only 3.5 million Iranian women are salaried workers, compared with 23.5 million men.



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However much as Iranians as a whole are doing well in terms of health, education, and social protection, the presumed benefits of Islamization for women's advancement look meager when compared to the social and gender indicators of other advanced developing countries.

## *WOMEN, WORK, AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY*

The case of Iranian women's labor force participation is usually made on its own terms but is best understood in a comparative or international perspective, framed by theory. The globalization literature and studies done within the Gender and Development (GAD) framework show, on the basis of much evidence across the globe, that the employment effects of globalization have differential effects on women and men in labor markets depending on occupation and sector, and depending also on the nature of the country's integration in the global economy (measured by, for example, trade and foreign direct investment). "The feminization of labor" refers to both the growing proportion of women in the labor force and the deterioration of work conditions, as "flexible labor markets" become the order of the day. At the same time, there has been a growing trend, for more educated women, of increasing involvement in a variety of professional services, including finance, insurance, and real estate jobs (the FIRE sector).

The GAD literature also emphasizes the expansion of informal and unregistered work, which can be both high-end and low-end. This includes desktop publishing, catering,

making fancy jams, designing jewelry, private language or music lessons, beauty services, sewing and alteration; as well as food preparation, hawking, and producing garments for a sub-contractor.

In this context, key questions are: How does Iran compare to other countries with similar income levels and at similar stages of economic development, such as Venezuela, Malaysia, China, South Korea, Tunisia, or Brazil? How is Iran integrated in the global economy and with what effects on labor-capital flows in general and women's labor force participation in particular? Is Iran part of the global economy and globalizing processes? If so, what have been the effects on women's labor force participation, occupational distribution, and income? If not, perhaps that says something about why Iranian women remain marginalized from the paid labor force. Are women's low rates of labor force participation a result of systematic discrimination (driven by both cultural norms and legal restrictions) or a function of the nature of the Iranian economy? Or, conversely, is this a matter of women's own choice and preference?

A number of authors have emphasized Iranian women's educational attainment, arguing that women's increasing university enrollments is a major achievement of the revolution. And yet, the expansion of female education — including the smaller proportion of adolescents in the work force and the larger share of women's university enrollments — is a global phenomenon and cannot be attributed to Islamization. The same is true with women's employment in services; in most medium- to high- middle income developing countries, female labor has shifted from agriculture and manufacturing to the services sector.

#### *WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT 30 YEARS AFTER THE REVOLUTION*

The most recent Iranian census (1385/2006) shows that the female share of the labor force is less than 20%, considerably below the world average of 45%. (The census gives the figure of 18.5%, which is at odds with the 24.6% figure sometimes seen in international data sets. It is also at odds with the higher figure in the Socio-Economic Characteristics of Households panel data, produced by the Statistical Center of Iran and used by Djavad Salehi-Isfahani.) Some 33% of Iran's female labor force is in professional jobs, concentrated in education, healthcare, and social services — hardly a seismic shift from the pre-revolutionary period in terms of gender roles. Slightly over half of all teachers in Iran are women, but the proportion of female university teaching staff is, at 20%, less than that of Algeria (41%), Tunisia (40%), Turkey (38%), and Bahrain (36%). Iranian census data reveal no evidence of a shift to the FIRE sector, and less than 4% of employed women are found in senior or executive or managerial positions.

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For the urban areas, the rather small female labor force is about equally divided between private and public sector employment. Just 20% of the urban female work force is in industrial employment (compared to 45% of rural women). Some 50% of the female work force is in professional and technical employment (54.5% with executive positions in-

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*Moghadam...*

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cluded); 11% in administrative and clerical, and 10% in services and sales. Extrapolating to discern patterns by social class, it appears that the vast majority of urban working class women are either unemployed/seeking work; economically inactive/housewives; or engaged in informal, home-based, or voluntary activities. This would mean dependence on male kin for social insurance and retirement benefits.

Given high unemployment and inflation in Iran, it is likely that the vast majority of non-employed women engage in an array of high-end and low-end home-based economic activities described above. Thirty years after the Iranian revolution, we have yet to see a systematic study of the informal sector in Iran, or a survey of the services performed by women from their homes. We know from anecdotal evidence that the practice of *mahr/mehrieh*, whereby the groom promises an amount of money to his bride, has been growing rather than declining in Iran. Can this be explained at least partly by the fact that women's employment opportunities are limited and women cannot rely on a steady income?

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**Thirty years after the Iranian revolution, we have yet to see a systematic study of the informal sector in Iran, or a survey of the services performed by women from their homes.**

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# Social Change, the Women's Rights Movement, and the Role of Islam

*Azadeh Kian-Thiébaud*

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The implementation of Shari'a reinforced the patriarchal order and institutionalized gender inequality in post-revolutionary Iran. Nevertheless, the modernization of society has led to profound changes in the lives of Iranian women and in their attitudes regarding men's authority. The modernization of women's attitudes<sup>1</sup> has in turn led to their mounting resistance or opposition against gendered social relations.

The emerging Iranian civil society is marked by the vitality of debate on the social, civil, and political dimensions of women's citizenship. The arrest of dozens of women's rights activists,<sup>2</sup> the closure of several women's magazines<sup>3</sup> and women's NGOs<sup>4</sup> — the number of which has increased from 54 in 1995 to over 600 today — and many other attempts by the government to intimidate women's rights activists attest to the increasing political importance of women's issues. Although state authorities qualify feminism as a sign of Western cultural invasion, it has become commonplace in the discourse of women's rights activists, and self-identification with feminism is no longer a taboo. Among women's rights activists, some present a new and dynamic reading of Islam to demand citizenship rights for women while others exclusively refer to universal human rights and other international charters. Despite limitations set by the current government freedom of expression and action, women's rights advocates attempt to express their views in women's press, internet sites and weblogs,<sup>5</sup> books, novels, paintings, theater, cinema, and through ongoing campaigns (e.g., the One Million Signature Campaign to change the discriminatory laws, the Campaign Against Stoning and All Forms of Violence against Women, and the White Scarves Campaign against sex segregation in stadiums).

The number of women writers, novelists, journalists, publishers, and movie directors has grown sharply. Women use the camera to unveil the mechanisms of patriarchal control and to demonstrate women's struggles against gender disparities. They highlight women's legal



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1. For a discussion based on statistical data see, Azadeh Kian-Thiébaud, "From Motherhood to Equal Rights Advocates: The Weakening of Patriarchal Order," in Homa Katouzian and Hossein Shahidi, eds., *Iran in the 21st Century: Politics, Economics and Conflict*. (London, UK: Routledge, 2008), pp. 86-106.

2. Including the recent trial of Parvin Ardalan, Mansoureh Shoja'i, Khadidjeh Moghaddam, Jelveh Javaheri, Nahid Keshavarz, Maryam Hosseinkhah, and Zhila Bani-Yaghoub, to name but a few.

3. Including the closure of the influential *Zanan* in January 2008, which has been edited since 1992 by Shahla Sherkat.

4. Including the Training Center for Women NGOs led by Mahboubeh Abbasgolizadeh and the Raahi Center led by Shadi Sadr, in 2007.

5. According to official statistics, the number of internet users had increased from 250 in 1994 to 4 million in 2006 and the number of weblogs from just one in 2001 to over 65,000 today).

and social problems and portray women as active and courageous people with strong personalities. The important success of these movies shows that the urban population is interested in modern interpretations of gender questions. Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Tahmineh Milani, Poursan Derakhshandeh, Manijeh Hekmat, Marziyeh Meshkini, Samira Makhmalbaf, and Nikki Karimi are among the most well known of these movie directors. But women's active presence is undoubtedly the strongest in the realm of literature. Some of these writers, such as Simin Daneshvar, Goli Taraqi, and Shahrnush Parsipour, had started publishing prior to the revolution. Yet others, such as Qazaleh Alizadeh (who died in 1996), Monirou Ravanipour, Fariba Vafi, Zoya Pirzad, Lili Farhadpour, Sepideh Shamlou, and Mahsa Moheb-Ali are among the many women novelists who started writing from the 1990s onward. The aim of these novelists is to occupy the public space through written expression and to give greater visibility to women, their problems, and their struggles. In their literary works women also deal with the issues of sexuality and the body that are usually considered to be taboo subjects and are prohibited in the movies.

Women also became very active in journalism. Some women's magazines published in the 1990s by Islamic advocates of women's rights (especially *Zanân*, *Farzâneh*, and *Zan*) served as a forum for discussion between female activists who criticized civil and penal codes, work legislation and the Constitutional Law, and the state authorities. Women's press also played a crucial role in establishing a dialogue between Islamic and secular advocates of women's rights. Despite their political and ideological differences, gender and class solidarity emerged among these women, who overwhelmingly belong to urban middle classes. Following President Muhammad Khatami's election, secular feminists finally obtained the authorization to publish a magazine in 1998 called *Second Sexe [Jens-i Dovvom]*, edited by Nouchine Ahmadi-Khorasani.

Women's increasing access to education, revenue earning activities, and social participation, and their disaffection with official Islam combined with their inferior positions within the social and economic hierarchy to have had an important impact on the structuring of their political behavior.

Under president Khatami, some advocates of women's rights tried to ameliorate women's legal status through interactions and negotiations with the political or religious elites. Some who attempted to modify laws through *Ijtihad* promoted discussions with reformist clergy. Although some reformist female members of the sixth Majlis (2000-2004) attempted to change the discriminatory laws, the Guardian Council overruled them, declaring that the proposed changes to the law were incompatible with Islam. The lack of change in the legal status of women during Khatami's presidency (1997-2005) led to the disillusionment and political demobilization of educated middle class women. Their lack of participation in legislative and presidential elections, especially from 2004 onward has contributed to the failure of more moderate candidates in large towns, where the bulk of these women live.

Since the election of the radical populist President Mahmud Ahmadinejad in 2005 and the intensification of repressive

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measures against women's rights and human rights activists, the gap has widened between the political elite and women's rights advocates, leading to their further autonomization and radicalization. In 2006, some secular feminists (e.g., Nouchine Ahmadi-Khorâsâni, Parvin Ardalân, and Mansoureh Shoja'i of the Women's Cultural Center) declared that they did not identify with the political and religious elite, refused to recognize the latter's legitimacy, and challenged the police and the judiciary by opting for street demonstrations. Their declared aim was to reach out to ordinary women, whose mobilization, they argued, would force the elite in power to change laws. More moderate activists (including Shahla Sherkat, the editor of the influential *Zanân*, and a number of Islamic and secular activists) disapproved of street demonstrations, arguing that the costs of such acts would be too high for the women's movement and that they would alienate ordinary women instead of bringing them into the movement.<sup>6</sup> Their moderate stand provoked the anger of radical secular feminists, who have tremendous support in the Iranian Diaspora and who accused "reformist women" of having close ties with the ruling elites and of being content with implementing change in laws through lobbying.

Despite these controversies, some "reformist" and "radical" women activists launched the One Million Signature Campaign together; however, their persistent differences contributed to further divisions, leading to the predominance of the secular feminists in the campaign. While the activists were preoccupied with their internal debates, the government prepared a new Family Protection Bill in 2007 that marks further regression of women's rights.<sup>7</sup> The government also increased its repressive policies against all women's movement activists.

Faced with this adverse development, some advocates of women's rights opted for gender solidarity. In September 2008, over 50 of these secular and Muslim women who had decided to prevent the bill's ratification demanded to meet the concerned members of Parliament (MPs), presented proposals to change the controversial provisions, and ultimately succeeded in convincing the Parliament to postpone ratification pending further investigation. Their action also provoked debates among the more moderate MPs who do not support the government of President Ahmadinejad and who agreed to modify the bill on the one hand, and pro-government hardliners who support the bill, on the other.

Despite sporadic success, the Iranian women's rights movement, still remains largely confined to the educated urban middle class women (many of whom are Persian) in large towns. It needs to strengthen ties with lower class, rural, and ethnic minority women and women in mid-sized and small towns (where the majority of the population live) who are barely represented within the movement, although their younger generation shares the egalitarian demands of women's rights activists. Despite the lack of organic relations between these ordinary women and the activists, the women's movement overwhelmingly reflects the demands of an increasing number of women. Thanks to their better education and their increasing social and economic participation, women have become aware that the current laws and institutions tend to strengthen the patriarchal order, and that the struggle for women's citizenship rights and democracy are intertwined.

6. These controversial discussions were published in *Zanân*, No. 133 (June 2006) and No. 134 (July 2006).

7. For some of the most controversial provisions of the proposed bill, see the Women's Learning Partnership website at <http://learningpartnership.org/en>.

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# New Challenges for Iranian Women

*Elaheh Koolaee*

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Women have played a crucial role in the Iranian struggle for democracy. They have played an important role not only in the victory of the Islamic Revolution,<sup>1</sup> but also in the developments that have occurred since. The reform period was one of progress in women's rights, including in the public sphere.<sup>2</sup> However, in the post-reform period, there has been a strong challenge not just to further progress in women's rights but to preserve the gains that previously had been achieved.



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## *THE REFORMIST PERIOD*

The mass participation of women in different aspects of politics laid the groundwork for the reformist movement, the impressive electoral victory of President Muhammad Khatami, and a new empowerment of civil society. They challenged the stereotype of Iranian women as subservient, passive creatures. Reformists in the government and the Parliament tried to respond to women's demands. Reformist parliamentarians were articulate, committed advocates for reform. Female MPs formed a special faction and tried hard to remove some of the obstacles to women's progress.<sup>3</sup> Assisted by reform-minded men, they succeeded in amending some articles of civil law that were against women rights.

The reformist parliament tried to change women's legal status by focusing on laws related to issues such as inheritance, divorce, child custody, and insurance. The reformist government ratified and the parliament approved the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, the Guardian Council rejected CEDAW, interpreting it as in contradiction with Islamic values. The women's faction presented a plan to reform some parts of the civil code in a package later in that period.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Mohammad Hossein Hafezian, "Political Participation of Women and the Islamic Revolution of Iran," *Discourse*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2002), p. 52.

2. Elaheh Koolaee, "Women in Public Sphere, a Case Study of Islamic Republic of Iran," *Journal of Faculty of Law & Political Science*, Tehran University, No. 61 (Fall 2001), pp. 228-232.

3. Elaheh Koolaee, "A Glance at Women's Faction Performance in 6th Parliament," *Shargh*, Nos. 215, 223 (2002), p. 3.

4. Ashraf Gramizadegan, "6th Parliament and Women Rights," *Reyhaneh*, (*Journal of the Center for Iranian Participation Affairs*), No. 6 (2004), pp. 219-255.

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THE POST-REFORM ERA

One of the most important achievements of Iranian women after the victory of the Islamic Revolution was their large presence in the public sphere. According to the traditional thinking to which the conservatives adhere, women must stay at home and essentially perform household duties and raise children while men work to earn money and manage the family. But the late leader of Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini, stressed the necessity of women's participation in all social activities, and encouraged them to take part in socio-political developments. He focused on the domestic roles of women and their family duties, but did not ignore their role in social tasks.

One of the first initiatives of the new government was changing the name of "The Center for Women's Participation Affairs" in the President's Office to "The Center of Women's and Family Affairs." For the new president of this office, Nasrin Soltankhah, women's NGOs had lost their importance. Her counterparts in the Seventh Parliament (2004-2008) had been accusatory towards the previous president of the Center for helping women improve their capacities and activities.<sup>5</sup> The government decreased the budget for women's affairs, and put its appropriations and allocation under the auspices of the Center.<sup>6</sup> This Center has focused exclusively on women who are managing their families without men, and has changed the course of its activities profoundly.

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**It became clear that there would not be room for women in the board of the Parliament and the presidency of commissions and committees of the Parliament.**

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The Seventh Parliament omitted "gender justice" in the process of amending the "Fourth Development Plan," which reformists had passed.<sup>7</sup> Very soon it became clear that there would not be room for women in the board of the Parliament and the presidency of commissions and committees of the Parliament. President Ahmadinejad said that he does not accept a gender quota, and that he perceives it as a violation of justice and human rights. Some female representatives subsequently passed the plan of "house holders insurance" that remained from the Sixth Parliament (1996-2000). The Cultural Commission of the Parliament has worked seriously on the plan for matters of dress, especially in relation to women.<sup>8</sup> Large propaganda programs promoting the *hijab* were put forth to persuade all women to put on the *chador*. Many conservatives claim Khatami's cultural policies have ruined Islamic norms in Iran. However the Seventh Parliament has finished some of remaining plans from the Sixth Parliament too. They passed the bill on conditional abortion that permitted the operation to save the life of mother in very specific cases.<sup>9</sup>

One of the serious problems facing Iranian women relates to those who marry foreigners. According to Articles 964 and 976 of Iran's Civil Law, an Iranian woman who marries a foreigner may not transfer her citizenship to her husband and children, though an Iranian man who marries a foreigner may transfer his citizenship to his wife and children.

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5. "One Month with Women in the Parliament," *Zanan* (Monthly Women Magazine), (August 2006), pp. 20-23.

6. "One Month with Women in the Parliament," *Zanan* (October 2003), p. 21.

7. "Omit the Gender, Justice and its Reflections," *Reyhaneh*, No. 8 (2005), pp. 177-188.

8. "One Month with Women in the Parliament," *Zanan* (June 2003), p. 30.

9. "One Month with Women in the Parliament," *Zanan* (June 2004), pp. 27-32.

Although the reformist parliament sought to change this,<sup>10</sup> the Conservatives reaffirmed it.<sup>11</sup>

## CONCLUSION

One of the considerable achievements of Iranian women after the Islamic Revolution has been the large-scale presence of women in the public sphere. Nevertheless, because of many socio-cultural obstacles, many women have been unable to obtain jobs commensurate with their education. Conservatives have attempted to return women to their homes, and have focused on dividing the private sphere and public sphere between women and men again. They have implemented a new gender quota plan to limit the number of girls who are admitted to universities.<sup>12</sup> They have put in place a region-based university application system whereby a girl must have the permission of her father or husband to attend university in another city!

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**Many structures and institutions must be changed according to women's needs and demands.**

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The “Family Bill” represents another major setback for women’s rights. This proposed legislation would facilitate a man’s remarriage by no longer making it necessary for him to gain the permission of his first wife. Although as a result of a huge protest by many women activists — from right and left and religious and non-religious quarters — the original bill was modified, the issue is not yet settled.

Nobody can stop the process of social change. Iranian women have used the educational opportunities afforded by the Islamic Republic to gain the knowledge and skills with which to better their situation and that of their families. Many structures and institutions must be changed according to women’s needs and demands. As is the case in all countries where traditional norms are deeply ingrained, women in Iran face stiff resistance from the conservatives. Yet, recent experience has shown that Iranian women have learned how to challenge and have succeeded in removing some of these obstacles. They, like many of their counterparts throughout the world, continue their struggle.

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10. “One Month with Women in the Parliament,” *Zanan* (January 2003).

11. “One Month with Women in the Parliament,” *Zanan* (August 2006), pp. 27-33.

12. Elaheh Koolae, “Gender Quota against Iranian Women,” *Aeen*, No. 10 (2007), pp. 54-57.

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# *Education, Media, and Culture*

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# Educational Attainment in Iran

*Zahra Mila Elmi*

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Educational attainment has improved considerably in the Islamic Republic of Iran over the past three decades. During this period the improvement for women has been greater than for men. In recent years, women have gained access to education at different levels and in many fields.



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During the first decade after the revolution, Iran experienced a baby boom due to the suspension of family planning. Consequently, Iranian educational institutions were inundated by a wave of young people in need of training during the second decade after the revolution. In addition, because of parents' support for their daughters' education and the changing attitudes of women about themselves, more women sought an education. These circumstances led to a dramatic increase in the number and share of females who entered schools and universities.

As a result, statistical differences between the number of male and female students have declined in the third decade of the Revolution. Since 1979, achievements of women in higher educational levels are improving, and the number of female students and graduates in different fields has increased noticeably in recent years.

## *LITERACY*

Statistical analysis of literacy rates in the years 1966, 1976, 1986, 1991, and 2006 indicates that educational attainment improved considerably in the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially for women. Over this period, the literacy gap between women and men has narrowed. Before the Islamic Revolution (specifically, in 1978), over 60% of the Iranian female population was illiterate. In the post-revolutionary years, women have shown an increasing willingness and effort to become literate and highly educated. Currently, more than 55% percent of first-year university students are women.

According to national census data, in 1966, only 17.42% of the Iranian female population or 1,628,000 was literate (Table 1). In the same year, the male literacy rate was 39.19% (3,928,000). These figures were 47.49% for men and 35.48% for women in 1976.

**Table 1: Literacy Rate (Population over 6 Years Old)**

Year		1966	1976	1986	1991	1996	2006
Total	Population (in thousands)	19,372	27,113	38,709	45,856	52,295	63,920
	Literate Population (in thousands)	5,556	12,877	23,913	33,966	41,512	54,084
	Literacy Rate	28.68%	47.49%	61.78%	74.07%	79.38%	84.61%
Male	Population (in thousands)	10,023	13,926	19,822	23,675	26,534	32,494
	Literate Population (in thousands)	3,928	8,198	14,078	19,091	22,465	28,835
	Total Percentage of Literate	70.70%	63.66%	58.87%	56.21%	54.12%	53.32%
	Literacy Rate	39.19%	58.87%	71.02%	80.64%	84.66%	88.74%
Female	Population (in thousands)	9,348	13,187	18,887	22,181	25,761	31,426
	Literate Population (in thousands)	1,628	4,679	9,835	14,875	19,118	25,247
	Total Percentage of Literate	29.30%	36.34%	41.13%	43.79%	46.05%	46.68%
	Literacy Rate	17.42%	35.48%	52.07%	67.06%	74.21%	80.34%

Source: National Census, Statistic Center of Iran

The first post-revolutionary national census in 1986 indicated that the women's literacy rate had climbed to the level of 52.1% and that 9.8 million women had become literate by that year. Based on the second post-revolutionary national census in 1996, 74.2% of the Iranian female population over the age of six (25.7 million) were literate. This figure was 74.7% for men (26.5 million). Finally, the 2006 census showed that 80.3% of the total female population over the age of six was literate. The corresponding figure for the male population was 88.7%.

As illustrated in the charts below, Iran has had two educational gaps: between men and women (see Diagrams 1 and 2) and between rural and urban residents (see Chart 3). The data show that the gap between men's and women's literacy rates has narrowed, as has the gap between rural and urban residents' literacy rates. The narrowing of these gaps over time is depicted in Table 1.

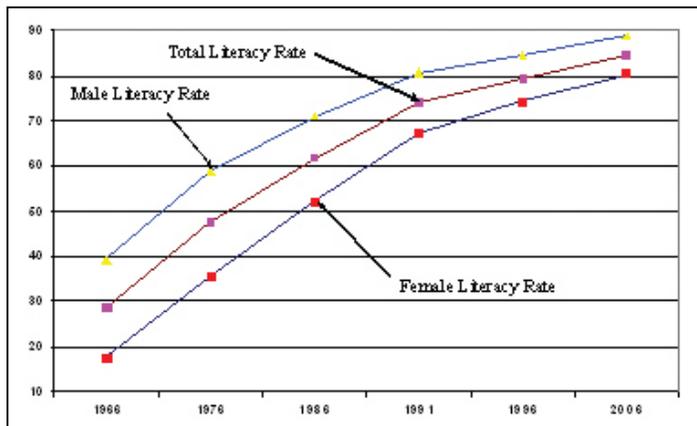


Diagram 1: Female and Male Literacy Rates in Iran

Diagram 2: Literacy Rate in Iran by Gender

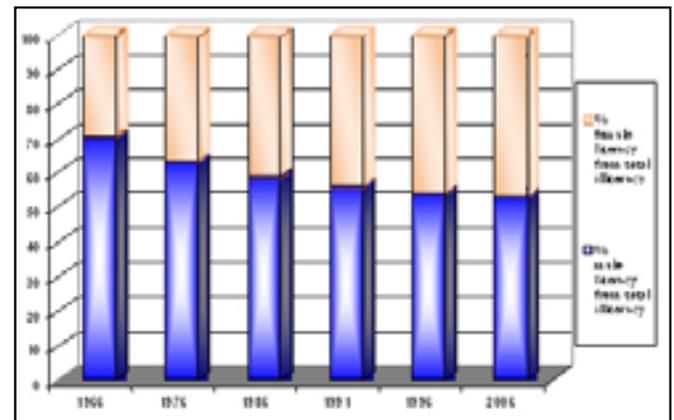


Diagram 3: Literacy Rate (Population over 6 Years Old)

*ENROLLMENT IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL AND IN TECHNICAL SCHOOLS*

The number of students and gender enrollment ratio for primary, secondary and technical schools for the four academic years 1976/77, 1986/87, 1991/92, 1996/97, and 2006/07, are shown in Tables 2 through 5.

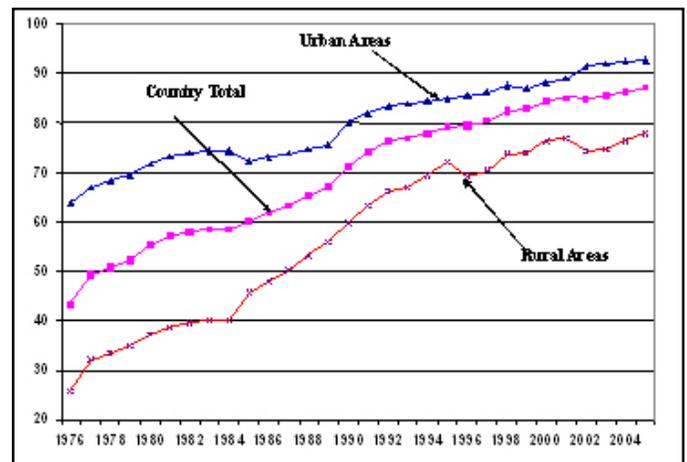


Table 2: Enrollment in Primary Schools by Gender

Academic year	Total	Male	Female	Ratio (% of total)	
				Male	Female
1976/77	4,768,588	2,939,800	1,828,788	61.7	38.3
1986/87	7,232,820	4,058,853	3,173,967	56.1	43.9
1991/92	9,787,593	5,224,343	4,563,250	53.4	46.6
1996/97	9,238,393	4,885,665	4,352,728	52.9	47.1
2006/07	5,699,506	2,946,021	2,753,485	51.7	48.3

Table 3: Enrollment in Junior secondary schools by gender

Academic year	Total	Male	Female	Ratio (% of total)	
				Male	Female
1976/77	1,368,910	875,516	493,394	64.0	36.0
1986/87	2,299,510	1,406,118	893,392	61.1	38.9
1991/92	3,541,578	2,050,707	1,490,871	57.9	42.1
1996/97	5,188,812	2,845,092	2,343,720	54.8	45.2
2006/07	3,913,928	2,092,895	1,821,023	53.5	46.5

**Table 4: Enrollment in Senior Secondary Schools by Gender**

Academic year	Total	Male	Female	Ratio (% of total)	
				Male	Female
1976/77	740,471	446,974	293,497	60.0	40.0
1986/87	1,076,762	614,026	462,736	57.0	43.0
1991/92	1,770,410	984,218	786,192	55.6	44.4
1996/97	3480635	1817811	1662824	52.2	47.8
2006/07	3695947	1890567	1805380	51.2	48.8

**Table 5: Enrollment in Technical Schools by Gender**

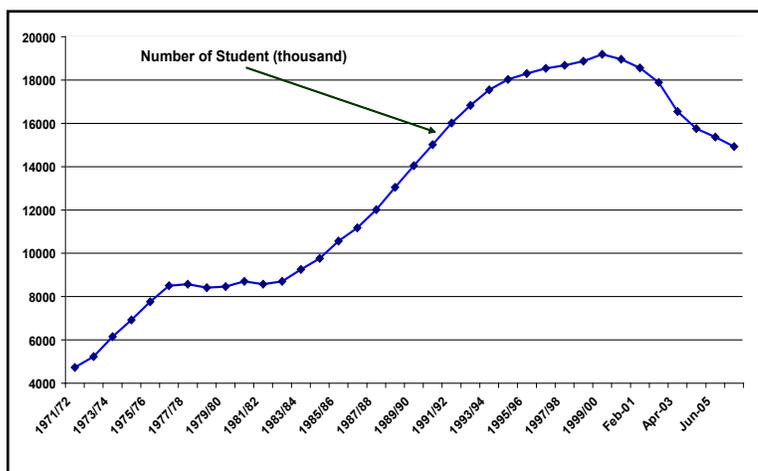
Academic year	Total (thousand)	Male (thousand)	Female (thousand)	Ratio (% of total)	
				Male	Female
1976/77	201	162	39	81	19
1986/87	207	161	46	78	22
1991/92	292	235	57	80	20
1996/97	80	60	20	75	25
2006/07	357	120	237	34	66
2006/07*	509	200	309	39	61

\* Kar va danesh is a branch of vocational education established in 2006-2007.

Source: Ministry of Education

An analysis of the trend in education by gender from 1976 to 2006 points to an increase in gender equality at the primary and the secondary school levels. In addition, the downward trend in population growth during the recent decade has led to a decrease in the total number of students at various educational levels (Chart 4). In the academic year of 1999/2000, the number of students was 19,187,000 persons and reached 14,931,000 persons in the year 2006/07.

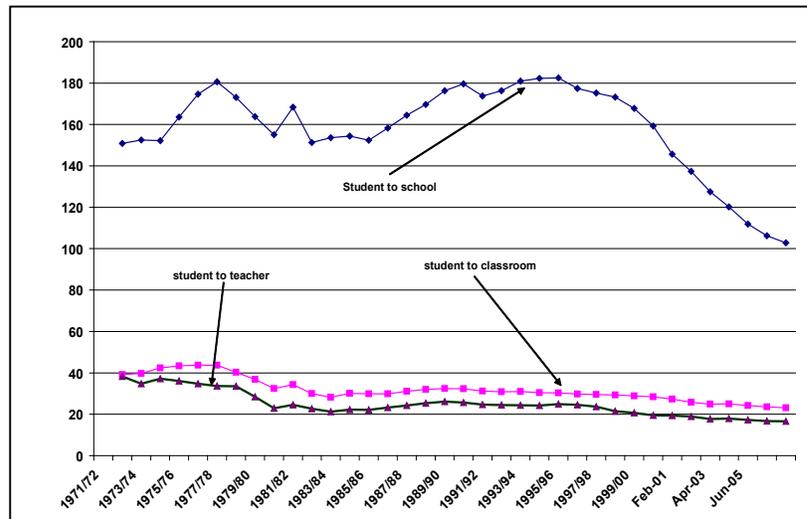
**Diagram 4: Number of Student during Academic Years 1971/72 to 2006/07**



*INDICATORS OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY*

Indicators of educational quality are shown in Diagram 5. Educational indices of the quality of “student to school,” “student to classroom,” and “student to teacher” have trended upward during the 1970s, 1980s, and half of the 1990s, but improved overall during the 2000s, owing largely to a reduction in the number of students and an increase in the number of teachers.

**Diagram 5: Educational indicators: Quality of “student to school,” “student to classroom,” and “student to teacher” during the years 1971 to 2007 in Iran**



Source: Ministry of Education

(1) Number of students and classes of the new high school level are included since 1996/97

**ENROLLMENT IN UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Over the years, the number of university student in public and private universities rose considerably. But, according to statistics presented in Tables 4 and 5, the number and proportion of girls who study in universities and higher educational institutions increased compared to boys. During the last decade, the number of girls in public universities and the private Islamic Azad University grew almost 4.3 times and 2.4 times respectively. For boys, these figures were 2.6 and 1.9 times respectively. During the academic year’s 1991/92 to 2006/07, the share of female students enrolled in public universities rose from 28% to 58%. The share also increased in private universities.

**Table 6: Number of students in public universities and institutes of higher education (1)**

Academic Years	Number of students			Associate of arts			Bachelor of arts/science		
	Total	Female	Share (% of total)	Total	Female	Share (% of total)	Total	Female	Share (% of total)
1991-1992	344,045	96,969	28.18	43,141	6,471	15.00	242,835	75,486	31.09
1996-1997	579,070	209,163	36.12	85,165	26,956	31.65	418,692	161,365	38.54
2001-2002	759,870	378,365	49.79	146,389	56,087	38.31	532,525	294,016	55.21
2202-2003	809,567	412,848	51.00	172,965	61,353	35.47	552,907	321,568	58.16
2003-2004	923,913	493,420	53.41	195,369	71,214	36.45	641,718	389,201	60.65
2004-2005	1,018,980	549,570	53.93	210,845	73,799	35.00	713,461	438,937	61.52
2005-2006	1,191,048	656,847	55.15	293,422	119,819	40.84	793,955	494,610	62.30
2006-2007	1,538,874	888,799	57.76	283,284	122,484	43.24	1,131,538	710,740	62.81

Table 6 continued

Academic Years	Master of arts/science			Professional Doctorate			Ph.D		
	Total	Female	Share (% of total)	Total	Female	Share (% of total)	Total	Female	Share (% of total)
1991-1992	14,070	2,356	16.74	39,519	11,311	28.62	4,480	1,345	30.02
1996-1997	26,832	4,771	17.78	39,837	13,304	33.40	8,544	2,767	32.39
2001-2002	35,481	9,041	25.48	34,093	16,519	48.45	11,382	2,702	23.74
2002-2003	39,174	11,103	28.34	32,159	15,914	49.49	12,362	2,910	23.54
2003-2004	42,719	13,395	31.36	30,749	16,275	52.93	13,358	3,335	24.97
2004-2005	50,226	16,878	33.60	30,291	16,410	54.17	14,157	3,546	25.05
2005-2006	57,775	21,169	36.64	29,689	16,861	56.79	16,207	4,388	27.07
2006-2007	76,406	32,783	42.91	29,455	16,613	56.40	18,191	6,179	33.97

Source: Ministry of Science and Higher Education

Includes Payam-Noor University students (distant learning university)

Table 7: Number of Students in Islamic Azad University

Academic Years	Number of students			Associate of arts			Bachelor of arts/science		
	Total	Female	Share (% of total)	Total	Female	Share (% of total)	Total	Female	Share (% of total)
1996-1997	613,468	250,596	40.85	67,725	30,082	44.42	517,522	212,044	40.97
2001-2002	806,639	390,068	48.36	200,207	92,788	46.35	568,934	283,419	49.82
2202-2003	864,190	435,435	50.39	229,906	106,714	46.42	594,205	313,165	52.70
2003-2004	968,206	481,590	49.74	291,953	132,826	45.50	634,191	332,398	52.41
2004-2005	1,098,491	529,993	48.25	378,463	165,908	43.84	676,290	346,977	51.31
2005-2006	1,197,521	574,815	48.00	417,262	182,518	43.74	731,155	372,746	50.98
2006-2007	1,289,637	593,438	46.02	453,446	186,577	41.15	779,308	383,259	49.18

Table 7 continued

Academic Years	Master of arts/science			PhD and Professional Doctorate		
	Total	Female	Share (% of total)	Total	Female	Share (% of total)
1996-1997	18,070	4,861	26.90	10,151	3,609	35.55
2001-2002	24,974	9,045	36.22	12,524	4,816	38.45
2202-2003	27,617	10,460	37.88	12,462	5,096	40.89
2003-2004	27,486	10,268	37.36	14,576	6,098	41.84
2004-2005	30,140	11,329	37.59	13,598	5,779	42.50
2005-2006	35,216	13,544	38.46	13,888	6,007	43.25
2006-2007	41,464	16,746	40.39	15,419	6,856	44.46

Source: Islamic Azad University

Both tables show the number of enrollments and gender ratios at various higher educational levels. Over the years, the number and share of women at various higher educational levels rose considerably. Tables 8 and 9 present details on the student bodies of public universities and Islamic Azad University in the 2006/07 academic year.

**Table 8: Public Universities and Higher Education Institutes (1) and Islamic Azad University in the Academic Year 2006/07 by General Fields of Study**

Fields of Study	Public universities and higher education institutes (1)			Islamic Azad University			Total university students		
	Total	Female	Share (% of total)	Total	Female	Share (% of total)	Total	Female	Share (% of total)
Medical Sciences	97,846	64,845	66.27	44,019	38,832	88.22	141,865	103,677	73.08
Humanities	788,330	505,501	64.12	552,958	318,136	57.53	1,341,288	823,637	61.41
Basic Sciences	197,096	130,621	66.27	106,141	79,308	74.72	303,237	209,929	69.23
Technical and Engineering	311,678	107,644	34.54	463,965	100,442	21.65	775,643	208,086	26.83
Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences	74,781	40,921	54.72	83,623	32,365	38.70	158,404	73,286	46.27
Arts	69,143	39,267	56.79	38,931	24,355	62.56	108,074	63,622	58.87
<b>Total</b>	<b>153,8874</b>	<b>888,799</b>	<b>57.76</b>	<b>1,289,637</b>	<b>593,438</b>	<b>46.02</b>	<b>2,828,511</b>	<b>1,482,237</b>	<b>52.40</b>

Source: Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and Islamic Azad University  
Includes Payam-Noor University students (distance learning university)

**Table 9: The Female and Male Share of Total Enrollments by Fields of Study at Public and Private University in the Academic Year 2006/07**

Fields of Study	Female Students			Male Students		
	Public Universities and Higher Education Institutes (1)	Islamic Azad University	Total University Female Students	Public Universities and Higher Education Institutes (1)	Islamic Azad University	Total University Male Students
Medical Sciences	7.30	6.54	6.99	5.08	0.75	2.84
Humanities	56.87	53.61	55.57	43.51	33.73	38.45
Basic Sciences	14.70	13.36	14.16	10.23	3.85	6.93
Technical and Engineering	12.11	16.93	14.04	31.39	52.22	42.16
Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences	4.60	5.45	4.94	5.21	7.36	6.32
Arts	4.42	4.10	4.29	4.60	2.09	3.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and Islamic Azad University  
(1) Includes Payam-Noor University students (distance learning university)

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Statistics on the enrollments of female students in universities in the academic year 2006/07 indicate that women constitute about 70% of university students in medical sciences and basic sciences, about 60% of students in humanities and arts, and 47% of students in agricultural and veterinary sciences. The proportion of women in universities is low only in technical and engineering fields.

The figures and trends presented in this essay suggest that Iranian policy-makers should focus their attention on increasing male enrollment at universities and improving female labor market opportunities lest the human capital gathered at universities not be wasted.

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# Attitudes towards the Internet in an Iranian University

Hossein Godazgar

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Iranian universities are undoubtedly experiencing their hardest period since the Cultural Revolution of 1980-1982.<sup>1</sup> All this is taking place in the name of “Islam” or “religion,” with little attention paid to the complexities of their definitions, nor indeed to those of “non-religion,” “non-Islam,” or “secular.”<sup>2</sup> This is perhaps because what has ruled Iran since 1979 is not “Islam” as a “religion,” but “Islamism,” a political ideology, which cannot escape from its essential character of selectivity, generalization, and, as a result, simplicity and simplification.<sup>3</sup> However, this ideology did not simply favor “traditionalism.”<sup>4</sup> That is, through the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Iranian Islamists “did not seek to turn the clock back.”<sup>5</sup> The Islamic Republic maintained more or less the same modern institutions, but attempted to mix their modernity with Islamic tradition and Iranian culture. This mixture, which I refer to as “cultural nationalism,” emphasizes the superiority of the Iranian nation based on ideas of traditional culture, which present a different face of modernity.<sup>6</sup>



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After the 1979 revolution, Iran did not replace modern universities with the traditional seminary schools of *hawzehs* or *madrassahs*. It maintained the same modern universi-

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1. One hundred and nine university professors have protested Ahmadinejad's policies on universities in an open letter to him, citing three major concerns: a) disregard for the principle of the 'independence of universities' and the endangering of the position of institutes of higher education by authorizing the interference of non-higher educational institutions in higher educational affairs; b) transformation of university culture and functions by imposing non-democratic and non-scientific procedures and policies on universities; c) reduction of professors' and students' participation in university life by forcing 'prominent professors' to retire and appointing non-elected chancellors. PDEN (Political Department of Etemad Newspaper). "Negarani dar bareye ayandeye daneshgah" ["Concerns about the Future of Universities"], *Rouznameye Etemad: Onvan* [Etemad Newspaper: Headline], October 15, 2008, <http://www.etemaad.com/Released/87-07-24/default.htm>.

2. In the early days of his presidency, Mahmud Ahmadinejad addressed a gathering of so-called "young scientists" thus: "Today students should protest and shout at the President, asking why some liberal and secular professors are still present in the universities ... Colonialism is seeking the spread of its own secular system." While he admitted that it was not easy to change this system, he said: "Such a change has begun." "Ahmadinejad: daneshjou bayad az hozour-e ostad-e secular dar daneshgah faryad bezanad" ["Ahmadinejad: A Student Must Shout [at the President] due to the Presence of a Secular Professor in a University"], *Rouznameye Shargh: Sotun-e vizheh* [Shargh Newspaper: Special Column], October 15, 2006, <http://www.sharghnewspaper.ir/850615/html/news.htm>.

3. L.B. Brown, *Ideology* (London: Penguin Education, 1973), p. 11.

4. S.A. Arjomand, "Traditionalism in Twentieth-Century Iran," in S.A. Arjomand, Ed., *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984), pp. 195-232.

5. S. Bruce, *Fundamentalism* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2000), p. 54.

6. H. Godazgar, *The Impact of Religious Factors on Educational Change in Iran: Islam in Policy and Islam in Practice* (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008), pp. 67-75.

ties, but attempted to add a flavor of Islamic tradition to them. This essay focuses on attitudes towards the Internet — an example of high modernity — in a major Iranian university and examines views of modernity in an Islamist context and to what extent they differ from the rest of the world.

#### ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE INTERNET

My findings were shaped by participant observation and interviewing 30 post-graduate students and seven academic staff from different faculties of the University of Tabriz, situated in northwest Iran, in the spring of 2002. The main variables were as follows: the Internet as a value system; the necessity of the Internet; causes of Internet establishment; the pleasant parts of the Internet; access to the Internet; and the effects of the Internet. The six main implications of my findings follow.

First, with reference to the question of “Internet as a value system,” none of my informants had absolute negative attitudes towards the Internet. But although the majority of them (59%) viewed the Internet positively and as a provider of easy and convenient access to scholars, scientific resources, and communications, some others (41%) described it as a hybrid phenomenon. They had no doubt that the Internet was useful, and indeed necessary for the development of science and knowledge in the present world. But, in their view, the Internet also contained some negative aspects with respect to culture and morality. Nevertheless, only a few of them wanted to regard it in the context of an ideological contest that could pave the way for the “penetration of the strange culture” (*nofuz-i farhang-i biganeh*), usually signifying Western culture. In the opinion of some others, this “penetration” could be a positive aspect of the Internet, bringing Iran to “universalism and humanism.”

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**After the 1979 revolution, Iran did not replace modern universities with the traditional seminary schools of *hawzehs* or *madrasahs*. It maintained the same modern universities, but attempted to add a flavor of Islamic tradition to them.**

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Second, all my interviewees confirmed the “necessity of the Internet,” while some of them regarded universities as being “nothing without the Internet.” They offered the following reasons for this assessment:

- a) access to up-to-date academic books and journals;
- b) the desperate need for acquaintance with the world’s scientific development;
- c) the necessity of communication and avoidance of isolation.

My informants regarded the Internet as a new technology that has widely replaced the traditional methods of acquiring information, such as university libraries.

Third, globalism was mainly regarded as a major “cause of establishing the Internet” in Iranian universities. For them, Iran had no choice other than “imitating universal phenomena, such as the Internet.” In this regard, they raised two key

points:

- a) after more than 20 years of ideologically oriented policies, “it was time to take science into account” to tackle the country’s social, cultural and economic problems; and
- b) the society was exhausted of ‘being isolated from the rest of the world.’

Fourth, a large majority of my interviewees (89%) mentioned that the availability of scientific resources and papers was the most “pleasant part of the Internet.” Only a few of them said that they also enjoyed using the Internet for leisure and news. Not surprisingly, my informants did not trade, advertisement, and sex in response to this question. (Use of the Internet for the latter purpose is illegal in Iran, and use of the Internet for trade is highly inconvenient, given the scarcity of credit cards in Iran.)

Fifth, all of my informants suggested that they had the capability “to access the Internet.” However, they complained about the lack of continuous access. They attributed this problem to the ignorance of the university authorities about the significance of the Internet; the lack of understanding by the government of the status of the Internet in Iranian society and among Iranian families; financial shortcomings for adequate service and/or misuse of the budget for ideological purposes rather than educational purposes; the lack of training courses for the use of the Internet; insufficient attention to the humanities and hence less access by humanities and social science students to the Internet; restricting access to the Internet to daytime owing to the fear of immoral interactions between male and female students during vacations and nights; and censorship of certain sites for both political and moral reasons.

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**Apart from one respondent, all viewed the “effects of the Internet” as positive.**

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Finally, apart from one respondent, all viewed the “effects of the Internet” as positive and its use for academic purposes as very useful and necessary. The impact of the Internet on scientific production in the university, particularly in post-graduate studies, was emphasized repeatedly. However, when asked about the non-academic uses of the Internet, the respondents offered differing views, as was clear from their comments on the “Internet as a value system.”

## CONCLUSION

Islamic ideology, particularly the lack of a clear definition for what has come to be known as making universities “Islamic” (*islami kardan-i daneshgah-ha*) and ambiguous aims such as “the Unity of Seminary and University” (*vahdat-i hawzeh va daneshgah*) have caused uncertainty and complexity in the post-revolutionary life of Iranian universities. Indeed, various post-revolutionary Islamic authorities have, with differing degrees of emphasis, tried to act as a “switchman” to direct the “vehicle,” in Weber’s terminology, of social institutions, particularly universities, towards Islamic particularism and cultural nationalism. But, as this research shows, and the current President Mahmud Ahmadinejad admits, this objective is not easily achievable. Nevertheless, according to the findings of this research, post-revolution-

ary university staff and students, at least with reference to those of the University of Tabriz, welcomed both communication and information technologies and presented concerns regarding the restriction of access to these technologies. Through these technologies, they appreciated the value of science and universalism in the sense of feeling interconnected with different cultures and societies. In brief, post-revolutionary Iran has certainly modernized its society, but it has done so in a way that challenges the way that modernity is perceived in the West.

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## Literary Voices

*Nasrin Rahimieh*

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The history of modern Persian literature is closely aligned with some of the oppositional movements that culminated in the 1979 revolution. The origins of modern Persian writing are inseparable from a preoccupation that literature speak to the concerns of the masses. Mohamad Ali Jamalzadeh, the reputed father of modern Persian prose, was among the first and most influential advocates of this view to overcome the elitist language and style of early 20<sup>th</sup> century literature. This move to make literature accessible to the masses revolutionized literary expression and form in both prose and poetry. The political fate of the nation, her apparent near-domination by outside powers, provided an equally strong impetus to those who saw literature as a means to national awakening. The preoccupation with the intersection of politics and writing is reflected in the first Iranian Writers Congress held at Tehran's Soviet Cultural Institute on June 25, 1946. The need for change in literary form and sensitivity to the population at large were discussed and debated, as was the desire to depict Iran's new social and political realities.



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The anti-colonial and national independence movements of the 1960s that fueled the concept of *engagé* literature influenced the Iranian literary scene and led to a home-grown literature of commitment. Many Iranian writers viewed themselves as mouthpieces for their oppressed compatriots and used their writing as a vehicle for expressing social, cultural, and political problems that beset their nation. There were notable exceptions, such as Sadegh Hedayat, the most renowned prose writer of the modern era, whose creativity was fueled by other forces as well. Not surprisingly, the most outspoken literary voices of the pre-revolutionary era were treated with reverence by opposition forces and with suspicion by the monarchy and the secret police. The stories of imprisonment, censorship, and intimidation associated with major literary figures made them into heroic revolutionaries. This history is occasionally mapped onto the contemporary cultural scene. For instance, a major thoroughfare in Tehran is named after the writer and social activist Jalal Al-e Ahmad, whose 1962 treatise *Gharbzadegi*, often translated as Occidentosis or Westitis, decried Iran's cultural dependence on the West.

Such examples notwithstanding, the Islamic Republic's relationship to writers has not been radically different from the pre-revolutionary era. The attempt to revamp Iranian culture and make cultural expression conform to Islamic values and ideals gave rise to new guidelines for the publishing industry, while by and large leaving intact the censorship mechanisms that had existed before the revolution.

There are some obvious thematic overlaps between literature written before and after the revolution. The Iran-Iraq War, the closure of universities, and the overall political clampdown of the war years drove many writers to exile. Yet many others remained in Iran and continued to find forms of creative expression and to maintain a place of prominence in Iranian cultural life. New figures and voices also emerged after the revolution.

The most immediate discernable shift was the emergence of a literature devoted to the ideals that underwrote the establishment of the Islamic Republic. The earlier leftist leanings were replaced in these new forms of literary expression with adulation for Shi'ite and Islamic beliefs.

The eight-year war between Iran and Iraq also led to the emergence of a literature of war. Ranging between personal testimonials, short stories, and novellas this literature spoke to the experiences of a large number of young Iranians and captured the harsh realities of a devastating war with whose aftermath Iran continues to grapple, long after the end of the hostilities in 1988. Davud Ghaffarzadegan is among the prominent writers today whose prose work bears witness to the war's psychological impact.

The most remarkable observable change in Persian literature after the revolution is the increasing presence of women writers. More than at any other time in Iranian history, large numbers of women have entered the literary arena. Even more importantly, they have contributed to the introduction of new forms of writing. Writers such as Shahrnush Parsipur and Moniru Ravanipur were among early trendsetters who experimented with postmodern forms of writing. Along with their male counterparts, 'Abbas Ma'rufi and Ja'far Modarres Sadeghi, they also adapted the concept of magical realism to the Persian idiom and explored new ways of situating women's lot within the currents of Persian literature.

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**The most remarkable observable change in Persian literature after the revolution is the increasing presence of women writers.**

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Women novelists are also at the forefront of reviving realist explorations of history. The unprecedented popularity of the novel *Bamdad-i Khomar (Drunkard Morning)* by Fattanih Haj Seyyed Javadi, first published in 1998, marked a turning point in women's literary production and its widespread reception among Iranian readership. The novel demonstrates that hardships faced by women do not necessarily and exclusively stem from the inequality of the sexes before the law, but rather from social, economic, and cultural values that have been deeply ingrained in Iranian history.

Numerous other women writers, representing a vibrant new generation, have added their voices to contemporary Persian literature. In addition to reaching a much larger readership, these writers have become recipients of literary prizes. Zoya Pirzad, Fariba Vafi, and Parinush Sani'i are among Iran's most read and celebrated novelists today. Their art is marked by a new sensitivity to the lives of ordinary women and their means of coping with daily demands of family and work. Their protagonists are not the extraordinary beings or heroic types of the 1960s and 70s, and bear witness to a turn away from the almost didactic focus of *engagé* writing.

Contemporary Persian literature would seem to have moved beyond the focus on educating and liberating the masses. In a dramatic departure from the past, the writer does not see herself or himself primarily or exclusively as a social or political activist. The current trends in Persian literature indicate that the experiments with writing in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century have indeed borne fruit, making literature both accessible and popular among the population at large.

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# Communication, Media, and Popular Culture in Post-revolutionary Iran

*Mehdi Semati*

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In the news media and the prevailing political discourse, Iran is often portrayed as a closed society. Characterizations of Iran as a theocratic state, fundamentalist society, and a rogue nation depict Iran as an “Islamic” totalitarian state devoid of any freedom and trappings of “civil society.” At the same time, cinéphiles the world over applaud the work of Iranian filmmakers. One can cite numerous other examples of robust cultural activities in Iran.



Iran’s popular culture and media landscape are not only vast and complex, but are shot through with paradoxes and contradictions. One of these paradoxes is the proliferation of a largely secular popular culture that has emerged out of the very context in which the state has deployed various “Islamization” projects throughout society. This is not to suggest that the state has not been successful in launching institutions and policies to propagate its version of Islamic culture. Nor does this necessarily mean that all forms of religious popular culture are products of the state. Understanding this context requires analytical work that carefully considers the state’s cultural policies on the one hand, and how Iranians (with varying degrees of religiosity) live their lives under the roof of the “Islamic” Republic on the other hand. Part of the context of everyday life, even in Iran, is the presence of “globalization” processes and effects. Another indispensable component of this context is communication technologies.

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In order to understand communication media and popular culture in Iran, we should begin with government owned and operated IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting), which, by law, is under the direct control of the office of the Supreme Leader. IRIB is a mammoth organization that covers a wide range of activities in the production and the distribution of content. Its main domestic activities include seven television channels and 14 radio networks. Its domestic broadcasting includes a variety of external television and radio services that beam programming in 27 languages. The internal broadcasting services offer a wide range of highly popular programs (e.g., entertainment, news and public affairs, and sports), which itself is far from monolithic (although the news reflects the official views of the state).

With regard to other media outlets, the commercial newspaper industry is very dynamic, with the “reformist” press in a constant tug of war, albeit often in a restrained fashion, with the authorities. Satellite dishes, though illegal in Iran, are plentiful in urban, and to some extent in rural areas as well. Iranians receive, for a nominal one-time fee, over 40

Persian-language satellite television networks from outside Iran (including the dreadful “oppositional” channels). They also receive hundreds of foreign-language satellite channels (including BBC, CNN International, Voice of America, the Bloomberg channels, and the recently launched Persian-language BBC TV). Iran was among the first countries to go online in the Middle East, and internet in Iran has become a major force socially, politically, and culturally. Presently, there are 700,000 registered blogs in Persian, which is among the top ten languages for blogging worldwide. It is estimated that by 2010 about 50% of Iranians will have at least one cellular phone (text-messaging has become a cultural and political force), and the recent introduction of very cheap “pay-as-you-go” mobile phones has pushed these numbers even higher. These are the major media components of the media landscape in Iran. With such a wide-ranging media in the present globalizing context, in a country where 70% of the population is under the age of 30, popular culture cannot help but partake in global youth culture. Here I have space to address briefly only rap music in Iran as one form of popular culture that has emerged out of this context.

Over the past four years, *chafiyeh*, the checkered scarf which has been a part of the iconography of the Iranian revolution, has made a comeback in Iran among two groups — Mr. Ahmadinejad and his ardent supporters, and underground rappers. This, in itself, illustrates the contradictions within Iranian society today. For one group, the *chafiyeh* is the symbol of revolutionary commitment, while for the other it is a hipster’s fashion accessory. Over the past four years, rap has exploded in Iran. Clearly, the production and circulation of rap music could not be possible without the new media technologies in Iran (e.g., accessible software and home studios, file sharing, Internet, cell phones). The state authorities in Iran are not pleased with the phenomenon of “underground music.” Their concern became dramatically clear when state television recently produced a controversial documentary demonizing rappers and rock musicians as devil worshippers, drug addicts, and delinquents (not unlike “moral panic” episodes in the West when punk music or rock were first embraced by youth).

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**The official “Islamized” media and their discourse, then, coexist with a secular popular culture that is in tune with what is globally popular, even as it is reflexive and intensely interested in its Iranian identity.**

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The official “Islamized” media and their discourse, then, coexist with a secular popular culture that is in tune with what is globally popular, even as it is reflexive and intensely interested in its Iranian identity. Here we could say that the wider popular culture provides a space in which the demands of state Islamization through official media and the realities of (global) youth culture and media-saturated everyday life are negotiated and reconciled. In a country with a young and largely urbanized population that has easy access to communication technologies and information, such cultural dynamism is noteworthy. In the case of the *chafiyeh*, in any case, we find the dilemmas and contradictions of the Iranian state and the revolution of 1979 that still demand careful examination.

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# Society

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# Iranian Society: A Surprising Picture

*Bahman Baktiari*

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Iranian society has changed dramatically over the past 30 years, and bears little resemblance either to the expectations of or the picture painted by the leadership of the Islamic Republic. Indeed, as much as the ruling clerics like to project self-confidence and the ability to predict the future, they could not have envisaged a society with these characteristics. While many of these surprising developments have occurred because of the policies of the Islamic Republic, others have occurred despite or regardless of them. If our picture of Iran prior to 1979 was so positive that we could not imagine anything negative happening inside the country, our picture of Iran today is so negative that we cannot imagine anything positive taking place. Yet, as this essay shows, some government policies have been pragmatic and beneficial to society.

*The “demographic gift” of the post-revolutionary period has resulted in a doubling of the population to 71 million, and more specifically a burgeoning of the youth population. Two out of three Iranians are under the age of 30. As reflected by Iran’s 85% literacy rate (among the highest of Muslim countries), young Iranians are much better educated than previous generations. However, fewer than one in three can remember the revolution, and the young suffer disproportionately from the regime’s failures. In 2007, by the government’s own reckoning, nearly every other Iranian between the ages of 25 and 29 was unemployed. A lack of jobs is no doubt one reason for the prevalence of crime and delinquency in the country.*

*The demographic surge has been accompanied by rapid urbanization; seven out of ten Iranians now live in cities. Large cities are confronted with serious issues regarding municipal management of basic services, poor planning for housing construction, and serious environmental risks. The population of Tehran has increased to 14 million (from six million in 1980). The World Bank, which in 2003 lent Tehran \$20 million to clean up the air, said the pollution in Iran’s major cities exceeded World Health Organization standards by 40% to 340%.<sup>1</sup>*

*Iranian society is a nominally austere society, much of whose actual behavior attests to the fact that the regime’s draconian policies of imposing Islamic restrictions on everything, ranging from the country’s penal code to university admission policies, have backfired. According to one source, Iranian clergy have complained that more than 70% of the population does not perform their daily prayers and that less than 2% attend Friday 1. *The Los Angeles Times*, October 21, 2007.*



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mosques.<sup>2</sup> The rise of lay intellectuals, such as Abdolkarim Soroush, is due to the fact that their argument emphasizes the separation of religion from politics in Iran, implicitly hinting at the problems caused by clerical involvement in politics.<sup>3</sup>

*Iranian society has become globalized.* A recent blog census found that there are more than 700,000 weblogs written in Persian, compared with about 50 in neighboring Iraq. Iranian bloggers include members of Hizbullah, teenagers in Tehran, retirees in Los Angeles, religious students in Qom, dissident journalists who left Iran a few years ago, exiles who left 30 years ago, current members of the *Majlis* (parliament), reformist politicians, a multitude of poets, and — quite famously — the President of Iran, among many others. This has allowed the Internet savvy Iranian youth to have access to a wide range of perspectives that criticize the Islamic Republic's policy positions.<sup>4</sup>

*The number of women graduating from Iran's universities is overtaking the number of men, promising a change in the job market and, with it, profound social change.* Well over half of university students in Iran are now women. In the applied Physics Department of Azad University, 70% of the graduates are women — a statistic which would make many universities in the West proud. Ten years ago, only 12.5% of Iranian medical students were women, and the government responded by setting a goal that half of new students would be female. Today, one-third of the 22,326 students in Iran's 38 medical schools are women. But the regime's policy of depriving female doctors of training in male hospital wards leads to tensions. In 2001, students at the Fatimieh Female Medical School in Qom, one of Iran's most religious cities, held a sit-in protest in Tehran.

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**Striking a balance between the republican and Islamic components of governance has become exceedingly complicated, if not confounding.**

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*Striking a balance between the republican and Islamic components of governance has become exceedingly complicated, if not confounding.* Iran has a confusing legal structure that is based on parliamentary legislations, codification of Islamic law into an Islamic penal code, religious rulings of *mujtahids* (*fatwas*), opinions of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (known as the *faqih* or jurisconsult), and rulings by the current Supreme Leader, 'Ali Khamene'i (*vali amr moslemin*). Although republicanism is expressed in elections for a President, parliamentary deputies, and city councils, powerful unelected clerical bodies, such as the Council of Guardians, use their authority to veto any candidate that they view as "unacceptable." Moreover, according to Article 167 of the Iranian Constitution, "whenever there is no law or the law is ambiguous, judges must refer to authoritative sources and authentic *fatwas*." This has led to thousands of contradictory *fatwas*, which makes it impossible for judges to give uniform rulings on similar violations.

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2. *The Economist*, January 16, 2003.

3. Afshin Matin-asgari, "Abdolkarim Soroush and the Secularization of Islamic Thought in Iran," *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 30, Nos. 1-2 (Winter/Spring 1997).

4. John Kelly and Bruce Etling, Mapping Iran's Online Public: Politics and Culture in the Persian Blogosphere, The Berkman Center for Internet & Society, Harvard Law School, April 2008.

*The publication of books by non-clerics directly question and challenge the clerics on their interpretation of Islamic law. To cite one example, Emad Baghi's book, *Right to Life*, argues for the abolition and suspension of the death penalty in Iran and draws on Qur'anic verses to argue that, "Crime, felony, and executions are the results of and contributors to a culture of violence."*

*As much as the ruling elite in the Islamic Republic has had a difficult time negotiating the boundaries of Islamic principles with its Republican constitutionalism, they have not been as rigid in finding a positive interpretation of Shari'a when it comes to the role of science, particularly regarding important scientific discoveries. Since the late 1990s, Iranian scientists have engaged the religious hierarchy in a lively debate on genetic engineering, biomedical sciences, and ethical issues. Iran is now investing heavily in science, after decades of neglect.<sup>5</sup> Even Supreme Leader Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i has issued a *fatwa* calling on researchers to secure Iran's position as the "leader in science" in the Middle East over the next 20 years.<sup>6</sup> They have effectively applied the principle of *maslahat* (expediency) as a way of justifying important scientific discoveries since there are no texts in the Qur'an or Sunna that expressly prohibit such innovations. Iranians have been quite open in their judgments about scientific developments in genetic engineering, artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization (IVF), and transplants. This is in contrast to the controversy that has been raging for decades about kidney transplants in Egypt.<sup>7</sup>*

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**After living in a state of semi-crisis for 30 years, Iranians have learned their lessons about revolution, the consequences of mixing religion with politics, and the costs of living in a country that is under sanctions and pressures.**

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In conclusion, Iranians from all walks of life crave stability on their borders and a government that can deliver on its promises and plans. After living in a state of semi-crisis for 30 years, Iranians have learned their lessons about revolution, the consequences of mixing religion with politics, and the costs of living in a country that is under sanctions and pressures. With 30% inflation, a 35% increase in food prices in 2008, a \$50 billion deficit, and an unemployment rate of 16% (the highest level since the 1960s), Iran's rulers will have a hard time convincing the population that they are better off in 2009.

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5. *Science*, September 16, 2005, p. 1802.

6. *Science*, December 17, 2008, p. 292.

7. The Egyptian Parliament passed legislation effectively banning any kidney transplants between Muslims and Christians. In August 2008, the Egyptian Medical Association denied that a bill would discriminate between Christians and Muslims by prohibiting organ transplants between members of the two faiths. The Association supports the controversial measure. "This is all to protect poor Muslims from rich Christians who buy their organs and vice versa," explained Hamdi al-Sayyid, the Director of the Medical Association. Under the bill, physicians who violate the proposed law would face retribution. See Martin Barillas, "Egypt Seeks to Ban Christian-Muslim Organ Transplants," *The Cutting Edge*, August 25, 2008.

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# Iranian Nationalism Rediscovered

*Ali Ansari*

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In the fall of 2007, President Mahmud Ahmadinejad welcomed President Vladimir Putin on the first state visit by a Russian leader since Joseph Stalin came to Iran to attend the Tehran Summit in 1943 along with Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. The Iranian press was in no doubt as to the significance of the visit, which for many illustrated not only Iran's importance but its return to the world stage as a power with which to be reckoned. If the press commentary echoed aspirations more commonly associated with the pre-Revolutionary monarchy, a more startling symbol of continuity soon became apparent. As the two Presidents took their positions for the official welcome and opening press conference, observers were faced with a backdrop constructed to look like the Achaemenid Persian guards that adorned the ruined walls of Persepolis.



*Dr. Ali Ansari, University of St Andrews*

The celebrated site of the ancient Persian ceremonial capital had remained popular within the Iranian consciousness, though it had been kept at arm's length by the official ideologues of the Islamic Revolution. For them, Persepolis was tainted not only by the fact that it represents pre-Islamic Iran, but perhaps more crucially because of its close association with Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. Few would have dared to exploit the symbolism as explicitly as Ahmadinejad — an unambiguous statement that Iranian nationalism, always a staple of the social consciousness, had returned to the political stage.

Yet it is also remarkable how few have noticed the significance of the transformation taking place in the Islamic Republic of Iran. To be sure, Iranian nationalism has never been far beneath the political surface, although at the onset of the Islamic Revolution it tended to be buried within layers of Islamicized rhetoric. While many have debated the relationship between religion and nationalism, and particularly the importance of Shi'ism to the development of a specifically Iranian identity, there has perhaps been less appreciation of the process by which religion has effectively been nationalized over the last 30 years, such that now more than ever we can talk of an "Iranian Shi'ism." There has been a tendency in the West to essentialize the Revolution, to view it through an Arab or Islamic prism, and above all to see it as unchanging. There are obvious pedagogic reasons for this, such as the need to simplify a complex and at times bewildering political dynamic. But at the same time, it does little justice to the reality of social change.

The ideologues of the Islamic Republic did not dismiss nationalism. Instead, they sought to define nationalism in such a way that it would play a subservient role to the dominant

Islamic narrative. However, this proved to be difficult. With the onset of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, it became apparent that the people could not be mobilized by religion alone. Confronting an Iraqi regime that had a clear interest in defining the struggle in ethnic rather than sectarian terms, the Islamic Republic was quick to adapt. The “nation” became sacred.

The impact of the eight-year war, along with the dramatic growth in literacy, the emergence of a truly mass media, and the consequent rise in political consciousness, all encouraged a vibrant popular discussion of the nature of national identity and the meaning of being Iranian. Some of this related to notions of development, especially reflections on under-development. Of equal, if not greater importance was the relationship between religion, specifically Islam and identity. Some have interpreted this development simply as the reaction of society against the oppressive Islamic dogma of the state. While this interpretation has some validity, it tends to disguise the role played by the state, if only inadvertently, in harnessing this transformation. It was, for example, the Islamic Republic that encouraged its acolytes to research the history of early Islam in Iran. It was these very devotees of revolution who began to uncover realities that were at odds with the dominant orthodox narrative promoted by the new Islamic Republic. As in the case of students of religious history in the West, it was a short step for the acolytes of the Islamic Republic from studying the history of Islam to contextualizing that history. By extension, this development was more complex than a simple return to the equally dogmatic and somewhat stale state ideology of the Pahlavis. Indeed, one of the real strengths of this rediscovered nationalism was the pluralistic character and the intensity of the intellectual debates it engendered.

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As Ahmadinejad’s press conference revealed, while the Achaemenids had enjoyed a gradual if emphatic rehabilitation in the eyes of the state, what was now different was the intellectual depth of the debates, and the crucial fact that in this case, the state was more often than not responding to social sentiment. Moreover, it wasn’t simply the Achaemenids who were basking in a new-found attention; it was the entire social and culture milieu of the Iranian world prior to the rise of Islam along with a reassessment of its legacy for the world of Islam. Through the decade of the 1990s to the present, there has been a gradual synthesis of the various narratives of Iranian history — drawing on developments in modern historiography and the rehabilitation of traditional mythologies of descent as encapsulated in the national epic, the *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings). It is a view of Iran’s place in the world which has been reinforced by the apparent reality of the growth of Iranian influence in the region. This renewed Iranian national project is ongoing and far from complete. Like all developing ideologies, it is inconsistent and contradictory. President Ahmadinejad has been the most blatant in his exploitation of this sentiment, and there is little doubt that the ruling elite will seek to harness and control it. However, history suggests that this may not be as easy as they may think.

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## Iranian “Exceptionalism”

*Sadegh Zibakalam*

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One of the strange features of 20<sup>th</sup> century Iranian leaders has been a tendency to perceive themselves, their government, and Iran as serious challengers to the present world order. Given the fact that the present world order is very much a Western dominated system, the Iranian leaders’ historic “crusade” has been broadly anti-Western. Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi as well as his successors have perceived their respective regime as offering the world a different system of leadership — one that is far superior to that of the West in many respects. Thus, Iranian “exceptionalism” rests on two main pillars: the negation of the present world order and the belief in the inherent superiority of Iranian civilization.

Iranian leaders’ repudiation of the current world order stems from their criticism that it perpetuates the gap between the less developed and the more affluent nations; enables the exploitation of less developed countries by Western multinational companies; imposes an international trade regime while denying useful technology to developing countries; drains the meager wealth of developing countries by foisting upon them luxury and consumer goods which for the most part they could do without; and pollutes the environment. They also accuse the West of fuelling domestic turmoil and conflicts between the nations of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. By keeping the conflicts burning, the West is able to sell arms to the warring parties, thereby preventing their leaders from spending money on health, education, job creation, and other services. Iranian leaders also charge that the West has interfered in the political affairs of less developed countries, including by tacitly supporting coups and assassinations, and by other methods, seriously hampering the efforts of nationalists and patriotic leaders who have challenged Western supremacy and incursion into their countries.

Another important area of dispute between the Iranian leaders and the West concerns the latter’s political structure. The Iranian indictment of the Western political system, or liberal democracy, is twofold. First, according to Iranian leaders both before and since the Islamic Revolution, the notion that genuine democracy exists in the West is an illusion. The people in the West are misled by those who hold real power to believe that they are enjoying democracy — that they, as citizens, can choose their government and that they can alter the government and change its policies through the ballot box. These are deceptions and illusions. The real power in the West is held by those who own large economic enterprises — banks, factories, financial institutions, and multinationals. They choose the government and the ruling elite through a complex political and



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media network. It is true that the people in the West believe their votes at the ballot box changes the government and appoints new leaders, but lo and behold, it is the vested interest that holds all the strings and imposes its will upon the ordinary man on the street, leading him to believe that it was his or her vote which brought changes.

Second, Iranian leaders have disputed the West's claims about human rights. Both the Shah and Islamic leaders have been criticized by the West for their human rights record. Of course, human rights violations were far more serious and widespread during the Pahlavi era than under the Islamic regime. However both regimes' responses to the Western criticism have been astonishingly identical. Neither the Shah nor Iran's present leaders ever accepted that they might have violated human rights. Nor have they ever accepted that they might have put someone behind bars for his or her political views. Both have insisted that those who were detained were criminals, were colluding with the country's enemies, or were jeopardizing state security. They also have dismissed Western human rights criticisms as being "politically motivated." Whereas the Shah stated that his independent policies were the real cause of the West's anger against him, Islamic leaders have accused Western countries as being the real violators of human rights.<sup>1</sup>

But the most remarkable similarity between the Shah and the Islamic leaders lies in their dismissal of Western civilization on the one hand and their belief in "Iranian superiority" on the other. In the case of post-revolutionary leaders, Islam has been added to the "Iranian" ledger as well. The Shah praised his "Great Civilization" (*Tamadon Bozorg*) as an alternative to Western civilization which, according to him, would end in Fascism or Communism if it failed to change its political system.<sup>2</sup> He was so confident of the superiority of the great Iranian civilization and of his political philosophy under the *Tamadon Bozorg* to the West's liberal democratic system that nearly a year before the 1979 revolution he actually advocated it as an alternative to Western democracy.<sup>3</sup>

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The idea that Western civilization is disintegrating and that Islamic Iran offers a viable and a far superior sociopolitical as well as economic alternative has become a far more serious undertaking under the leaders of the Islamic Republic. Many Iranians perceived the Islamic Revolution as a "third way" between Western capitalism and Eastern communism. The great slogan of the revolution "*na sharghi, na gharbi*" (neither the East nor the West) reflected the conviction that Islamic Iran would be a truly independent state — independent from both Western and Soviet domination. Gradually, however, the notion of "neither the East nor the West" turned into an ideological crusade implying the superiority of the Iranian-Islamic model that had been established in Iran since the revolution. The bitter eight-year war with Iraq and a host of other problems which emerged in the country persuaded many Islamists not to greatly boast the merits of the Islamic Republic to the West or the East. The ideological crusade receded during Hashemi Rafsanjani's term as President (1989-1997), and receded further during the reformist period under President Muhammad Khatami (1997-2005).

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1. Sadegh Zibakalam, *Moghdame-h bar Inghelab-e Islami* [An Introduction to the Islamic Revolution], 5<sup>th</sup> edition (Tehran: Rozaneh Publications, 2007), pp. 195-216.

2. Zibakalam, *Moghdame-h bar Inghelab-e Islami*, pp. 189-190.

3. Zibakalam, *Moghdame-h bar Inghelab-e Islami*, p. 198.

However, since the rise of the hardliners in 2005, the ideological crusade has resumed. Both President Mahmud Ahmadinejad and other Iranian leaders are once again beating the drum of the superiority of Islamic-Iranian civilization over that of the “decadent West.” According to the Iranian hardliners, the US failure in Iraq and Afghanistan as well the collapse of the US plan for the “Greater Middle East,” coupled with Israel’s defeat by Hizbullah in south Lebanon in 2004, Iran’s progress in its nuclear program despite the West’s opposition, and the great financial crisis of the Western economy in 2008 all are clear indications that the West is on the decline and that the great and historic Islamic civilization is on the rise. Of course, the more prudent and more realistic Islamic leaders have not partaken in this crusade. But the more hardline Islamic leaders enthusiastically tell their huge audience that the decadent and arrogant Western power is disintegrating, Islam is on the rise, and victory will come soon.

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**The more hardline Islamic leaders enthusiastically tell their huge audience that the decadent and arrogant Western power is disintegrating, Islam is on the rise, and victory will come soon.**

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Given the extremely dangerous ramifications that this strange “superman” attitude and an “ideological crusade” can have for peace and security in the region, not to mention its negative and tragic consequences for Iran itself, it would be an interesting academic exploration as well as immensely useful sociopolitical research to find out why so many Iranians perceive their country as the great nation which has been entrusted with the historic task of saving the world from decadent powers.

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# *Energy, Economy, and the Environment*

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# Potentials and Challenges in the Iranian Oil and Gas Industry

*Narsi Ghorban*

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Thirty years after the revolution, Iran's hydrocarbon industry is facing new opportunities and challenges. This essay attempts to evaluate the future of Iran's oil and gas sector in view of changing circumstances in the oil and gas industry and the barriers to Iran taking full advantage of its potentials.

Iran's combined oil and gas reserves are probably the highest in the world and are matched only by Russia and Saudi Arabia. Based on official statistics, Iran's oil reserves are over 130 billion barrels, which allows the country to produce more than 5 million barrels of oil per day for over 50 years. Even if half of the declared estimated reserves are considered, Iran could still produce oil at current levels for over 40 years. The gas reserves (around 30 trillion cubic meters) make Iran's gas potential second only to that of Russia. If gas production is increased by four times the current level to over 550 billion cubic meters per year by 2020, Iran can still produce gas beyond 2055. The country is also rich in mineral resources, and the mining industry could be profitably exploited in view of the availability of energy in the long term.

Iran's other major potential is its educated youth. More than 70% of the Iranian population is below 32 years; there are currently 20 million people at schools and 2 million in universities. The combination of human skills and mineral resources near the natural gas fields of the Persian Gulf makes an ideal investment opportunity in energy-based industries. For example, the cost of production of clinker and cement in Iran would be one of the lowest in the world, given the vast lime stone availability, low priced gas, local technical and operational expertise, and immediate access to Persian Gulf ports. Other energy-based industries such as iron, aluminium, and glass industries as well as Gas to Liquids and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) also have good potential. Iran's petrochemical industry is already the second largest in the Middle East, but has much room to grow.

Another potential asset that Iran can utilize is its geographical position connecting the resources of the Persian Gulf countries with those of the Caspian Sea region and Russia in West Asia as well as being within a reasonable distance on land from major energy consuming regions (i.e., the Indian subcontinent and Turkey). Easy access to markets in the Far East and Europe from the Persian Gulf is an additional advantage. Iran could be a major producer and consumer (given population growth projections) of a variety of goods and services, importing and exporting oil products, natural gas, and electricity.



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Against all these enviable potentials, which could easily make Iran a regional superpower in a relatively short time, there exist a number of major challenges that have to be addressed if Iran would like to benefit from these advantages. First and foremost, Iran needs to redefine its outlook on the world in line with the regional and international realities. The governments that have come to power through revolution usually call for a revolutionary spirit and zeal to continue, and Iran is not an exception. However, after 30 years of revolutionary behavior, it is time to give priority to the future of its young population, who seek jobs and a better standard of living. The biggest challenge is to set these priorities based on the country's real strengths and regional realities, rather than delusions. Iran must sort out its differences with the United States and Europe in order to open the door to a constructive competition from all countries for inward investment, particularly in the oil and gas industries, which is the country's engine of growth.

Iran has to address the rapid decline in oil production from the old fields, which is currently estimated to be over half a million barrels per day each year. This is a major challenge, which requires a transfer of up to date technology in enhanced oil recovery techniques, development of gas resources to be injected into old oil fields, and huge capital investment in developing new oil fields. If the political circumstances improve and the right economic incentives are offered, the transfer of technology and the much needed investment would be forthcoming. The present legal framework — “buy back” service contracts — is neither attractive to international oil and gas companies nor popular among many experts within Iran. In addition, these types of contracts have failed to bring Iran up to date with recent technological advancements. In general, the interaction between Iranian scientists in various fields with their counterparts around the world has been limited. Unless serious changes in policies are made, the technology gap will widen, with serious consequences for the industry in general and the oil and gas sector in particular.

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**However, after 30 years of revolutionary behavior, it is time to give priority to the future of its young population, who seek jobs and a better standard of living.**

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Another major challenge that Iran must address is the rising domestic demand for petroleum products and natural gas, which has been over 10% annually during the past decade. Energy subsidies and the lack of comprehensive energy policies are generally blamed for this. The idea of raising energy prices to the price level of other countries is a folly that could reduce the consumption of energy at the expense of the total collapse of the country's industry, resulting in more wide-ranging severe economic consequences. It is prudent that in the initial stage the energy prices are raised to the level where it covers the cost of energy production, refining, and transportation with a reasonable rate of return in each sector. The government could then gradually levy taxes similar to those in many energy producing countries of the world. Although energy subsidies should be directed to the lower income group, it would be unwise to think of this as a solution to the problem or use it as a political objective.

The current structure of the oil and gas industry in Iran is not suited to deal with developments in the world oil and gas sector that have taken place in the past 30 years. Major changes are needed in order to enable the present Iranian oil and gas industry to cope with the realities of the domestic and world markets. Privatization has not moved according

to plan, and Iranian's participation in the oil and gas industry has been minimal so far. After 100 years of oil and gas production, refining, and transportation, private and even state Iranian companies are not fully capable of undertaking major upstream or downstream projects without relying on foreign help. Similarly, the structure of the industry has prevented the Iranian banking system and private capital from engaging in the oil and gas business. Consequently, for every major project, the government seeks international finance and participation from foreign energy companies.

Another important issue is the lack of adequate research and development facilities and proper institutions for Iranian students to learn about different aspects of the oil and gas industry. Although the National Iranian Oil Company has had its own research center for some time and a few universities recently have opened petroleum study courses, there is no serious link or cooperation between the oil and gas industry and higher education institutions.

If the above-mentioned challenges are swiftly resolved, there will be a huge investment in the Iranian oil and gas industry, which would lead to a major positive impact on the Iranian economy and the standard of living in Iran.

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# Iran's Foreign Policy and the Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline

*Jalil Roshandel*

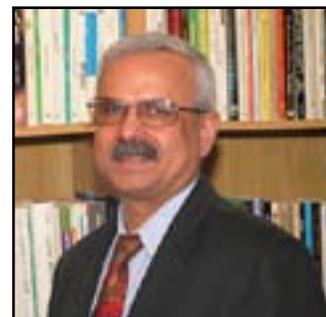
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Shortly after the revolution in 1979, Iran somewhat irrationally distanced itself from the international community. Partly because of revolutionary fervor, Iran initially made itself vulnerable. The American hostage crisis and the eight-year war with Iraq exposed Iran to economic hardship and international isolation.

Post-revolutionary Iran has sought to overcome its weakness by using economic and political resources to create an international coalition aimed at counteracting pressure imposed by the West. To achieve this goal, Iran has played different cards, including strengthening ties with Middle Eastern groups such as Hizbullah and Hamas; keeping a window of dialogue open or trying to avoid confrontation with the European Union with the aim of challenging the US embargo and political pressure; engaging in military-industrial cooperation with Russia and China in order to create a friendlier environment at the UN Security Council while advancing its nuclear agenda; and pursuing a policy of *détente* with the GCC states, with the broader objective of reducing US influence in the Persian Gulf.

In addition to these efforts, Iran has sought to build a pipeline to transfer Iranian natural gas to the Indian subcontinent — though bringing this project to fruition has proven elusive. Natural gas reserves were discovered in Iran's South Pars field ten years after the revolution. Soon after this discovery, the governments of Iran, Pakistan, and India increased their efforts to realize a natural gas pipeline project that will serve the twin purpose of increasing Iran's gas exports and meeting high energy demand in South Asian countries. The Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline, also called the "Peace Pipeline," has special significance for both economic and political reasons. Not only would this project greatly benefit energy-deficient countries such as India and Pakistan, but it also has the potential to affect the nature of the relations among them and to contribute to greater regional stability.

Iran, which has the world's second largest proven natural gas reserves after Russia, has been eager to exploit this resource not only as source of revenue, but also as leverage for political gains. India, with an increasing need for energy as its population quickly approaches 1.3 billion, is the biggest potential customer. Pakistan, which refuses to establish normal trading ties with India, also can benefit greatly from the pipeline by earning hundreds of millions of dollars in transit fees and other annual royalties from both Iran and India. Were this pipeline to be constructed, Pakistan's role between Iran and India



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would be very similar to that of Ukraine between Russia and the European Union.

The United States has been opposed to the gas pipeline project, citing various security concerns. Washington is fearful that a situation might emerge where these countries would directly or indirectly confront the United States and other Western countries for the control of energy bases. In addition, emerging strategic relations between Iran and India could lead to cooperation in the nuclear sphere, or at a minimum provide the revenue that could be used to further Iran's alleged nuclear weapons program and its support for terrorism. In addition, this project could help to shape an environment in which Iran might be able to perpetuate its poor human rights record.

Until recently, Iran faced two main challenges in bringing this project to fruition. The first challenge is the historic conflict between India and Pakistan over Muslim Kashmir, in which Iran has taken the pragmatic stance of non-intervention. Regarding the Kashmir conflict, it is worth noting that Iran has had similar experiences with its northern neighbors, maintaining a more or less neutral position on the Chechens' conflict with Russia, basically because of the strategically significant gains that this posture promised to yield. Similarly, Iran's position on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh was driven by strategic concerns, which ruled out taking a pro-Azeri position, rather than by religious ideology.

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**Were this pipeline to be constructed, Pakistan's role between Iran and India would be very similar to that of Ukraine between Russia and the European Union.**

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The second and more important challenge was and still is the American perception — with which most Western states appear to agree — that Iran should not be allowed to make long-term commitments on its strategic resources with non-Western countries. It is important to mention that these Western concerns are not limited to Iran; there is a general concern that the revenues generated by Pakistan also could be further used to support terrorist activities, depending on who channels the funding. The Pakistani involvement in the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November 2008 confirms that this concern is not baseless.

The attacks in Mumbai undoubtedly had direct and lasting implications for international security, but its immediate regional impact was to disrupt Iran's efforts to reach a final agreement on the pipeline project at a time when there were signs of progress despite the change of government in Pakistan. Following the Mumbai attacks, however, Iran's negotiations with India and Pakistan on the issue of the gas pipeline came to an abrupt halt. The IPI project seems unlikely to move forward any time soon. Many strategists believe that Pakistan's *raison d'être* is deeply rooted in the conflict with India. If their assessment is correct, then Iran either will have to wait a long time for the Peace Pipeline to materialize or look for other highly costly and doubtful options like transiting the pipeline through waters not far from Pakistan's southern shores.

The focal issue for Iran is to push the pipeline project into an operational phase. However, Iran faces several obstacles and uncertainties. First, although the United States recognizes the growing energy needs of India and Pakistan, it has

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*Roshandel...*

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repeatedly expressed concerns over international participation in energy projects with Iran. Second, it is not clear which countries/companies will eventually become involved in the implementation of the project. China, Russia, Japan, and even some European countries have expressed interest in the project's long-term potential. Obviously, Russian involvement in the pipeline project, in addition to their involvement in Caspian Sea projects, could complicate the situation further by reducing US companies' participation in the region.

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**The Mumbai terrorist attacks have disrupted Iran's politico-economic strategy.**

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In conclusion, the Mumbai terrorist attacks have disrupted Iran's politico-economic strategy. Indeed, they have deprived Iran of a major foreign policy achievement — of which there have been very few in the past 30 years.

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# Environmental Snapshots in Contemporary Iran

*Mohammad Eskandari*

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Pollution is a familiar story to Tehranis. Every winter a black, smelly cloud accumulates over Tehran. But the scale and intensity of the newest phase of invading toxic pollutants seems to have taken everybody by surprise. The sick and elderly are warned to stay indoors. Schools might be closed for a week. The officials estimate that the life expectancy of every resident of Tehran has dropped by five years due to pollution. And the argument over which institutions are responsible, and what measures should be taken, seem to be leading nowhere. The cars responsible for producing over 90% of the pollutants are an integral part of urban transportation and a vital source of income for many Tehranis. At the same time, the government is paying over \$9 billion every year to subsidize gasoline that keeps the cars running. Even so, Tehran's air pollution is but one case among the complex environmental problems in need of radical changes that are too politically sensitive to be taken on by any government.

As Tehran's air pollution crisis reached its peak, Iran's first environmental news agency — IREN — launched its website.<sup>1</sup> Almost all other national and local dailies also cover environmental news routinely. Many even have a special environmental page, a sign of heightened environmental awareness. Yet the very existence of these newspapers is under threat. An increasing number of papers and journals recently have been forced to shut down following sham trials, while the remaining ones find themselves at the mercy of an unrelenting press court and a repressive press law.

The number of environmental NGOs has been on the rise since President Muhammad Khatami opened the door to civil society institutions. One expert put their number at 500 in 2003.<sup>2</sup> These grassroots initiatives are promising indeed. Yet most of them have few or no resources — no labs, maps, or satellite image processing capability. They rely completely on the voluntary work of concerned citizens. They do not have a clear mission. In most cases, their officials are poorly trained and are poorly connected to universities or research institutions. And their activists try to stay away from suspected



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1. Iran NonGovernment Environment News Network, <http://www.iren.ir/>. See also B. Rohani's interview with Nasser Karami at Radio Zamaaneh, [http://zamaaneh.com/rohani/2008/12/post\\_42.html](http://zamaaneh.com/rohani/2008/12/post_42.html).

2. See Bagher Namazi's summary report about Iran's NGOs at the Wilson Center, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=events.event\\_summary&event\\_id=40196](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=events.event_summary&event_id=40196). Mr. Namazi, who has been running an NGO empowerment center, the Iran NGO Initiative, is the most reliable source about Iranian NGOs, yet this number should be taken with caution. Some of these so-called NGOs consist of a few enthusiasts in a small neighborhood with no real activity other than regular friendly meetings.

international advocacy institutions. Most importantly, they have no clear standing in the decision-making process. No wonder these NGOs have not yet been able to successfully oppose even a single project in the country.

There are reports about the sad condition of Iranian lakes, rivers, groundwater, and other water systems. Lake Bakhtegan has gone completely dry.<sup>3</sup> Anzali lagoon is considered by many experts to be terminally doomed.<sup>4</sup> Zayandeh Rood River in Isfahan annually goes dry in some seasons.<sup>5</sup> And with the demise of each, whole ecosystems are gone forever. Apart from record level drought, extensive dam construction and water diversions are behind this sad scene. Iranian officials seem to be obsessed with dam construction, when the adverse social, economic, and environmental impacts of large dams are now common knowledge. The guiding principle of water management in Iran is still the discredited view of not letting any drop of water be “wasted.”<sup>6</sup> The result is drying lakes. Why are dams still so central to water management in top-down development practices in Iran? Why is the opposition to them ignored even in the most extreme cases, such as Sivand Dam in Fars Province?

Lake Uromiyeh in the northwest has been in the news lately because it is going dry and its marine life is being destroyed. This is also a result of dams and water diversions.<sup>7</sup> This lake also has been subject to one of the world’s most bizarre engineering projects: a bridge is being built by pouring cement, sand, and rock into the bottom of the lake to fill it up to the surface and literally cut it in half. The idea is to build a road through it that reaches the bottom of the lake.<sup>8</sup> Had the bridge been completed as originally designed, the project would have disrupted completely the ecological life and functions of this lake. Needless to say, this unified body of water kept moving, defying the engineering feat. How are these “development” decisions made? Who is overseeing the implementation of these projects? Where is Iran’s Environmental Protection Organization?

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### Where is Iran’s Environmental Protection Organization?

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In the north of Iran, all reports indicate that the Caspian Sea is seriously ill. Its only mammal, the Caspian seal, is disappearing at an alarming rate.<sup>9</sup> Overfishing is threatening its fish stocks and fisheries, and its sturgeon and other caviar

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3. “Bakhtegan lake gone dry,” BBC Persian, August 28, 2008, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/story/2008/08/080820\\_mg\\_bakhtegan.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/story/2008/08/080820_mg_bakhtegan.shtml).

4. Holčík, J. and J. Oláh, “Fish, fisheries and water quality in Anzali lagoon and its watershed,” FAO, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/AD192E/AD192E00.htm>.

5. “Zayandeh Rood gone dry,” BBC Persian, June 29, 2008, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/story/2008/06/080629\\_an\\_zayanderood.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/story/2008/06/080629_an_zayanderood.shtml).

6. Persistence on not letting water be ‘wasted’ by completing its circle is such a common view in Iran that it is even repeated in Friday prayers.

7. Zoltan Vekerdy, “Integrated Water Resource Management for the Uromiyeh Basin,” Water Food Ecosystems, <http://www.waterfoodecosystems.nl/?page=1920>.

8. See also these two news reports about the bridge: B Rohani, “Environmental impacts of Uromiyeh bridge,” RadioZamaneh, [http://zamaaneh.com/rohani/2008/11/post\\_29.html](http://zamaaneh.com/rohani/2008/11/post_29.html) and Esmail Karom, “Environment, the victim of poorly studied development projects,” Radiozamaaneh, [http://radiozamaaneh.com/rohani/2008/08/post\\_243.html](http://radiozamaaneh.com/rohani/2008/08/post_243.html).

9. “Caspian’s only mammal on the verge of extinction,” BBC Persian, October 14, 2008, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/science/story/2008/10/081014\\_mg\\_iucn.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/science/story/2008/10/081014_mg_iucn.shtml).

producing fish are going extinct.<sup>10</sup> A kind of comb-jelly fish, *Mnemiopsis*, an invasive species, is destroying the ecological balance.<sup>11</sup> Oil pollution, nuclear pollution, and urban waste are running into it and are threatening the ecosystem. Yet Iran and the other countries surrounding this body of water are still fighting over how to divide it between them. How are they going to address the pressing environmental problems of this sea absent a working framework for dialogue and cooperation?

What do these snapshots suggest? That the environmental problems faced by Iran are tied to Iran's confused and rapidly changing political scene. Three decades after the revolution of 1979, there is still intense competition among political factions on how to define what it means to be an Islamic Republic. It is still not clear what it means to be a citizen of Iran, i.e. what rights and duties come with citizenship. A degree of freedom of the press exists, but the free press is still under constant threat. It is still not clear what model of economic development the country is pursuing. It is not clear how important decisions are negotiated, what institutions are involved, where the general public stands with regard to them, who is participating, whose values and aspirations are represented through what mediums, and whose voice is silenced. Overseeing institutions are constantly sidelined. The relationship between Iran and its neighbors, while friendly, is far from actively cooperative. Iran's relations with the international community and international institutions of governance are also ridden with tensions. It is only in this political context that Iran's mounting environmental problems can be understood. Absent a resolution of these contradictions, the environmental problems faced by Iran are the last thing in the mind of its citizens.

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**The environmental problems faced by Iran are tied to Iran's confused and rapidly changing political scene.**

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10. "Iranian official warns Kaviar fish going extinct in a decade," BBC Persian, September 21, 2008, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/science/story/2008/09/080921\\_mg-caviar.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/science/story/2008/09/080921_mg-caviar.shtml).

11. UNDP, "Comb-jelly spreading through the Caspian Sea," <http://maps.grida.no/go/graphic/comb-jelly-mnemiopsis-leidy-spreading-through-the-caspian-sea-invasive-species>.

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## Back to the Future: Bazaar Strikes, Three Decades after the Revolution

Arang Keshavarzian

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Gauging from the events in Iran's bazaars, October 2008 had an uncanny resemblance to October 1978. During the Islamic revolution, *bazaaris*, responding to the *ancien régime's* misconceived scheme to address rampant inflation by identifying and prosecuting alleged profiteers, had organized nationwide closures. Three decades later, *bazaaris* in Isfahan and subsequently in Mashhad, Shiraz, Tabriz, and Tehran challenged the government's attempt to impose a value-added tax (VAT) by closing their shops and offices. After several days of strikes and vocal criticism by industrialists and traders alike, the government suspended the new tax. This about-face was reminiscent of the old order. The government sent security forces into the bazaars as the state-run *Kayhan* daily described the strike as "an anti-national movement" and branded the *bazaari* protesters as "wealthy leech-like people" and "smugglers." Although the more recent round of bazaar closures lasted just a few days and was not connected with activism in other social sectors, one is nonetheless tempted to assume that not much has changed in the bazaar or in its relationship with the state.

Despite the change in regime from one that was unabashedly hostile to the bazaar and its "traditional" ways to a post-revolutionary regime that the *bazaaris* helped bring to power, the *bazaaris* have continued to resort to public dissent to express their antipathy towards the political establishment and protect their economic interests. As in the 1970s, it was economic apprehension, rather than religious passion that moved *bazaaris* to political action.

This apparent continuity in state-bazaar dynamics stems from a number of factors. Notwithstanding the rhetoric about safeguarding Islamic values, the Islamic regime has been as interested in transforming and developing the Iranian economy as its predecessor, especially since the end of the Iran-Iraq War. Supporters of the short-lived VAT, for instance, justified it as a modern and progressive system used in Europe. On the other hand, the conflict over the imposition of a new tax system that will require greater transparency on the part of businesses, not only threatened the bottom line of merchants, but also evoked a central and long-standing dilemma for all Iranians — can the state be trusted? At the core, *bazaaris* are concerned about what the state may do with greater access to their business records as well as revenue accruing to the treasury. Like previous unaccountable regimes that have ruled Iran, the Islamic Republic has not been transparent, efficacious, or just in its spending practices. The mistrust of the



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Iranian state is endemic, but the specifics of Mahmud Ahmadinejad's presidency have exacerbated it. The new tax was imposed allegedly with little communication with the business community. In the same week that the strikes spread from Isfahan's gold and jewelry bazaar to other cities, a prominent merchant and long-standing member of the Chamber of Commerce described Ahmadinejad's economic policies as a complete failure and his belacose foreign policy as resulting in the "self-sanctioning" of Iran's economy.<sup>1</sup>

However, state-bazaar relations and the bazaar itself have not remained the same over the last three decades. In fact, the events of October 2008 were exceptional. In the decades prior to the revolution, the bazaar was politically potent, and not merely because it enjoyed economic resources and was centrally located in Iran's urban morphology. What made bazaars act as if they were a unitary and solidaristic entity were arbitration mechanisms, promissory notes, multilateral credit systems, informal religious circles, and expansive kinship webs. These practices blurred and combined economic, social, and cultural registers by forging dense, long-term, and multifaceted social relationships within the bazaar community that bridged and compensated for the social stratification, political diversity, and economic specialization and rivalries inherent among *bazaaris*. For this reason, with and without the support of the clergy, students, and intelligentsia, *bazaaris* throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been able to confront tyrannical rule and protect their "collective interests," defined and framed in different ways over time.

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**With and without the support of the clergy, students, and intelligentsia, *bazaaris* throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been able to confront tyrannical rule and protect their "collective interests," defined and framed in different ways over time.**

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Yet, "religious shopkeepers" and "traditional merchants" were not supposed to go on strike against the Islamic Republic as they did against the Western-oriented monarchy. Under the current regime, the Islamic associations in the bazaars and the *bazaaris*' long-standing ties with the clergy (and Khomeinist tendency in particular) are assumed to preclude the need to take to the streets and clash with security forces to change state policy.

This view of a *bazaari*-regime alliance captures the historical and sociological reality of kinship, economic, and social affinities between some members of the bazaar and the clergy. It also reminds us that some of the earliest non-clerical supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini were religiously oriented political activists who were merchants or came from merchant and petty-trading families, who have in several cases parlayed their long-standing relationship with and loyalty to Khomeini and his former students into political capital and positions in ministries, foundations, and other state and parastatal organs.

However, the *bazaaris* were not uniform or consistent supporters of Khomeinism. In fact, immediately after the revolution an important segment of the bazaar clearly favored Mehdi Bazargan's more liberal and lay brand of political Islam. The relative quiet in the bazaars in the 1980s had more to do with the strong-handed tactics of the ascendant Khomein-

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1. "I am an Emperor: Interview with Asadollah 'Askarowladi," *Jam-e Jam*, 16 Mehr, 1387 (October 7, 2008), <http://www.jamejamonline.ir/newstext.aspx?newsnum=100951039096>

ists and the Iran-Iraq War than with consent and approval of the consolidation of the Islamic Republic. The eight-year war was critical for it both promoted the rhetoric and actual spirit of national unity at the expense of political diversity, and because war mobilization created a war economy under the auspices of the state ministries that systematically stripped the *bazaaris* of their historic role in international and local commerce. With the end of the war and the death of Khomeini, though the smoldering political and social discord came to the fore, the levers of the economy remained in the firm grasp of the state and its clientistic web. *Bazaaris* were left with two second-rate options: They could act as dependent agents of large quasi-state conglomerates with oligopolistic privileges, or they could reconfigure their activities to tap into new networks, in particular the cluster of free trade zones in the southern Persian Gulf and Dubai. In this growing regional economy, the old *bazari* elite were often rendered junior partners to purposefully transnational, polyglot, and stealth circuits of trade. This new economy rewarded agility, adaptability, transience and multi-functionality, rather than the traits historically lauded in the bazaar — rootedness, multi-generational reputation, conviviality, and specialized expertise.

Iran's large urban consumerist society and the structure of the macro-economy have ensured that commerce remains lucrative, and many *bazaaris* continue to be wealthy in both relative and absolute terms. However, the transformations directly and indirectly resulting from state policies and the *bazaaris'* attempt to negotiate them have rendered the bazaar a very different social constellation than it was during 1977-1979. The political-economic and social transformations subsequent to the revolution rendered the bazaar as collectively fragile and the sorts of events Iranians witnessed in October 2008 rare and surprising. It is no coincidence that the leaders of the recent strike were jewelers and that carpet merchants were prominently involved; due to the very nature of the commodities they trade, these are sectors that have been better able to maintain the close-knit relations essential for making the bazaar more cohesive and capable of engaging in collective action.

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**The political-economic and social transformations subsequent to the revolution rendered the bazaar as collectively fragile and the sorts of events Iranians witnessed in October 2008 rare and surprising.**

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Anniversaries of the revolution are moments in which the Islamic Republic, its detractors, and many ordinary Iranians are encouraged to draw direct comparisons between 1978-9 and the current period. We are invited to deduce that today's Iran is a direct outcome of the events, struggles, and emotions that culminated in the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a new order. Yet, these linear narratives of contemporary Iran that set forth from 1979 are too easy. Social change tends to be more like a kaleidoscope where transformations interact and refract into unintended and unpredictable constellations, rather than an arrow that sets out from the bow of a clear-sighted archer. As the plight of the *bazaaris* suggests, Iran 30 years after the revolution is a society produced by policymakers and ordinary Iranians, but made under circumstances not entirely foreseen let alone of their own choosing. More than simply being empirically shoddy, over-emphasizing the revolution ironically destines *bazaaris*, and all Iranians, to blindly reenact history, rather than participate in its making, as was the case in the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

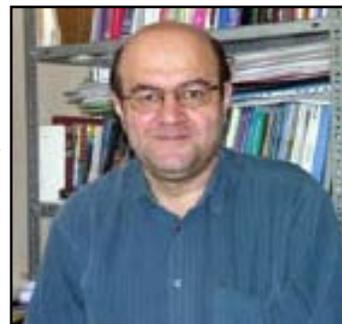
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## Iran Para-governmental Organizations (*bonyads*)

Ali A. Saeidi

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The establishment of several para-governmental organizations (*bonyads*) following the revolution of 1979 in Iran has created a large socio-economic sector. This sector tried to harness a mass society by creating parallel structures of revolutionary legitimacy and authority in order to contribute to the consolidation process. When, in the aftermath of the revolution of 1979, the properties of the Shah and the royal family were confiscated, the control of these vast fixed and liquid assets passed on to religious leaders in the forms of newly established *bonyads*, and increased their financial independence. Ayatollah Khomeini, in his letter to the Revolutionary Council, mandated that “all of the Shah’s and royal family’s liquid assets should be deposited in the banks in the name of Revolutionary Council.” He directly asked the revolutionary committees across the country to implement this injunction and called these assets spoils (*ghanimat*, pl. *ghana’em*) and added that they must be kept and controlled separately from state properties.<sup>1</sup>



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These *bonyads* claim to conduct a variety of activities related to social work, advisory, social, and rehabilitation services for satisfying the needs of low-income groups, improving the conditions of families of martyrs, former prisoners of war, needy rural dwellers, guardian-less households, the disabled, and the handicapped. The *bonyads* active in this regard include the Martyrs’ Foundation (*Bonyad-e Shahid*), the Imam Khomeini Relief Aid Committee, the Oppressed and Disabled Foundation, the Housing Foundation, and the 15<sup>th</sup> Khordad Foundation.

The *bonyads* maintained the hegemony of revolutionary forces over the subordinated classes and assisted them by administering social welfare and reconstruction programs. Yet, they are a unique product of the revolution in the sense that the creation of an Islamic state was mainly based on Ayatollah Khomeini’s doctrine that the restoration of Muslim unity depended solely on the establishment of a government having the real interests of Muslims at heart.<sup>2</sup>

Criticizing the machinery of the old regime as being in line with the capitalist mode of production, an instrument of dependence, and a system that had established a rentier

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1. Ruhollah Khomeini, *Sahifeh-ye Nur [Pages of Light: A Collection of Speeches and Pronouncements]*, Vol.17 (Tehran: Ministry of Islamic Guidance, 1984), p. 124.

2. Ruhollah Khomeini, *Nameh’i as Imam Musavi Kashifal-Ghita* (Tehran, 1976), pp. 41–42; and H. Enayat, “Iran: Khomeini’s Concept of ‘Guardianship of the Jurisconsult,’” in James Piscatori, ed., *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 160–180.

economy, the Islamic state tried to create an Islamic economic framework on the basis of independence, self-sufficiency, and distributional justice in practical terms. It was impossible to apply the economic aspect of religious injunctions, such as collecting the alms-tax, protecting the poor, or supervising endowments (*awqaf*) within the Islamic state without the creation of *bonyads*. At first glance, it seemed that, in the immediate aftermath of the revolution, the religious and revolutionary leaders did not trust the provisional government and state enterprise to fulfill this truly religious obligation. In subsequent years, however, the *bonyads* expanded, evolving from religious charities into giant private monopolies with no governmental oversight of their operations and institutions that could contribute to the ideological and cultural needs of the Islamic state.

The *bonyads* have embodied a contradictory position within the religious establishment and have reinforced part of the dual structure of power in the Islamic state when they work parallel with government enterprises. Although the establishment of the Islamic Republic led to the integration of the religious establishment into the political system by the application of the concept of “Guardianship of the Jurisconsult” (*velayat-e faqih*), the religious leaders were not inclined to apply the economic aspect of religious injunctions within government policies.

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**The *bonyads* have been actively involved in Iranian politics by propagating the dominant ideology in a wide range of social and cultural activities.**

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The revolution led to the integration of religion and state, resulting in the ‘*ulama*’ as the sole rulers and arbiters of the political order, including the enforcement of the Islamic penal code. Nevertheless, none of the governments that have taken office have integrated some of the other important religious injunctions, such as collecting the alms-tax and administration of *awqaf*; nor have they let the religious institutions responsible for these financial practices function separately from the state organizations.<sup>3</sup> For instance, the *Bonyad-e Astan-e Qods-e Razavi*, the most important charitable foundation, based on the shrine of Imam Reza at Mashad, continued to be controlled by religious leaders.

The *bonyads* have been actively involved in Iranian politics by propagating the dominant ideology in a wide range of social and cultural activities. This major function reinforced the consolidation of political authority for new men of power by sustaining the revolutionary ideology, assisting the disciples of religious leaders with secular backgrounds in occupying second-tier positions in the state, and facilitating social mobility for the lower middle classes. In fact, these organizations were established in order to assist institutionalization of the ideology of the ruling class by producing an ideological apparatus for the new regime, given that the revolutionary forces could not trust the old regime’s bureaucratic apparatus. They also increased the rate of social mobility among the lower middle classes and supporters of revolutionary forces in order to extend the power of Islamic ideology. They assisted individuals from these classes in moving into new economic, social, and occupational positions.

In the post-revolutionary era thousands of professionals, white-collar workers, students, and teachers of both liberal

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3. H. Amirahmadi, “Bonyad,” in John L. Esposito, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 1 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 234–235.

and radical persuasions, who were purged, imprisoned, executed, or who fled into exile were replaced with members of the lower middle classes who supported the revolutionary regime by the *bonyads*.<sup>4</sup> These organizations then took advantage of the situation to circumvent the quota system for higher education in order to set up a system for producing a new cultural elite. The special higher education quota has been set aside for these organizations in order to solve the difficulties confronting the regime resulting from a minimal degree of knowledge among potential appointees. This exemption enables the *bonyads* to allocate key positions to those who support the ruling regime.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, it can be concluded that since the revolution, *bonyads* have facilitated social mobility by supporting members of lower middle classes with lay backgrounds in occupying the secondary positions in the state apparatus. They enabled the Islamic state to implement the policy of training and distributing human capital by controlling accessibility to higher education and public sector employment to the advantage of special social groups. In stages, they helped restructure the state apparatus. In fact, the revolutionary regime needed the resources of these organizations to consolidate and expand the central state apparatus.<sup>6</sup>

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**Since the revolution *bonyads* have facilitated social mobility by supporting members of lower middle classes with lay backgrounds in occupying the secondary positions in the state apparatus.**

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4. A. Ashraf, "Charisma, Theocracy, and Men of Power in Post revolutionary Iran," in Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner, eds., *The Politics of Social Transformation in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994), p. 118.

5. N. Habibi, "Allocation of Educational and Occupational Opportunities in the Islamic Republic of Iran: A Case Study in the Political Screening of Human Capital in the Islamic Republic of Iran," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 22, no. 4 (1989), p. 23.

6. For more see Ali A. Saeidi, "The Accountability of Para-governmental Organizations (*bonyads*): The Case of Iranian Foundations," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 37, no. 3 (September 2004), pp 479-498.

# Poverty and Inequality since the Revolution

*Djavad Salehi-Isfahani*

Thirty years ago, Ayatollah Khomeini proclaimed equity and social justice as the Revolution's main objective. His successor, Ayatollah Khamene'i, continues to refer to social justice as the revolution's defining theme. Similarly, Presidents Khatami and Ahmadinejad, though they are from very different political persuasions, placed heavy emphasis on social justice in their political rhetoric. Yet the very fact that 30 years after the revolution social justice continues to occupy the highest place in Iran's political discourse implies that this goal of the revolution remains as elusive as ever.



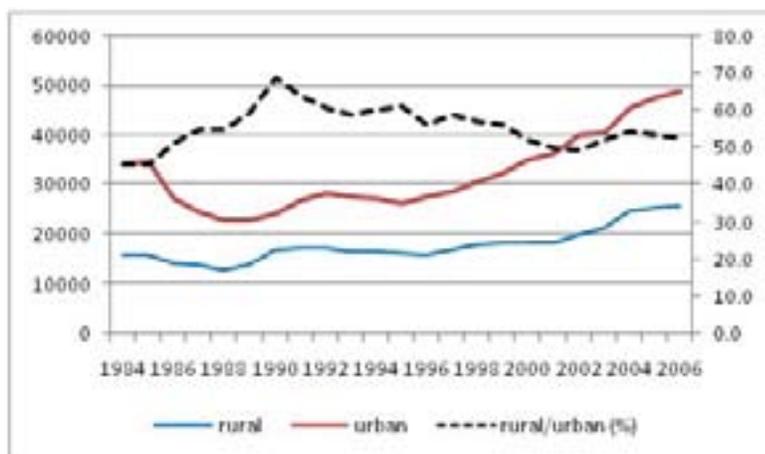
*Professor of Economics, Virginia Tech University, and Guest Scholar, Wolfensohn Center for Development, Brookings Institution*

Inside Iran the facts regarding the evolution of equality are hotly debated. However, data from the Statistical Center of Iran offer evidence of how inequality has changed in terms of household expenditures, education attainment, and access to health and basic services. The picture that emerges is a mixed one: success in improving the standard of living and the quality of life for the poor, and failure in improving the overall distribution of income.

## INEQUALITY

The most obvious, if not quantitatively most important, source of inequality in Iran is the rural-urban differential. Figure 1 shows that during the great economic downturn of 1984-88, average expenditures in rural and urban

**Figure 1: Trends in rural and urban per capita expenditures, 1984-2006 (2006 rials per day)**

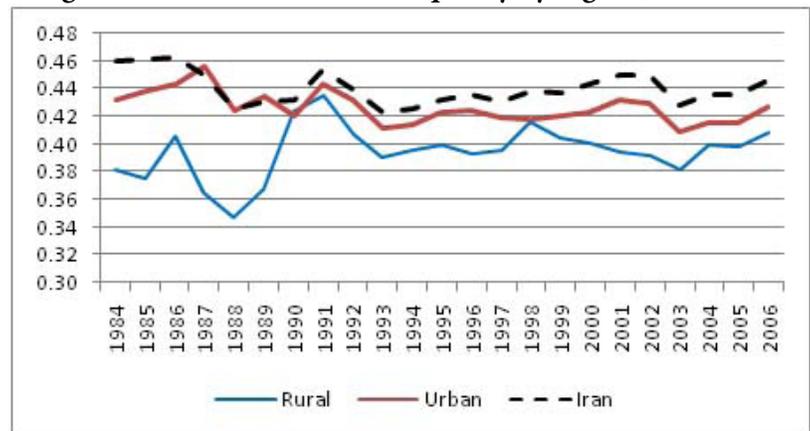


Source: Author's calculations using HEIS data files.

areas fell by 20% and 33%, respectively, narrowing the rural-urban gap in expenditures. Rural incomes continued to grow faster than urban, raising the rural-urban ratio to a historic high of 69% in 1990, before falling back to 53% in 2006. The widening rural-urban gap in the last 15 years has contributed significantly to the resilience of measured inequality in the country as a whole.

Immediately following the revolution, overall inequality fell substantially, by about ten Gini points, from 0.56 to 0.46,<sup>1</sup> but has since remained fairly stable at levels well above those observed in countries such as Egypt. It is nonetheless much lower than in Latin America (see Figure 2). Rural inequality, which was much lower than urban inequality during the war years (1980-88), increased sharply after the war, reaching the urban level, most likely because of government policies such as ending the rationing (that had protected the poor from inflation during the war) and permitting a greater role for markets in setting prices.

**Figure 2: The Gini index of inequality by region, 1984-2006**



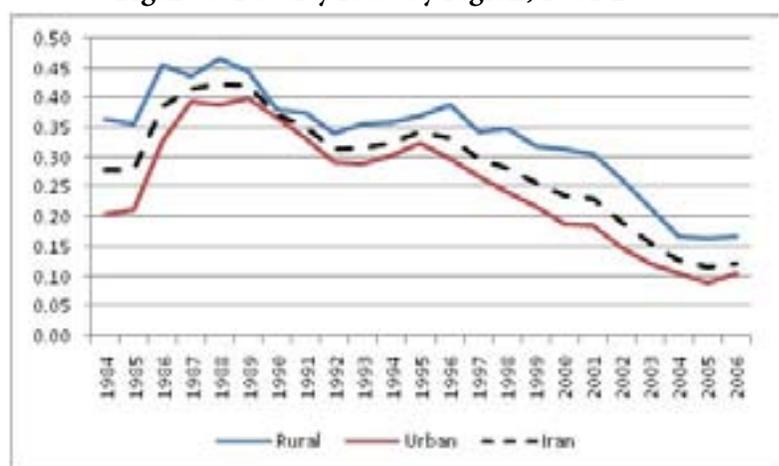
Source: Author's calculations using HEIS data files.

Significantly, during the first two years of the Ahmadinejad Administration (2005-06) inequality worsened in both rural and urban areas, possibly because higher inflation hurt those below the median income level more than those above it. This is not so much an indication that Ahmadinejad was insincere in promising redistribution but how difficult it is to redistribute income without fundamental changes in the country's distribution of earning power (wealth and human capital) and political power, which determines access to government transfers from oil rent.

### POVERTY

Despite a lack of improvement in inequality, poverty has declined steadily in the last ten years. Figure 3 shows the proportion of individuals who were poor (the Headcount ratio) during 1984-2006 using separate rural and urban poverty lines.<sup>2</sup> Poverty rates increased sharply during 1984-88 but, contrary to popular belief, fell during the economic reconstruction and market reforms. Poverty rose again briefly when the economy had to adjust to the balance of payments crisis of 1994-95. Since then, poverty has declined steadily to an enviable level for middle-income developing countries.<sup>3</sup> Despite claims to the

**Figure 3: Poverty rates by region, 1984-2006**



Source: Author's calculations using HEIS data files.

1. Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, "Poverty, Inequality, and Populist Politics in Iran," *Journal of Economic Inequality*, published online February 21, 2008, <http://www.springerlink.com/content/67k71t441vk54ml3/fulltext.pdf>

2. In 2005 Purchasing Power Parity dollars these lines were \$2.7 per person per day for rural and \$3.8 for urban individuals. See Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, "Poverty, Inequality, and Populist Politics in Iran."

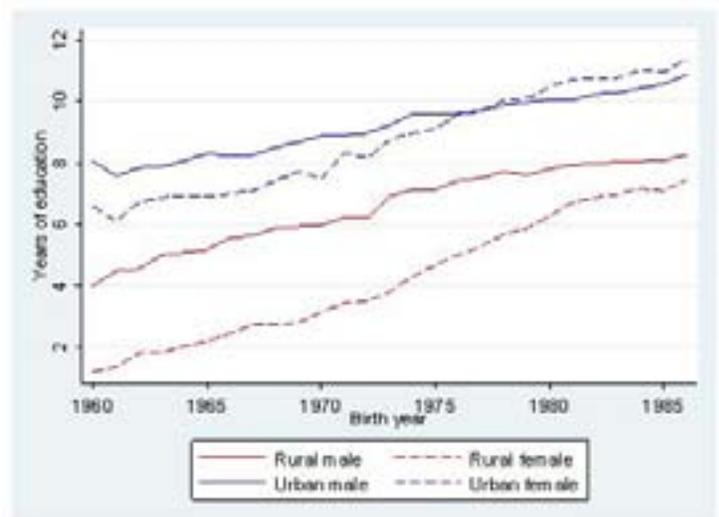
3. Based on the international two-dollars-per-day poverty line (\$3 in 2006), Iran's poverty rate in 2006 was only 6%, which is

contrary, during the eight years of the Khatami Administration, poverty fell by more than 2 percentage points each year. Significantly, in the first two years of the Ahmadinejad government, urban poverty appears to have increased by 1.5 percentage points, or about 680,000 individuals (rural poverty remained unchanged). Given the huge inflow of resources into the economy in 2006 and the Ahmadinejad government's active redistributive efforts, the increase in urban poverty is quite striking. The data for 2007 and 2008 are not available to reach a definitive conclusion on the current administration's efforts at redistribution and poverty reduction, but the available evidence on inequality and urban poverty does not bode well for his re-election.

## EDUCATION

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the revolution during its 30-year history is the expansion of educational opportunities, especially for women and rural families. Figure 4 shows the impressive gain in education by the least educated group — rural women. Their average years of schooling increased from about 40% of their male counterparts for women born in the 1960s (who started school during the Shah's White Revolution) to about 90% for those born in the late 1980s (who started school after the war with Iraq). Urban women have now surpassed urban men in average years of schooling, a phenomenon that led Iran's Parliament to seriously consider and partially implement affirmative action for men in entering university!<sup>4</sup>

Figure 4: Average years of schooling by birth cohort



Increased access to free education from primary to university has equalized educational attainment between individuals. The Gini index of inequality of years of schooling for adults born in the 1950s was in excess of 0.60, compared to 0.35 for cohorts born 20 years later, which is a substantial decrease in education inequality in just one generation. However, there is evidence that educational attainment still depends greatly on family resources.<sup>5</sup> Education inequality is likely to worsen as private education, both at the university and high school levels, continues to expand.

very low by the standards of developing regions. See Shaohua Chen and Martin Ravallion, "The Developing World is Poorer Than We Thought, But No Less Successful in the Fight Against Poverty," The World Bank Development Research Group, Policy Research Working Paper 4703 (2008), [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/I B/2008/08/26/000158349\\_20080826113239/Rendered/PDF/WPS4703.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/I B/2008/08/26/000158349_20080826113239/Rendered/PDF/WPS4703.pdf)

4. See Djavad Saleh-Isfahani, "Are Iranian Women Overeducated?" The Brookings Institution (2008), [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0305\\_education\\_salehi\\_isfahani.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0305_education_salehi_isfahani.aspx).

5. Djavad Salehi-Isfahani and Daniel Egel, "Youth Exclusion in Iran: The State of Education, Employment and Family Formation," Working Paper, The Brookings Institution (2007), [http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2007/09\\_youth\\_exclusion\\_salehi\\_isfahani.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2007/09_youth_exclusion_salehi_isfahani.aspx).

*HEALTH AND BASIC SERVICES*

Another major equalizing achievement of the country in the last 30 years is reduced fertility, especially in rural areas, thanks mainly to increased education and improved access to health and other basic services (electricity and piped water). Together with women's gains in education, family planning has substantially advanced gender equality in Iran, bringing social pressure to improve women's status in law. In rural areas the average number of births per woman fell from about eight in the mid-1980s to about two in 2006. The poor's access to basic services has substantially increased: during 1984-2004 access to electricity by the poorest quintile (bottom 25%) in rural areas increased from 37% to 94% and to piped water from 31% to 79%.<sup>6</sup> Remarkably, as a result of the extension of these services, by 2004, 80% of these households owned a refrigerator, 77% a television, and 76% a gas stove.

*POPULIST POLITICS*

There are very few countries (e.g., South Korea) that have combined economic growth with increased equity. Iran is not one of them. Nevertheless, much has been achieved in terms of improving the lot of the poorest section of the population. Even so, many Iranians seem disappointed with the material improvements of the last 30 years. There are good reasons why. In the last ten years, a huge inflow of oil revenues has taken place without any improvement in income inequality. Added to this is a lack of government transparency, which has fueled suspicion about how the oil riches are being spent. Ahmadinejad's populist rhetoric has intensified fears of corruption and distrust of the rich in a country where wealth accumulation is held in low esteem, no matter its sources. Indeed, the proper purpose of politics and governance in Iran is considered to be redistribution much more so than promoting economic growth. As the revolution enters its fourth decade, with oil prices down for the foreseeable future and the disappointing results of the latest experience with populist politics already evident, it would be interesting to speculate if this narrow view of politics is likely to change. The June 2009 presidential election is a good time to find out.

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6. Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, "Revolution and redistribution in Iran: poverty and inequality 25 years later," Department of Economics Working Paper, Virginia Tech University (2006), [http://www.filebox.vt.edu/users/salehi/Iran\\_poverty\\_trend.pdf](http://www.filebox.vt.edu/users/salehi/Iran_poverty_trend.pdf).

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# *Government and Politics*

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# Elections as a Tool to Sustain the Theological Power Structure

*Kazem Alamdari*

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In the 30-year history of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), a total of 30 elections have been held. In spite of losing popular ground, and despite uninterrupted elections, the clerics in Iran still firmly hold the reins of power because elections are designed to serve the *status quo* rather than to change it.

Elections in the IRI have aimed to: (1) legitimize the system while discriminating against the majority of the people by declaring them ineligible to run for office; (2) prevent unwanted people (outsiders) from entering the power structure; (3) determine the shares of rival groups (insiders) within the ruling circle, which reduces internal tension; (4) manipulate and orchestrate religious people because their participation in elections is a means of supporting Islam, and (5) make the system appear to be democratically endorsed by the people.

The ruling circle in the IRI includes appointed and elected persons. Those appointed, mainly clergy, enjoy higher power with less — or even no — accountability because it is asserted that they have been divinely chosen for their positions to serve Islam.

The major elective offices in the IRI include the presidency, the legislature, and the Assembly of Experts (AE). Election of the city and town councils is less political and therefore less controlled. The Supreme Leader, Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, appoints crucial power-holders such as the six clerical members of the Guardian Council (GC); the 30 members of the Expediency Council; the head of the judiciary branch; the commanders of the Army, the Revolutionary Guards, and the Militia (*Basij*); the Chief of Police; the head of the National Security Council; and the head of the radio and television broadcasting, among others.

Local and regional governors appointed by the president are publicly controlled by clerics, who are appointed to represent the Supreme Leader in cities and towns, where they deliver Friday sermons. They are not accountable, and they enjoy great local power through their social and religious status. Also, both the processes and the outcomes of elections for positions in the legislative and executive branches are restricted by unelected clerics. Even the president cannot select his cabinet members without consulting with the Supreme Leader. In some cases, *Majlis* (parliament) deputies travel to the holy city of Qom to consult religious leaders before introducing a bill in the legislature, because they know that the clerical members of the GC have the authority to reject their



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bills if they find them un-Islamic.

According to the Constitution, the political structure of the IRI is composed of two opposite poles: *Shari'a* (Islamic law) and the Republic (people's will). While elections symbolize the Republic (the rule of the people), *Shari'a* represents the religious pole of the structure, which guarantees the rule of clerics and undermines the role of the people. According to Article 4-four of the Constitution, "All civil, penal, financial, economic, administrative, cultural, military, political, and other laws and regulations must be based on Islamic criteria. This principle applies absolutely and generally to all articles of the Constitution as well as to all other laws and regulations, and the *fuqaha'* of the Guardian Council are judges in this matter."

Clerics legally manipulate elections through two mechanisms. First, the GC is authorized to screen the candidates before allowing them into a race.<sup>1</sup> For example, opponents of the *Velayat-e Faqih* (rule by the Jurisconsult) are banned from elections as being unfit to hold office in the Islamic system. Second, all elected officials, including the President, are in a subordinate position to the Supreme Leader (the *Walayat al-'amr*,) of the *Umma* (the nation), who enjoys absolute power in the system. The Supreme Leader also can remove an unfit President from office, if he desires to do so.

The role of the six clerical members of the GC in elections and law-making is decisive. According to Article 99 of the Constitution, the GC has the responsibility of supervising the elections and the direct recourse to popular opinion and referenda. However, referring to Article 98 and Part 9 of Article 110, which gives the right of interpreting the laws to the GC, they have been developed into a political tool for keeping the entire electoral system under the control of the conservative clerics.

The legislative assembly is deliberately named the "Consultative Assembly" because, in the IRI, this organ "does not hold any legal status if there is no GC in existence" (Article 93), and cannot make laws without the GC's approval. The GC can declare any law passed by the legislative branch to be unconstitutional or un-Islamic (Article 94). Therefore, the legislative branch cannot pass a law to limit the role of the GC in elections. This order is based on Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's doctrine of *Velayat-e Faqih*.

Khomeini, the founder of the IRI, believed that elections should not undermine clerical rule. He wrote that the people must accept the rule of the clerics and follow their decisions as religious duties.<sup>2</sup> In his book, *Islamic Government*,

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1. The Guardian Council is composed of six clerics appointed by the Supreme Leader and six lawyers proposed by the judiciary chief and approved by the *Majlis*. However, only the clerics have authority to judge and interpret whether a law is un-Islamic.

2. More precisely, the notion of *Velayat-e Faqih* originated in the writings of several Shi'ite jurists such as Mulla Ahmad Naraqi, who used the idea to legitimize the absolute rule of Fatali Shah Qajar and Sheikh Fazlollah Nouri, who strongly opposed constitutional rule (1906) as an anti-religious measure in Iran. Other predecessors of Khomeini in this regard include Mirza Hasan Shirazi, Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shriazi, and Kashif al-Ghita.

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Khomeini asserted that

... the *ulema* [clerics] were appointed by the imam for government and for judgment among people, and their position is still preserved for them ... *Ulema* are the heirs to the prophets ... If a knowledgeable and just jurisprudent undertakes the task of forming the government, then he will run the social affairs that the prophet used to run, and it is the duty of the people to listen to him and obey him.<sup>3</sup>

The third elective body of the IRI is the AE. All candidates are carefully screened, and they must be clergymen. The AE is responsible for selecting, evaluating, and dismissing the Supreme Leader. However, because the members are carefully screened by the GC, whose members are appointed by the Supreme Leader, the AE members never challenge the Supreme Leader's performance or decisions. AE elections are mainly competitions among conservative senior clerics. Since 1982, when it was established, the biggest action of the AE has been the selection of 'Ali Khamene'i as the Supreme Leader.

After reformist Muhammad Khatami's surprise landslide victory in 1997 and the takeover of the 6<sup>th</sup> *Majlis* by reformist representatives, the GC has rigidly applied its control to prevent known reformists from entering political races. The GC, in addition to using its influence among religious people, has hired 30,000 thousand new local employees to carefully watch and screen all candidates who want to run for any office. The tight control over the candidates leaves the voter with fewer choices and less motivation to participate in the elections. Therefore, conservative candidates have a much greater chance to be elected.

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Another major institution that plays a significant role in elections is the charity organization the "Imam Khomeini Committee." The Supreme Leader appoints the head of this organization, which has a several-billion-dollar budget to help poor people. In response to the efforts of this charity, many poorer people tend to support conservative candidates in elections.

Therefore, elections under the current political, legal, and religious structure are at an impasse and move in a vicious circle under the firm control of the clerics. This process only serves the status quo, which is characterized by absolute domination by conservative clerics. In other words, elections in IRI do not have the capacity to bring about any structural change, but only to sustain the theological power structure.

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3. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islamic Government*. Translated by Joint Publications Research Service (New York: Manor Books, 1979), p. 37.

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# Shi'a Politics in Iran after 30 Years of Revolution

*Babak Rahimi*

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In the wake of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Twelver Shi'a Islam saw the crystallization of a major radical movement led by activist clerics and militant ideologues with a revolutionary agenda to establish an Islamist political order. The institutionalization of the political ideology of the *velayat-e faqih* or the “guardianship of the jurist,” advanced by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1900-1989), brought to the fore a new conception of Shi'a government. This paradigm recognized the most learned cleric as the representative of the Twelfth Imam, whose eventual return is believed to culminate in the establishment of divine justice on earth. With the authority to participate in the political decision-making process, the new activist clerics emerged to help (and perhaps even shape) the first theocratic power in Shi'a Islamic history, hence breaking away from the traditionalist quietist school of thought that had been dominant for centuries.



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By and large, the 1979 Revolution included the different motivations of activists and groups that took part in it, and it is therefore not surprising that a variety of Shi'a Iranian factions emerged in the aftermath of the establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979. At the core of such factional rivalry was a vigorous debate over the question of clerical authority — the extent to which it can operate above the laws laid out by the legislative body, and, in essence, how best to achieve a political order that is both mundanely democratic and spiritually governed by divine law. As for dominant trends within Iranian Shi'ism since the outbreak of the revolution, four significant historical phases can be identified: (1) Khomeinism (1979-1989); (2) re-constructionism (1989-1997); (3) factionalism (1997-2005); and, finally, (4) neo-Khomeinism (2005-to the present).

During the first nine years following the Iranian Revolution, the Islamic Republic evolved into a militant state directed with the essential aim of fulfilling God's will on earth. While struggles with pragmatists and ideologues over state management continued to cause frictions within the regime, the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) provided a new opportunity for the revolutionaries to solidify their radical agenda. During the war, the regime promoted a culture of martyrdom among Iran's youth that primarily relied on symbols and mourning practices specific to Shi'a cultural tradition. Such culture was shaped on an activist retelling of the martyrdom of the Prophet's beloved grandson, Husayn, whose heroic death at the Battle of Karbala (680) was used to mobilize troops to the frontlines.

Not all Shi'a Iranians accepted Khomeini's vision of theocracy in the years following the revolution. For instance, Ayatollah Muhammad Kazem Shariatmadari (1904-1985), a senior Shi'a cleric at the time, publicly opposed Khomeini, whose radical movement he regarded to be a deviation from true Shi'ism. In response, the regime immediately stripped him of his religious authority and placed him on house arrest, a major affront to the clerical establishment that had never before seen a high-ranking jurist deposed by another cleric. In addition, the take-over of Qom, the country's religious scholarly center, by state-sponsored activist clerics caused many non-Khomeinists to keep quiet for fear of retribution, thereby successfully containing dissident senior clerics and their followers.

The death of Ayatollah Khomeini initiated a second phase that largely gave way to the rise of pragmatists and technocrats who aimed to strengthen state control over the public sector for the purpose of establishing a functioning bureaucratic state and adopting a realist foreign policy in the post-war period. The initial push for state consolidation primarily involved a revision of the constitution that not only broadened the juridical and political power of the guardian jurist, but also allowed him to qualify for the post without being a *marja* or high-ranking cleric. The August 1989 appointment of a mid-level ranking cleric, 'Ali Khamene'i, to the position of Supreme Leader introduced a major transformation in the classical function of the juristic authority that previously had recognized only the most learned *mujtahid* as the spiritual head of the Shi'a community.

By the early 1990s, a loose coalition of dissident clerics, seminary students, university students, intellectuals, and middle-class professionals gradually formed a movement to challenge the conservative establishment. The presidential election of 1997, which brought to power the reformist Mohammad Khatami, gave momentum to this new coalition. The implication of the reformist's ascendancy can be described in many terms, but one prominent feature is the escalation of political rivalry between reformists (who sought to limit the absolute authority of the Supreme Leader) and conservatives (who aimed to maintain political hegemony through repression and manipulation of the electoral process). The late 1990s came to represent the high point of post-revolutionary factionalism that gradually released Iranian civil society from the tight grip of Khomeinist authoritarianism.

In a swift reaction to reformists' success and control over the direction of the theocracy, the 2004 parliamentary and 2005 presidential elections saw the advent of a new faction of Khomeinist ideologues, who aimed at reviving the militant values of the 1979 Revolution and set back Khatami's achievements. The new movement, represented by the former mayor of Tehran, Mahmud Ahmadinejad, gave credence to a strategy to expand the role of ideologues, especially the Revolutionary Guard Corps, in the country's economic and political activities, and, more importantly, curtail the progress of the reform movement in the electoral process. The rise of the neo-Khomeinists highlights the fractious nature of

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Iranian Shi'ism in the post-Khatami era, and the significance of the legacy of Khomeini's vision of the Islamic Republic in the way it continues to play a vital role in shaping politics in Iran. The intriguing issue here is how contestation over the formation of a just Islamic government, paradoxically, not only has helped perpetuate the political hegemony of the (neo) conservative Right but also helped reformists bolster aspirations for a new political order based on democratic norms and pluralism.

With the collapse of Saddam's regime in Iraq in 2003 and the subsequent revival of Najaf, representing the center of quietist Shi'a orthodoxy, Shi'a Iran underwent an additional development. While reformists continued with their struggle to reinterpret Shi'ism in a democratic light, Ayatollah 'Ali Sistani, the most revered Shi'a cleric in the world (based in Najaf), emerged as a leading quietist senior cleric to offer an alternative model of spiritual leadership. With an expanding religious network and a tight social organization operating on a global basis, coupled with an adherence to a clerical democratic tradition dating back to the Constitutional Revolution (1906-1911), Sistani's positive influence over Iraqi democratic politics has served as an exemplary model of Shi'a democracy to many Iranian reformists, which potentially could have an impact on the country's political future.

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After 30 years, the identity of Shi'ism in Iran remains uncertain as new generations of reformists and hard-liners continue their rivalry with the determination to define the future of the Islamic Republic. What is certain, however, is that the future of Iran will be shaped by competing Shi'a factions, each possessing its own distinctive interpretation of sacred tradition.

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# Muhammad Khatami: A Dialogue beyond Paradox

*Wm Scott Harrop*

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Whether or not Muhammad Khatami decides to run again for President of Iran, his prominent legacy symbolizes an ongoing fertile debate inside Iran about political reform and adaptation. For Khatami, democracy and dialogue remain the essential path for Islamic Republic, a bridge between civilizations, a solid course for Iran to the future.

Observers, including this author, often emphasize apparent Iranian paradoxes to alert outsiders to Iran's vibrant and dynamic society, beyond the static, enigmatic "black" clichés so commonly clung to in popular Western discourse.

An appreciation for irony and nuance is surely needed. In the same country where current President Mahmud Ahmadinejad trivialized the Holocaust, a very popular television program sympathetically portrayed an Iranian diplomat who rescued Jews from the Nazis during World War II.

Yet paradox as a metaphor for Iran becomes less than helpful if it leaves the impression of a "hidden Iran" being incomprehensively mired in its own contradictions. Bewildered perhaps by such analytical frameworks, top Western officials, beginning with former Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, commonly admit that "they do not understand Iran" or that they "do not know" if negotiating with Iran will work.

To his critics, including disillusioned former supporters, President Khatami's reformist agenda was hobbled by contradictions inherent in the Islamic Republic. To more sympathetic observers, he was "transformational in vision," but constrained to be "incremental in strategy."

As Khatami evaluates what he might achieve in a third term as President, he recently lamented, according to the reformist paper *Aftab-e Yazd* (January 19, 2009), that because of "immoral behavior such as insults, denigration, elimination and suppression and lies," even for "many who were in the revolutionary front, there is no psychological security and they cannot present themselves and are liable to be rejected."

Yet despite such chronic problems, Khatami concedes no inherent conflict between the Islamic Republic and reform, between faith and freedom, between Islam and democracy, between justice and order, between idealism and realism, between Iran, America,



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*Harrop...*

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and the world.

Khatami's optimistic approach to transcending paradoxes was illustrated during a luncheon appearance on September 11, 2006 at Monticello, the historic home of Thomas Jefferson, the third US President and drafter of America's Declaration of Independence.

When asked by R.K. Ramazani to clarify his written advocacy of "the formulation of democracy in the context of spirituality and morality," Khatami unequivocally affirmed first that today, "there is no way other than the establishment of democracy for any country in any part of the world." For Khatami, "The legitimacy of power relies entirely on the vote of the people" and "people have the right to replace this power with another power without recourse to violence."

Democracy is then deemed compatible with "a progressive reading" of Islam that "recognizes the right of human beings to determine their own fates," to think and feel for themselves. The alternative reading of Islam is the "path of the Taliban."

Khatami then spoke to the sensitive and most commonly perceived paradox in the Islamic Republic, between democratic electoral forms and the absolute authority vested in the Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader. Speaking "at least theoretically," Khatami reasoned that those "given that kind of power" are "held responsible" to the people via their election of the Assembly of Experts, which in turn elects (or deposes) the Jurisconsult "and oversees a system of checks against the office of the Leader."

When asked a Jefferson-tinged question about another frequently cited paradox, concerning religious liberty within an Islamic Republic, Khatami again saw no inherent contradiction: "Freedom of conscience and the freedom of believing what one wants to believe, and practicing according to your beliefs, is one of the minimum requirements of the democratic system ... [and are] tenets of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic."

When discussing how to improve ties between the US and Iran, Khatami addressed yet another paradox — how Iran refers to America as "the Great Satan" while Khatami as President called for dialogue. Khatami clarifies that even Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was not referring to the American people or nation, but to "satanic policies," such as the overthrow of the government of Prime Minister Muhammad Mosaddeq in 1953.

Khatami well understands how such broad swipes at another country can be felt, as he related his personal "inability to forgive the one" (e.g., President George W. Bush) who called him (i.e., who called Iran), "an axis of evil."

As a corrective, Khatami, in keeping with his famous emphasis on "dialogue among civilizations," urges mutual respect between peoples — that countries "should pay attention so that the expression of political differences does not degenerate into expressions that might be interpreted as insulting to the peoples of the other nation."

In a veiled reference to the “well meaning” current President, Khatami recently observed that, “a word out of place may have many costs for the country.” By contrast, “a considered word can defend the country’s principles, norms and interests and reduce threats at the same time.”

Well aware of deep seated resistance to reforms in Iran, President Khatami lamented in a January 1998 *Time Magazine* essay that “Autocracy has become our second nature. We Iranians are all dictators, in a sense.” Thus, Iran’s “path to freedom is risky and rough.”

Yet Khatami echoes Jefferson in also affirming that, “I am of the view that thought cannot be contained, and if we live in a free atmosphere, opinions shall balance each other and logic shall prevail.” Without such freedom, Khatami warned, “the thought sparkling in the minds of thinkers shall be channeled into hidden communities and may emerge one day in the form of bitter and violent reaction.”

For Muhammad Khatami, the Islamic Republic of Iran understands that the expectation of democracy — of freedom and participation — remains ingrained within Iran’s culture. Iran has the choice between trying to bottle it up and risk “reaction,” or to advance again on the path of Islamic democracy.

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# *Minorities*

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# Religious Apartheid in Iran

*H.E. Chehabi*

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The religious make-up of Iran's population is marked by a paradox: while many religions and sects are present, the overall picture is one of homogeneity, as over 99% of Iranians are Muslims, and of these somewhere between 75% and 90% adhere to Twelver Shi'ism, Iran's official state religion for the last five centuries. However, the exact numbers are unknown, since Iranian censuses ask citizens for their religious affiliation but allow only four choices: Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism, the latter three constituting the "recognized" minorities. This classification is enshrined in both the constitutions of 1906 and 1979.



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Iran's Sunnis, the largest religious minority and numbering many millions, live mostly in the country's periphery and overwhelmingly belong to ethnic minorities: Kurds in the west, Turkmenis in the northeast, Baluchis in the southeast, Arabs on the shores of the Persian Gulf. For this reason, resentment against discrimination among Sunnis becomes easily couched in terms of ethnic nationalism. Moreover, these ethnic groups straddle Iran's borders, conferring a geopolitical dimension to the ethnic/sectarian question.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, various Sufi orders offer Muslims a spiritual alternative and thereby arouse the suspicion and often hostility of the clergy. Iran's non-Muslim citizens include, in addition to the above-mentioned constitutionally "recognized" communities, Mandaeans, Yezidis, Sikhs, and most numerically important, Baha'is, whose numbers were estimated at around 300,000 on the eve of the revolution.

The constitution of the Islamic Republic retained the provisions of the 1906 constitution regarding non-Muslims, granting them freedom of worship and parliamentary representation (three deputies for Christians, and one each for Jews and Zoroastrians). It improved on the previous basic law by acknowledging the existence of Sunnis, stating that they were "free to act in accordance with their own jurisprudence in performing their religious rites," adding that in areas where they formed a regional majority, "local regulations, within the bounds of the jurisdiction of local councils are to be in accordance with the respective school of *fiqh*." Recognizing that these two articles did not exhaust the nation's religious diversity, a third article, intended for the benefit of all re-

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1. Other Muslim minorities include the largely Kurdish Ahl-e Haqq, whose membership runs in the hundreds of thousands, the non-Twelver-Shi'ite Ismailis (less than 100,000), and the Twelver Shi'ite Shaykhi sect.

maintaining non-Muslims, proclaimed that they must be “treated kindly by the government and by Muslims in general.”

This differentiation of citizens according to their religion is reminiscent of apartheid’s classification of citizens by race, except that where the racist regime in South Africa at least maintained the pretense of “separate but equal,” the Islamic Republic does not even do that. The most repressive treatment was meted out to the Baha’is. Since the revolution, a total of about 300 have been killed, which equates to one in a thousand. There being no civil marriage in Iran, religious marriages contracted according to their faith were not recognized by the state, leaving their children in a legal limbo. Their cemeteries were bulldozed and they were given no land to bury their dead.

The “recognized” minorities fared better. Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians maintained their houses of worship, communal institutions, and separate family laws. They were even exempted from the general prohibition of alcohol. They were allowed to have their religion taught to their children at school, although the textbooks were written by Muslims.

Iran’s Sunnis, who have received far less international attention than Arab Shi’ites and are perhaps the most overlooked Muslim community in the Middle East, have fared better than non-Muslims. In traditionally Sunni areas of the country mosques function and flourish, although the Sunni population of Tehran, whose numbers runs into the hundreds of thousands, is not allowed to have a mosque of its own; the government invites them to attend prayers in Shi’ite mosques, an option most of them do not find attractive. This has posed a problem for Sunni diplomats stationed in Tehran, who in the 1990s held their Friday prayers in the basement of the Pakistani school. Like non-Muslims, Sunnis suffer discrimination in state employment, but to a lesser extent. Even in Sunni-majority areas like Kurdistan or Baluchistan, government officials are routinely recruited from among the local Shi’ites. But there are a number of Sunni MPs in the *Majlis*.

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The liberalization of social, political, and economic life during the presidencies of ‘Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Muhammad Khatami benefited religious minorities. The signs “special to religious minorities” disappeared from eateries and pastry shops; Ayatollah ‘Ali Khamene’i does not deem “people of the book” polluting. Jews, who had been treated more harshly than Christians and Zoroastrians, were given exit visas more easily. The penal code was amended to equalize the blood money of Muslims and (“recognized”) non-Muslims. Mandaean were recognized as a “people of the book” in 1996 by Ayatollah Khamene’i, but not given the parliamentary seat they demanded.

President Khatami made a point of embracing high dignitaries of the three recognized minorities at his first inauguration, named three trusted Sunni personalities as his advisors for Sunni affairs, and sent them as his personal emissaries to Sunni-majority areas. In Tehran, they acted as ombudsmen for Sunnis who felt discriminated. In Kurdistan, for the first time, two Sunnis were named district governors. But, as in other areas, the reformist administration’s actions were

stymied by the entrenched powers: when the Presidium of the Sixth *Majles* attempted to co-opt a Sunni Kurdish MP into its ranks, Shi'ite '*ulama*' in Qom protested so vehemently that the President's parliamentary supporters gave up the idea.

The reformists' efforts bore the most visible fruit in Baluchistan, Iran's largest Sunni-majority province. By making concessions to the local population, the government defused sociopolitical tensions exacerbated by the proximity of Afghanistan, where the virulently anti-Shi'ite Taliban supported Baluchi insurgents, and Pakistan, a country whose Baluchis have been in a state of almost continuous rebellion for years. Baluchis rewarded the reformists by voting *en masse* for the reformist candidate in the 2005 presidential elections.

Unsurprisingly, the advent of Mahmud Ahmadinejad in 2005 brought reversals on all fronts. The heightened sectarian tension in Iraq has led to an increase in anti-Sunni sentiment among the military and intelligence figures who dominate the regime. Public policy now aggressively tries to reaffirm the Shi'ite nature of the state. One way that this is done is through the saturation of Sunni-majority areas like Baluchistan with Shi'ite imagery on occasions such as the mourning ceremonies for Imam Husayn in the month of Muharram, which leads to a sense of being occupied. Predictably, Iran's Sunnis have become more restive. In Baluchistan a shadowy organization called Jun-dullah wages a low-level insurgency against the Revolutionary Guards, fuelled by the drug trade with Afghanistan, ethnic nationalism encouraged by the United States, and Sunni fundamentalism financed by Saudi Arabia. In the Kurdish areas of Western Iran people watch Kurdish television broadcast from Iraqi Kurdistan and wonder why in Iraq a Kurd can become President while in Iran he cannot even become provincial governor. Meanwhile, Wahhabi missionaries from Saudi Arabia ply Iran's southern coasts.

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**International law creates both *rights* and *duties* for states, and when a state consistently disregards its *duties*, it cannot expect the rest of the international community to respect its *rights*.**

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Sufis also came under attack. In February 2006 mobs destroyed their main house of worship in Qom, and a year later a prominent Sufi leader, Nur Ali Tabandeh, was arrested. The "recognized" minorities have come under closer scrutiny by the state as well. As might be imagined, the new intolerance has hit Baha'is the hardest. The organs of the state have maintained a steady barrage of accusations and calumnies intended to incite the population against the Baha'is.

What is often forgotten in discussions of the Iranian regime's discriminatory policies towards those citizens who happen not to profess the official religion of the state is that these policies contradict not only article 14 of the constitution, which enjoins the government to treat non-Muslims "kindly," but also numerous international conventions to which Iran is a party. International law creates both *rights* and *duties* for states, and when a state consistently disregards its *duties*, it cannot expect the rest of the international community to respect its *rights*.

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# Azerbaijani Ethno-nationalism: A Danger Signal for Iran

*Daniel Heradstveit*

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By the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828, Iran was forced to cede its dependent khanates north of the river Aras to Russia. The majority population of both North (Russo-Soviet) and South (Iranian) Azerbaijan belong to the same ethnic group within the Turkic linguistic family. Many Azerbaijanis tend not to differentiate between the modern republic and Iranian Azerbaijan; they consider the Iranian Azeris “kith and kin.” In fact, many Azerbaijanis actually have family on the other side. The nomenclature of North and South Azerbaijan is a way of asserting that the two areas belong together; the river Aras, which under the Soviet Union was a hermetically sealed frontier, symbolizes the artificial chasm running through the Azeri nation.



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The Azeris are the biggest minority in the multiethnic Iranian state, variously estimated at between a fifth and a third of the population. Persian speakers often speak of Farsi as a “more cultivated” language, which naturally is resented by Azeri speakers, who feel that they are the victims of cultural humiliation. Violent oppression, however, has decreased since the fall of the Shah. Azeri-language publications, for example, have advocated the free expression of Azeri identity and cultural rights. In 1997, newly elected President Muhammad Khatami offered more space for minority cultural rights so as to win the support of the periphery against the centralizing elite.

## *IRAN FEARS AZERI NATIONALISM*

The Turkic peoples of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Turkey itself are more secular-minded than the deeply religious Persians; whereas for the latter, the great marker is Islam, the former respond more to ethnicity. Language can thus be seen as a proxy for the very ancient Ottoman/Persian “clash of civilizations” in the Transcaucasus; for Tehran, pan-Turkic nationalism is the biggest threat of all. Promotion of a Turkic language in Iran can therefore be seen as potentially treasonous. When Abulfaz Elchibey, the first post-Soviet President of Azerbaijan, openly advocated irredentism, the Iranians were genuinely alarmed. They therefore determined to keep their new northern neighbor small and powerless.

One way of weakening Azerbaijan is to keep the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the boil; Iran openly supported Christian Armenia against its own (both Muslim and Shi’ite) co-religionists. Iran was afraid that supporting Azerbaijan instead could strengthen the

ties across the frontier and thereby facilitate Azerbaijani backing for Iranian Azeris. This tells us something about the balance between ideology and *realpolitik* in the Islamic Republic.

Both Azerbaijanis and Iranian Azeris viewed this opportunism as a double betrayal — of both co-religionists and ethnic cousins — and were encouraged to political activism. For this reason Tehran does not want Armenia to get too strong either, as that could lead to an influx into Iran itself of Azerbaijani refugees who would be very negatively disposed towards the Iranian state and inclined to ally with “the enemy within” (i.e., the already restive Iranian Azeris).

#### *DIVIDED BY A COMMON LANGUAGE?*

In the nearly two centuries since the Treaty of Turkmenchay, two very different cultures have evolved on the banks of the Aras. The situation is analogous to that in 1989 between the two Germanies, except that the separation between the two Azerbaijanis has lasted about four times as long. For this reason, the early euphoria over the prospects of fellowship between Azeris in the two countries did not long outlive the encounter with political reality. Azerbaijanis both desire and fear this fellowship; they see themselves as secular and cosmopolitan, but see their Iranian cousins as regrettably influenced by Persian religion and culture. Iranian missionaries in Azerbaijan have been given the cold shoulder.

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#### *THE IRANIAN AZERIS AND THE IRANIAN STATE*

It is hard to gain a clear picture of the strength of the Azeri identity in modern Iran. The Islamic Republic says that the Azeris are happy in the Iranian state; ethnic identity movements are largely non-violent and thereby invisible to the outside world. Moreover, metropolitan Azeris tend to display their Islamic identity in the public space, their Turkic one at home. It is such sophisticates, who do not see their double identity as a problem, whom foreigners tend to meet. In the provinces, however, people are less assimilated, and there are sporadic disturbances. The closer to the Caspian, the less the acceptance of the clergy’s watchdog role and Tehran’s attempt to equate Islam with Persianness is resented. It is frequently said that emissaries from the capital are not competent to govern the provinces of the northwest because they lack a comprehension of the area’s mentality; they should stay in Tehran where they belong.

The fact that almost everyone can now get hold of TV sets that can receive both Turkish and Azerbaijani programming has brought Turkic civilization psychologically much closer. The language of the Iranian Azeris can now be considered part of a “world language” rather than a despised sociolect. Tehran’s endeavor to present all things Persian as superior is thus losing ground.

Such Turkic programming gives the minority population insight into another world, one that resonates with its own

identity and mentality. Whether this will lead to Iranian Azeris feeling steadily more alienated from the Iranian state, to the point of wanting to break away altogether, is another question. Can the Azeri identity in Iran be integrated into loyalty to the Iranian state, or might the Iranian Azeris — in certain circumstances — consider reuniting with their cousins in Azerbaijan?

#### *WAR AS THE TRIGGER*

It would not be hard to unleash ethno-nationalism in both north and south, especially in times of war and disaster; for then, people would turn to their “own kind.” In the spring of 2006, an American attack on Iran seemed imminent. This served to revive the flagging idea of pan-Azeri identity. Indeed, Azerbaijan feared that a military attack on Iran could destabilize the country to such a degree that oppressed minorities could seek new alliances with surrounding states and ethnic groups. Thus, if a conflict or a domestic crisis were to occur, one cannot rule out a surge of Azeri ethno-nationalism, nor in that event predict what the repercussions might be.

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**Can the Azeri identity in Iran be integrated into loyalty to the Iranian state, or might the Iranian Azeris — in certain circumstances — consider reuniting with their cousins in Azerbaijan?**

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## **III. Regional and International Relations**

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# *Sources and Patterns of Foreign Policy*

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# Iran's International Relations: Pragmatism in a Revolutionary Bottle

*Anoush Ehteshami*

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Revolutions, though essentially domestic affairs, cause a tear in the very fabric of the prevailing international system, disrupting the balance of power and the normal flow of diplomacy. Iran's religiously inspired revolution has been no exception. On the one hand, it undid the intricate international web that had sustained the Pahlavi monarchy, and on the other it brought forth a series of priorities more consistent with the perceptions and values of the new elite and the ideological regime that the revolution had spawned.



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The revolutionaries claimed theirs to be different from all previous revolutions, inspired neither by the values of the West nor by the proletariat-driven Communist world. Yet, its small print — the constitution, power structure, governance system — shared aspects with both, adding to the unique characteristics of the Islamic Republic. However, this republic did indeed come to resemble none other, arguably evolving into an anti-imperialist Muslim version of the French republic as one thumbs through its (1979 and 1989 amended) constitution!

The Iranian revolution, which bucked the trend in 20<sup>th</sup> century revolutions in terms of its ideology, ended the reign of a pro-Western and secular regime in a large and strategically important Middle Eastern country. Inevitably, therefore, its ripples were to be felt across the region, despite the fact that this revolution had occurred in a non-Arab and Shi'a-dominated country. Like other revolutionary regimes, Tehran was determined to encourage the growth of its ideology and "export" it wherever possible. This regime, moreover, emerged and consolidated its grip at the height of a deepening Cold War between the United States, its far away adversary, and its next-door anti-religion neighbour, the Soviet Union. It had to find a new place for itself in this starkly defined international system. Yet, within ten years of its birth, it had to put aside the very rationale of its global presence — neither East nor West — as it witnessed the end of the half-century Cold War. It had to come to terms with the demise of its superpower neighbor, an unchallenged United States, and its own strategic and geopolitical presence in a New World Order.

Therefore, Iran's foreign policy, and indeed its international relations, reflect not only the complexities of a revolutionary state emerging in a highly dynamic and strategically important part of the world, but also perhaps the complexities and contradictory tensions of the new revolutionary republic's own domestic politics.

This is a regime whose stated goals in the international arena, as enshrined in its constitution, are either too abstract or too prescriptive to add any value to understanding its actual conduct. So, there is little sense in trying to take stock of the past 30 years with reference to those ideals. Nevertheless, the revolution-crafted republic has shown unique features that are best captured by the words of a prominent foreign policy advisor to President Mahmud Ahmadinejad, Mojtaba Samareh-Hashemi:

Iran's foreign policies have some principles and those principles are clear. These principles have been stated in the Constitution and at the same time have been defined by Iran's approaches during [the] 30 years since the revolution. Also macro policies on foreign issues have been specified and are clear in the remarks made by Imam Khomeini or the supreme leader [Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i] ... One of the most important issues is justice which has its own interpretations. There must be a just relationship whether in the bilateral, regional, multilateral or international relationships. Another issue is friendships, kindness and affection between human beings. [The] Islamic Republic believes relations should be based on friendships and brotherhood. The third point is the issue of spirituality and paying attention to human values. Paying attention to ethics or in one word monotheism [is another principle]. And the last issue is protecting human being's dignity and rights ... Iran would like to have relations with the whole world based on these principles.<sup>1</sup>

In practice, Iran's international relations have evolved into a series of pragmatic decisions alongside ideological stand-offs. Indeed, the country's international relations have been remarkably non-controversial, by and large. Revolutionary Iran has carried on being a fairly normal state on the international stage with few extraordinary aspirations. Iran has remained a faithful member of virtually every international organization of which the Pahlavi monarchy had been a part, and in this regard at least, it has acted as a *status quo* state. Indeed, until the late 1990s, Iran also had retained a similar trading pattern to that of the *ancien regime* (with the exception of trade with the United States).

Trade with the West dominated until well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and only began tapering off with the imposition of a series of UN sanctions from December 2006. There has been very little tangible shift towards the developing world in this regard, despite Iran's efforts to start a D-8 forum of large developing countries going. Iran's stance towards the Muslim world, theoretically its closest constituency, also has been uneven. The irony of the 1980s was that Iran had good relations with some secular-leaning Muslim states (Algeria, Libya, Syria) and bad relations with Islamic Saudi Arabia, but very indifferent relations with others. There was no "Muslim world first" policy, despite Tehran's overtly Islamist tone.

Yet, Iran's international posture and role does continue to concern, if not fascinate observers. The mix of religious-na-

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**Revolutionary Iran has carried on being a fairly normal state on the international stage with few extraordinary aspirations.**

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1. *Financial Times*, May 30, 2008.

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tionalism and revolutionary-populism propaganda, policy opportunism (e.g., buying arms from Israel during the Iran-Iraq War or importing weapons from the Communist states of the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea), and anti-Americanism/anti-Zionism make Iran's policies and intentions difficult to understand. For many, its anti-Americanism is sufficient evidence of deep-seated anti-imperialism, yet this regime has not been in the business of trying to take the world towards an Iran-made utopia. Its radicalism has been limited to certain issues and manifests itself closer to home, in the Middle East. Its other main concern has been how to manage its confrontation with the "Great Satan" (the United States).

Iran is a country whose trading links with the West remain strong, though it is desperate to shift East (to include Russia in this instance) politically and economically. Iran's own Third Way of "neither East nor West" gave way to a menu of relations with both the East (*Sharq*) and the West (*Gharb*), to paraphrase Ramazani.<sup>2</sup>

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**While the revolution itself was a geopolitical earthquake, the Islamic Republic's international relations have been remarkable for their ordinariness.**

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Analytically, then, the Islamic Republic's international relations can usefully be divided into distinct periods: from a period of confrontation (1980-88) to a period of accommodation (1989-97), détente (1997-2005), and rejection (post-2005). But this demarcation should not disguise the many elements of continuity, even with the policies of the Pahlavi era. Nor should it disguise the erratic nature of foreign policy in Iran. As *The Economist* has noted,

The country's foreign policies look erratic, too. Iran has condemned jihadist terrorism, but sheltered al-Qaeda fugitives. It has backed the government of Iraq's prime minister, Nuri al-Maliki, yet has abetted militias opposed to him. It champions Muslim unity but creates division by vilifying pro-Western Muslim rulers, backing Shia factions and expecting Shias everywhere to bow to Mr Khamene'i's authority.<sup>3</sup>

"Zigzagging" appears to be the hallmark of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy. Then again, what country's foreign policy cannot be thus described? Nonetheless, given Iran's location and revolutionary-religious-based political regime, its erratic foreign policy has been particularly troubling to many, especially to the United States.

While the revolution itself was a geopolitical earthquake, the Islamic Republic's international relations have been remarkable for their ordinariness. Indeed, the republic's enduring foreign policy legacy has been its anti-Americanism. Post-revolutionary Iran succumbed to the practical geopolitical forces that were at the heart of the monarchy's foreign policy making and its strategic thinking. In the end "Iran *zamin*" (i.e., the Iranian "cultural continent") as a concept and as a geographical entity consumed the revolution and made the country's new masters hostages to this ancient land's needs.

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2. R.K. Ramazani, "Iran's Foreign Policy: Both North and South," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (1992), pp. 393-412.

3. *The Economist*, May 24-30, 2008.

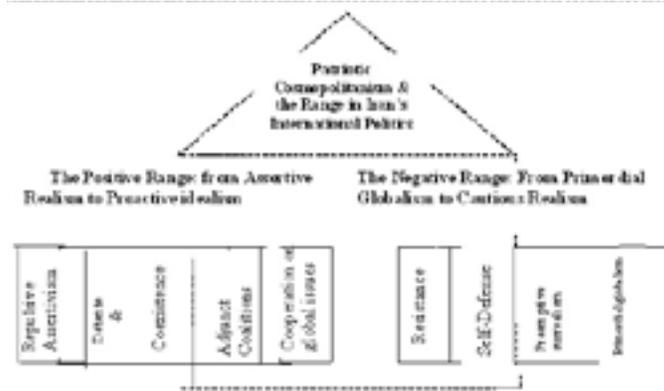
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# Culture and the Range of Options in Iran's International Politics

*Hossein S. Seifzadeh*

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Iran's political culture is most compatible with a proactive foreign policy based on "patriotic cosmopolitanism," a kind of doctrine with two apparently antithetical components: the idea of global citizenship, regardless of people's political affiliation; but also political commitment to sustain one's own values — in this case, Iranian values. Ideally, this formulation should appeal to religious intellectuals and pro-Mossadeq nationalists. But in reality, contemporary Iran has been caught between two extreme tendencies in its approach to international politics — "repulsive assertivism" and "primordial globalism." Repulsive assertivism is an ideological tendency driven by negative emotions to expunge the vestiges of a past adverse *status quo* — in this case, the humiliations imposed upon Iran by great powers in last two centuries — in a bid to once again become a viable and honorable polity. In this respect assertiveness functions primarily to express emotion and perhaps also to elicit similar emotions among others (in this instance Muslims and other disgruntled groups) against foreign intruders. Primordial globalism is a long-standing approach to mobilizing Muslims around the world to support the Islamic republic's cause and integrity against the threat of Western-led globalism. In turn, these latter cultures have been undermined by the idealistic imperatives of patriotic cosmopolitanism. Based upon a survey by the BBC, 85% of Iranians express a cosmopolitan passion, and feel that they are citizens in a global civil society.



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Essentially, then, contemporary Iranian political culture as it relates to Iran's approach to the Westphalian international system is a "push-pull" dynamic between these two competing tendencies. On one end of the spectrum lies the "repulsive assertivist" tendency, which dispenses with Iran's role as a geopolitical bridge in a realist bid to safeguard Iran's independence against foreign incursions. On the other end lies "primordial globalism," which is of more recent vintage and embodies the hope for reviving either Iranian and/or Islamic empires. It is within this mixed cultural context that the real strategic outlooks of contemporary Iran have been devised.

Iran's first approach to the Westphalian international system arose from its epoch-making defeats by Russia and Great Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a result of these defeats, the "push-pull" mechanism in Iran appeared for the first time. Chancellor Ghaem-Magham Farahani<sup>1</sup> embraced a "cognitive" approach to the defeats, while Muhammad Shah adopted a "primordial" (or ethnic foundationalist) reaction. Whereas the cognitive approach of Ghaem Magham was a deliberate approach based upon the national interest and values of Iran, the primordial (foundationalist) tendency of Muhammad Shah was an instinctive impulse, driven more by his tribal affiliations.

As time passed, other "pushes" complicated the picture. Rational choice of a balance-of-power between European Great Powers and the primordial surrealism of the clerical gentry defined in terms of anti-Russian fundamentalism also surfaced. In the process of push-pull mechanisms, however, the balance-of-power principle of "divide and rule" by Great Britain and Russia prevailed. Muhammad Shah<sup>2</sup> was enticed to kill Ghaem Magham in 1835. Hence, Iran's approach toward the Westphalian international system has been influenced by primordial culture.

Such a push-pull phenomenon has recurred many times in Iran. In a matter of two decades, such a push-pull and its tragic consequences once again resurfaced in Iran's approach to international relations. In this case, yet again the cognitive approach of Amir Kabir<sup>3</sup> was truncated by the ethnic foundationalism of Nasser-ed-Din Shah.<sup>4</sup> This time British machinations provoked both clerical fundamentalism and the ethnic foundationalism of Nasser-ed-Din Shah against the cognitive approach of Amir Kabir. Similar to the case of Ghaem Magham, foreign machinations enticed Nasser-ed-Din Shah to kill Amir Kabir in 1852.

Due to these experiences, the monarchs of the Pahlavi dynasty tried to incorporate Iran into the modern international system, justifying their approach with national interests, revolving primarily around the bridge geopolitics of Iran's location and then of its oil. A succession of prime ministers assisted the Qajar and then Pahlavi monarchs in this effort: Mirza Hossein Khan Sepah-salar (appointed in 1871), Mohammad Ali Foroughi (appointed in 1925, 1933, and 1941), Ahmad Ghavam (last appointed in 1952).

This approach received harsh criticism primarily from the nationalists gathering around Prime Minister Muhammad Mossadeq. Of course, the humiliating invasion of the Allied forces during the Second World War, ignoring Reza Shah's

1. Iranian Prime Minister from 1834-5.
2. Shah of Persia, 1834-48.
3. Prime Minister from 1848-51.
4. Shah of Persia, 1848-96.

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**Whereas the cognitive approach of Ghaem Magham was a deliberate approach based upon the national interest and values of Iran, the primordial (foundationalist) tendency of Muhammad Shah was an instinctive impulse, driven more by his tribal affiliations.**

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policy of neutrality, was a contributing factor. The inadvertent opening up of the polity of Iran was another factor. Against these favorable circumstances, Mossadeq attempted the first “velvet revolution” in Iran in 1950. Due to his legal education and moral attachment to Iran, he worked hard to make Iran’s international politics an extension of its domestic needs. This time, the strategic calculations of Britain and the United States led to the US-engineered coup against his legitimate government. The Soviet Union betrayed him as well.

As a result, the second Pahlavi monarch, Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, and his subservient prime ministers attempted to resign Iran to a proxy role in international relations. Such an inverted approach to politics — making domestic politics a continuum of international politics — required some due changes in Iran’s domestic sphere. The secularization of politics and capitulation were ratified and implemented in the 1960s. This infuriated the clerics not only against the regime but also against the international system and order. The Islamic Revolution was a reaction to such Westphalian politics.

The Islamic revolution exhibits both change and continuity. The primordial overarch remains constant, but its locus has changed from ethnic foundationalism to religious fundamentalism. In the process, however, after the cognitive approach of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan (1979) and America’s allowing the Shah’s entry into the US, the way for the fundamentalist approach was paved. After the embattled President Bani Sadr, Muhammad ‘Ali Rajai’s fundamentalism (1981) and Prime Minister Mir-Hossein Mousavi’s mixed moral-fundamentalist approach took effect. In reaction to their policies, for 16 years, Hashemi Rafsanjani attempted a modified pragmatic detente (1989-1997) and Muhammad Khatami attempted a triadic and inconsistent coexistence-adjunct coalition-global cooperation. President Bill Clinton’s imposed sanctions betrayed Rafsanjani, and George W. Bush’s naming of Iran as a member of the “Axis of Evil” betrayed the latter. Since 2005, Mahmud Ahmadinejad has pioneered a primordial surrealist campaign against the Pax Americana international system and order. His primordial surrealist campaign is a pragmatic foreign policy targeted to undermine Western globalism and hegemony by capitalizing on the already charged emotions (pan-Muslim solidarity and hate for the hostile West) of Muslims around the world. Khatami and Rafsanjani shifted their campaign in favor of preventive realism, in their hope for self-defense and resistance against the West.

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**The Islamic revolution exhibits both change and continuity.**

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The lasting popularity of Mossadeq, the more or less widening distance of Mousavi and Khatami in contrast to the tarnished images of rationalists such as Mohammad Ali Foroughi and Jamshid Amouzegar, and the waning popularity of surrealism explains Iran’s two-tiered international politics for normal and crisis circumstances.

#### *THE IMPACT OF MORAL CULTURE ON THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF IRAN*

Thanks to the criticism leveled against the trials and errors of the various appointed or elected officials in entangling in the pushes and pulls of polar positions of anarchic assertivism to primordial confrontation or in-between modified

positions, Iran has come to its own approach to international relations. Anarchic assertivism is a part of self-defense policy of Iran to undermine the Pax Americana order by asserting that Iran is an independent state, with differing strategic interests and values, and against the conformist measures imposed by the Pax Americana order. In case the US decides to push for confrontation to defeat Iran's assertive campaign, then the only remaining option for Iran is to opt to capitalize on the primordial values and the divided surrealist (love-hate) emotions of Muslims. By lumping both strategic needs and cultural tendencies, two alternative ideational approaches are devised; the positive and negative ranges. Each of these ranges has two normal and crisis situations. The normal positive range revolves around moral culture and the negative range revolves around cognitive culture. The best case scenario is located in the moral culture context; and the second best case scenario is located within the cognitive context. Each of these first and second best options include two scenarios. In sum, these four strategies reflect the proactive approach of Iran to international relations. The best case scenario for Iran is operationally defined in terms of two policies: either "Adjunct Coalitions" or "Cooperation on Global Issues." This tier of Iran's proactive policy is based upon a win-win policy for all and in accordance with Iran's status as a geopolitical bridge. In case the great powers decide to use Iran's geopolitical status against its will, then Iran will opt for the alternative tier of second best scenario. This scenario is operationally defined in terms of self-defense or resistance. Under exigencies, Iran will either shift to a rational choice culture defined in terms of "repulsive assertivism," or instead to "primordial globalism," at either extreme poles of the following diagram. The diagram above depicts the correlation between the culture and international relations approaches of Iran.

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**Anarchic assertivism is a part of self-defense policy of Iran to undermine the Pax Americana order by asserting that Iran is an independent state, with differing strategic interests and values, and against the conformist measures imposed by the Pax Americana order.**

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# The Geopolitical Factor in Iran's Foreign Policy

*Kayhan Barzegar*

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Revolutions either expand to export their ideologies or preserve themselves from the outside world. The 1979 Islamic revolution of Iran is no exception. A careful reading of Iran's actions in the region shows how and why Iran has shifted its policies to meet the latter aim. Since the revolution, Iran's leaders have faced the challenge of balancing their ideological (idealism) and geopolitical (pragmatism) approaches to foreign policy. Gradually, the Iranian leadership has come to focus on the geopolitical factor in the conduct of foreign policy; today, ideology one factor among many other sources of Iran's power, and serves the aim of preserving Iran's national security and interests.

Since the advent of the Islamic revolution, Iran's regional policies have been driven by ideology as well as geopolitics. Evidence of both of these elements can be found in the conduct of Iran's regional foreign policy over the years. Nevertheless, the geopolitical factor predominates in Iran's management of its relations with other regional states, and is likely to continue to do so. The main reason for this is the nature of the issues that Iran faces in its immediate political-security environment, which is marked by multiple sources of insecurity, including US military threats. These conditions require that Iran build strategic coalitions.

Living in an unstable neighborhood has been costly for Iran. This generalized condition of instability persists. There is sectarian conflict on Iran's western flank (Iraq). There are failed and fragile states on Iran's eastern frontier (Afghanistan and Pakistan). There are states along Iran's northern border whose political, social, and economic transformations are unsteady and incomplete (Central Asia and the Caucasus). And authoritarian and security-dependant regimes, each subject to political-social changes in future, lie to the south. Such an insecure environment has the potential of fuelling regional rivalries, igniting crises or military conflicts, and inducing a larger presence or direct intervention of major foreign powers. A major portion of Iran's political and economic capital is being spent on tackling these varied threats. The Iranian leadership's determination to maintain a powerful army reflects the national security concerns stemming from them.

Iran's geopolitical realities, ethnic politics, and cultural-religious characteristics profoundly tie its national security inextricably to that of the region. The situation in post-invasion Iraq has highlighted and intensified this security interdependence. Arising from the conditions in Iraq have been ethnic geopolitical rivalries, the risk of territorial disintegration, religious war, and interstate rivalries. Fear of Iraq's fading Arab identity has prompted Saudi Arabia to be more involved in the Shi'a and Kurdish issues. As the



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question of federalism and the threat of Iraq's possible disintegration have come to the fore, Turkey also has become more engaged in Shi'a and Sunni issues. Jordan and Egypt have warned that a "Shi'a Crescent" has formed, within which Iran has emerged to play the leading role. Through concerns about Hezbollah's relations with the Shi'a militias, Iraqi issues are now more germane than ever to Lebanese domestic issues. Concerned about Iran's increased activity in the southern Shi'a-dominated areas and its effects in the Persian Gulf region as a whole, Israel, too, has become involved in Iraqi Kurdistan. Lastly, on account of increasing cooperation at the transnational level between al-Qaeda operatives and sympathizers, Iraq's and Afghanistan's issues are increasingly inextricable. The interrelated characteristics of the region's newly emerging geopolitical and security issues have brought both challenges and opportunities for Iran.

Thirdly, there is a direct relationship between the level and likelihood of US military threats towards Iran and the implementation of the two elements of geopolitics and ideology in Iran's foreign policy. The Iranian engagement in the Iraq crisis is a good example. The greater the number of US threats made against Tehran and its overall political-security system, the more Iran asserted and employed the Shi'a ideological element, *inter alia*, in its foreign policy approach. A diminution in foreign threats will, conversely, lead Iran to remain focused on issues related to its immediate security perimeter, reducing the ideological element while emphasizing the economic and integrative aspects of its relations with regional states. To protect itself from the US military threats and preempt future security challenges, Iran has requested openly the right to modest engagement in the region's political-security architecture and economic-cultural activities. Indeed, tackling the new challenges mentioned earlier and creating prospects for economic development require that Iran help to build a secure and stable neighborhood.

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**A diminution in foreign threats will, conversely, lead Iran to remain focused on issues related to its immediate security perimeter, reducing the ideological element while emphasizing the economic and integrative aspects of its relations with regional states.**

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Lastly, Iran's close relationships with Shi'a factions in the region are aimed at building a strategic coalition based on geopolitical realities. In Iraq, one aspect of establishing this strategic coalition is the installation of a new generation of friendly elites at the level of the state. By supporting these Shi'a political factions or groups that are, in a remarkable break with the past, friendlier today towards Iran and unwilling to participate in an anti-Iranian coalition for the foreseeable future, Iran has attempted to coax Iraq into fulfilling the role of a strategic partner in the region. Another aim is the creation of an Iran-Iraq coalition aimed at shaping new political-security arrangements in the Persian Gulf in which all of the littoral states are included. The new Iraq is the place that Iran's ideological and pragmatic aspects of foreign policy have converged for the first time since the Islamic revolution.

During the first decade of the revolution, Iran's regional foreign policy was defined principally in ideological terms. More recently, however, geopolitical factors have predominated. Today, ideology is placed in the service of Iran's national interests and security. Given the multitude of security challenges and opportunities facing Iran, one can expect the Iranian leadership to follow a pragmatic approach to relations with the regional states that reflects geopolitical realities.

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# Iranian Foreign Policy: Concurrence of Ideology and Pragmatism

*Nasser Saghafi-Ameri*

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The Islamic Republic of Iran has pursued, as have other post-revolutionary states, certain principles and ideals that were revered in the movement that led to the revolution. Although Iran's foreign policy during the past three decades has had an ideological component, this has not prevented it from translating ideology into operational policy in its foreign relations.

From the outset, the Islamic government of Iran declared an independent foreign policy, employing the axiom, "Neither East nor West." In fact, this was not merely a declaration of independence — an attempt to be free of the hegemonic influences of the two superpowers — but it also constituted a repudiation of the bipolar international system.

That proclamation and revolutionary Iran's ensuing policies were generally interpreted as a revolt against the existing international system, and thus were confronted by both the East and the West. Similarly, the notion of the "export of Islamic revolution" caused much anxiety, especially among Iran's neighbors and in the region at large.

In fact, in Iran, there were two competing views about "exporting Islamic revolution." At one end of the spectrum were those who advocated exporting the *moral values* of the revolution, solely in the fields of education and culture, through normal diplomatic channels. At the other end were those who viewed revolutionary Iran as the vanguard of a world revolutionary movement to liberate Muslim countries specifically, and other Third World countries generally, from imperialist subjugation.

However, it did not take long for the radical elements in the latter group to be marginalized and lose much of their clout in foreign policy decision-making. The "moderates" mostly approached the issue within the context of national interest. They considered Iran to be the *ideological* leader and supporter of an international brotherhood. In that capacity, they consider it a duty and obligation for Iran to fill the vacuum of failed and fading pan-nationalism.

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that since 1979 Iran has faced numerous foreign policy challenges. Foremost among these was the eight-year war imposed upon Iran by the Ba'athist regime of Iraq, which the West supported; this intensified Iran's distrust of the outside world. The Western objections and pressures brought to bear on Iran regarding its nuclear program is yet another challenge, one that finally motivated the



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government of President Mahmud Ahmadinejad to fervently pursue a policy of “Looking to the East.” The aim of this policy is to forge closer ties with major countries like China, Russia, and India and with other like-minded countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In conjunction with that outlook, Iranian politicians aspire to strengthen the economy and to overcome the challenges confronting Iran by Western-imposed economic sanctions.

Meanwhile, the geopolitical changes that have occurred in Iran’s immediate neighborhood since September 11, 2001 have provided a chance for Iran to recoup its position in the region as a major power. Yet, the West, and the United States in particular, seem determined to prevent Iran from attaining this status. Western concerns about Iran’s nuclear program, which is in its final stages of development, are widely perceived in Iran as being anchored mainly in mistrust and suspicion, focused on non-verifiable intentions, and aimed primarily at keeping Iran down. This situation returns us to the original question of the fundamental character of Iranian foreign policy, specifically the extent to which it is driven by ideology, as opposed to a rational and pragmatic approach to advancing the national interest. The following observations may help to answer this question..

First, revolutionary governments in their early days tend to have a strong inclination toward ideological approaches to foreign policy. However as these governments mature, pragmatic considerations inevitably become salient, since the state’s survival much depends on taking into account the realities of the outside world. This may explain what prompted Iran to cooperate with the United States in Afghanistan and later in Iraq. Iranian leaders viewed the stability of Afghanistan and Iraq as being vital to the national interest. This consideration took precedence over the ideological preference for not talking or working with the United States. Pragmatism has prevailed over ideology in other instances, for example, when Iran adopted a policy of neutrality in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia, a Christian state, and the Republic of Azerbaijan, an Islamic state with a Shi’a majority.

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Second, objective facts, not ideological fervor validate Iran’s aspiration to be regarded as a major regional power. Iran’s size, the educational level of its 70 million people, and its natural resources make the country a natural candidate for regional preeminence and enhance its ability to play a leadership role reflective of its geopolitical weight. Iran’s regional influence in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Levant gives it additional weight in regional politics. So does Iran’s progress in nuclear and high technology.

Third, in contrast to general perceptions of Iran being a revolutionary country, its foreign policy is guided and influenced largely by its cultural heritage of moderation and close regional ties. The sanctity of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states has been emphasized repeatedly in Iranian foreign policy declarations. When Iran voiced its opposition to the Bush Administration’s attempt to impose its favored model of democracy and policy of regime change throughout the Middle East, this policy was accentuated.

Fourth, the animosity that has plagued Iran-US relations has overshadowed many aspects of Iranian foreign policy over the past 30 years. During that period and despite the fact that the two sides had many common interests in the region, harmful politics prevented any attempt at reconciliation. In the past, Israel — as the closest ally of the United States, citing an Iranian threat to its security — has been one of the main obstacles to an Iran-US *rapprochement*. Regarding the allegation by some that Iran is determined to attack Israel, President Ahmadinejad declared that the Islamic Republic has never waged war against any nation and does not intend to do so in the future.

Iranian foreign policy has undergone many upheavals during the past 30 years. In this period Iran has gained experience through hardship and endurance. The lesson to be learned is that success in a challenging and rapidly changing world requires striking a balance between ideological world views and pragmatism. Given the growing national sentiments in Iran, Iranian foreign policy is likely to be focused on pursuing the national interest, guided by ideological principles but flexible and practical approaches.

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# Iran's Tactical Foreign Policy Rhetoric

*Bidjan Nashat*

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Shaped during their coming of age in the Shah's prisons and at the frontlines of the Iran-Iraq war, Iran's leadership harbors fundamentalist and anti-Israeli beliefs that are deeply ingrained in their revolutionary identity. Nevertheless, Iranian leaders have often combined their ideological fervor with pragmatic calculations to achieve their strategic objectives. While Iran's geopolitical power has increased considerably since the beginning of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it faces old territorial and new international challenges. As a non-Arab Shi'a state, Iran suffers from strategic isolation in the Middle East. Its geopolitical importance is limited by growing ethnic and sectarian divides in the region.

Ayatollah Khomeini, who was keenly aware of these challenges, directly appealed to the *umma* by deliberately bypassing the leaders of other Muslim states. Although partly successful in the Persian Gulf states and southern Lebanon, the revolution's appeal did not reach Iran's Shia brethren in Saddam Husayn's army during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88). After Khomeini's death in 1989, Presidents Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Muhammad Khatami employed more conciliatory tactics and less extensive use of revolutionary rhetoric. Ending with a declaration of Muslim unity and solidarity, the December 1997 Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in Tehran marked a high point of Iranian success in terms of regional public diplomacy.

After September 11<sup>th</sup> and Iran's inclusion in the "Axis of Evil" by the Bush Administration in January 2002, conservative hardliners slowly returned to prominence. After his election in June 2005, Mahmud Ahmadinejad, recognizing the power of anti-imperialist and anti-Israeli rhetoric both as a foreign and domestic policy tool, broke with the conciliatory rhetoric of his predecessors and returned to the early revolutionary rhetoric of confrontation.

With the backing of Supreme Leader 'Ali Khamene'i, Iran's new nuclear policy team ordered the restarting of uranium enrichment in August 2005. Concurrently, Ahmadinejad and his advisors seized the chance to internationalize the nuclear conflict by attacking Israel and questioning the Holocaust, a subject which previously had not played an important role in the Iranian domestic debate. This rhetoric not only paralyzes Ahmadinejad's domestic opponents, but also fits into a national security concept promoted by hardliner elements. Their goal is to overcome Iran's strategic isolation in the Middle East by extending Iran's security perimeter to Lebanon and the Palestinian territories.



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Moreover, by re-positioning Shi'a Iran as a pan-Islamic force fighting for the (Sunni) Palestinian cause, Iran seeks to reduce the growing ethno-sectarian divide caused by the Iraqi civil war.

Ahmadinejad chose the venues for his anti-Israeli outbursts carefully. During the December 2007 Organization of the Islamic Conference summit in Mecca, he elaborated on his idea for relocating Israel to Europe in an interview with Iranian state television. Through his rhetoric, Ahmadinejad managed to endear himself to the Arab "street" and dominate the agenda. By using regional and international gatherings such as the OIC and the Gulf Cooperation Council meetings, he has forced the pro-US Arab regimes to walk a tightrope between their allegiance to the US on the one hand, and a growing Islamist opposition and a considerable Shi'a minority in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states on the other.

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However, Ahmadinejad's belligerent rhetoric soon backfired, leading the consensus-oriented Supreme Leader to balance the demands of the moderate reformers and the conservative pragmatists with those of Ahmadinejad's Neo-conservative power base. By establishing a new foreign policy-making council (Strategic Council for Foreign Relations) in June 2006, Khamene'i created a counterbalance to Iran's main foreign policy decision-making body, the Supreme National Security Council, which is chaired by the President. The new council is headed by some of the Islamic Republic's most experienced foreign policy officials. After the December 2006 local elections, which brought defeat for the President's supporters, the Supreme Leader reasserted himself as the main arbiter on foreign policy matters and started to keep Ahmadinejad's belligerence in check. However, if the appointment of Saeed Jalili as the new top nuclear negotiator in fall 2007 is any indicator, Ahmadinejad's influence in foreign policy decision-making is still considerable.

In response to this setback in the internal foreign policy-making struggle, Ahmadinejad started to increase Iran's international outreach. The strategy towards the international community centers on a message of self-sufficiency in technological progress and justice in world affairs. The main targets were the members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). In September 2006, Iran's public diplomacy scored a victory when 118 NAM members issued a statement at their summit in Havana in support of Iran on the nuclear issue. Since then, Ahmadinejad has seized every occasion to assert Iran's leadership of the developing, nonaligned states. During a January 2007 tour of Latin American states, Ahmadinejad proved that Iran is willing to add substance to the rhetoric of creating a "backyard of loneliness" for the US. At a meeting with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, both leaders pledged to set up a fund worth \$2 billion to support countries which oppose US foreign policy. Even though it is not clear whether the fund is in place, both states have intensified mutual investments and the exchange of technology. At a June 2008 UN summit on world food security in Rome, Ahmadinejad stressed that "the competitions for power and wealth need to be changed to competitions for serving humanity and friendship and the unilateral and oppressive relations must be replaced by just mechanisms."<sup>1</sup>

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1. President Ahmadinejad's speech at the High-Level Conference on World Food Security, Rome, June 3-5, 2008, [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/foodclimate/statements/irn\\_ahmadinejad\\_e.PDF](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/foodclimate/statements/irn_ahmadinejad_e.PDF).

Due to its effective public diplomacy and anti-imperialist rhetoric, Iran has been much more successful than the Arab states in reaching out to different parts of the world. In July 2008, Iranian Foreign Minister Manoucher Mottaki announced Iran's bid for a seat on the 2009-2010 UN Security Council at a meeting of the group of 57 Islamic nations. Iranian diplomats have claimed the support of the "Asian Group" and general agreement from other factions. Even though this application ultimately failed, it demonstrated the difficulties that the US and Europe face as they attempt to isolate Iran from the "international community" for its nuclear program.

The use of anti-Israeli, pan-Islamic, and anti-imperialist rhetoric has been a deliberate tool in the conduct of Iran's post-revolutionary foreign policy. President Ahmadinejad's administration has reintroduced and amplified Ayatollah Khomeini's rhetoric as a tactical means, which include overcoming Iran's isolation in the region and internationalizing the standoff over its nuclear program. Ahmadinejad's Holocaust denials and his efforts to tie the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to Iran's nuclear program have increased Iran's pan-Islamic reach into the Arab street and have put Arab governments on the defensive. On the international stage, Iran's leadership has succeeded in internationalizing Iran's nuclear program by tying it to the North-South conflict and stressing the themes of international justice, state sovereignty, and technological self-sufficiency.

Nevertheless, Iran's foreign policy approach has not been entirely successful. It has increased Iran's international isolation and led to three UN Security Council resolutions and economic sanctions. Some Arab governments, such as that of Saudi Arabia, have

become more vigorous in their opposition to Iran's nuclear program, raising the prospect of a regional arms race. Ahmadinejad's rhetoric also has backfired within Iran, strengthening the more pragmatic conservatives around the influential former President Rafsanjani and the former nuclear negotiator and new Majlis speaker Ali Larijani.

Though Iran has managed to win the hearts and minds of the Arab populace and some NAM members, a different approach is required to establish trust with Arab and Western governments. Iran is facing challenges to its security ranging from a possible failed state in Iraq, a resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan, and international pressure over its nuclear program. It is likely that historic pragmatism will once more prevail over its revolutionary identity in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy conduct.

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# *The Regional Theater*

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# The Kurdish Factor in Iran-Iraq Relations

*Nader Entessar*

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**K**urdish issues have been an important part of the myriad political and socioeconomic problems that have preoccupied the Islamic Republic of Iran since its inception. The Kurdish factor has also been an important determinant of Iran's regional foreign policy in the past three decades. Shortly after the onset of the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988, the Iraqi government began to woo the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) as potential leverage in its war effort. In January 1981, Saddam Husayn's regime established its first major weapons supply route to the KDPI near the Iranian cities of Nowdesheh and Qasr-e Shirin. Securing Nowdesheh was Iraq's prime objective, as the city's strategic location would deny Iran the use of the Baghdad-Tehran highway. The KDPI, for its part, had hoped to create "Kurdish liberated zones" throughout Iranian Kurdistan by relying on Iraqi-supplied weapons and those captured from military depots inside Iran. The tide, however, began to turn against both the KDPI and Iraq by later 1981 as Iranian forces managed to inflict heavy casualties on Iraqi forces in the northern front and push them across the border. Consequently, the Iranian forces launched a series of debilitating attacks against the KDPI, rendering them a marginal military factor during much of the Iran-Iraq War.



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By 1983, Iran began to play its own Kurdish card against Saddam Husayn's forces. Having secured the support of both Massoud Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party of Iraq (KDP) and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and forming a united front against the Iraqi regime, Saddam Husayn, in a last ditch effort to untangle the Iranian-Kurdish threat in the north, opened a secret channel of negotiations with the Kurds by promising them greater autonomy in their internal affairs. Baghdad was also concerned about possible Kurdish attacks against a strategic and highly lucrative pipeline that connected the Kirkuk oilfields to the port of Iskenderun in Turkey. Given Iraq's numerous attacks against Iranian oil installations, Tehran felt compelled to threaten the safety of the Kirkuk-Iskenderun pipeline. Although Iran never carried out its threat against this pipeline, Iraq remained highly vigilant against a potential Iranian-supported Kurdish attack on one of its most important economic assets.

After the end of the Iran-Iraq War and following Saddam Husayn's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the regional strategic calculations changed dramatically. With the establishment of a "safe haven" in northern Iraq and the creation of a no-fly zone north of the 36<sup>th</sup> parallel, upwards of 8,000 Western troops were stationed in or around this zone with the ostensible goal of protecting the Iraqi Kurds from reprisals by Saddam's forces.

From the start, Iran opposed Western operations inside Iraq and feared that the no-fly zone could be used by the United States to threaten Iran's territorial integrity or simply become a protected enclave for a variety of anti-Iranian opposition forces. In particular, Tehran became highly concerned about the United States using the KDPI to destabilize the border regions in the country's northwest. Beginning in March 1993, Tehran thus launched a series of bombing raids against the KDPI and its supporters inside the no-fly zone. However, as the Kurdish Autonomous Region developed semi-autonomous governing entities, Tehran opened up channels of communication with both the KDP and PUK, engaged in lucrative trade with Iraqi Kurdistan, and opened representative offices inside the Kurdish region of Iraq, allowing the two major Iraqi Kurdish parties to do likewise in Iran.

The US invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of the Ba'athist government in Baghdad presented yet another opportunity and challenge to Iran to devise a new approach to Iraqi Kurdistan. Economically, Iran's importance to Iraqi Kurdistan has increased exponentially since 2003, with the volume of trade and investment between the two sides having reached over \$2 billion. Notwithstanding generally good ties between Tehran and Iraqi Kurdistan, political obstacles remain. On several occasions, Iran has accused the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) of allowing Israeli agents to operate against Iranian interests from the Kurdish territory. Israel's presence, although not openly acknowledged by the Kurdish authorities, has remained a source of tension between the two sides. As reported by the investigative journalist Seymour Hersh in the June 28, 2004 issue of the *New Yorker* magazine, Israel has established a "significant presence" in Iraqi Kurdistan, and Israeli Mossad agents work undercover as businessmen in the area. The Israeli agents have reportedly been involved in providing direct and indirect aid to the newly-formed Kurdish Independent Life Party (PJAK), an off-shoot of Turkey's Workers' Party of Kurdistan (PKK), whose forces have been engaged in a guerrilla campaign and acts of terrorism inside Iranian Kurdistan. Iranian retaliatory attacks against PJAK and other hostile forces inside Iraqi Kurdistan continue to be a major source of friction between Tehran and the KRG.

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The capture and subsequent imprisonment of Iranian officials by US forces inside Iraqi Kurdistan in January 2007 have affected routine relations between the two sides. For example, when the US military raided the Iranian Liaison Office in Arbil and detained five mid-level diplomats working there, KRG officials reacted angrily, accusing American forces of violating their trust and attacking a liaison office that had been, for all practical purposes, operating as a consular office since 1992. Similarly, in September 2007, the US military raided a hotel in the city of Sulaymaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan and arrested Mahmud Farhady, the head of an Iranian trade delegation that had been invited by the Kurdish authorities to negotiate a series of wide-ranging agreements between the two trading partners. In protest, Iraq's President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, sent an angry letter to US Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus, then chief US military commander in Iraq, demanding, to no avail, the release of the Iranian trade delegate. This incident caused a diplomatic rift between Iran and the KRG and led to retaliatory measures by Iran. For example, Tehran intensified its bombing

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raids in the border areas and against the suspected PJAK bases inside Iraqi Kurdistan. Furthermore, the Islamic Republic temporarily closed an important border crossing between Iran and the Kurdish region. Given the fact that 50% of goods imported into Iraqi Kurdistan were crossing from Iran, the closure of the border post caused extensive hardship inside Kurdistan. The assault on the Iranian trade delegation also jeopardized years of delicate negotiations between Iran and the KRG to establish an overland trade route between Iran's Bandar Abbas in the Persian Gulf to a border crossing near Suleymaniye.

Finally, Iran's Kurdish policy is affected by domestic developments in Iraq. In particular, Iran's foreign policy towards Iraqi Kurdistan is a function of its broader foreign policy towards Baghdad. So long as Iraq's territorial boundaries are not challenged and its internal cohesion is not threatened by Kurdish political demands, Tehran can afford to maintain cordial relations with the Iraqi government and the KRG. However, if Iraq's viability is challenged, Iran's outlook towards the KRG will change and Tehran's policies towards Iraqi Kurdistan will be calibrated to minimize any negative spill-over effects of turmoil into Iran's national and regional interests.

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**Iran's foreign policy towards Iraqi Kurdistan is a function of its broader foreign policy towards Baghdad.**

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## Iranian-Lebanese Shi'ite Relations

*Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlohr*

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Next to the Arab-Israeli conflict, perhaps few other topics in the history of the modern Middle East have captured the interest of policymakers and scholars alike as has post-revolutionary Iranian-Lebanese Shi'ite relations, particularly the creation of Hizbullah. Although both groups have come to this topic with a set of similar questions — namely, what is the impact of this transnational network among Lebanese Shi'ites and how does it operate? — thankfully, they have arrived at very different conclusions.

The US government and many other Western governments have labeled this a terrorist network and a global threat since the early 1980s, classifying Hizbullah as a static and secretive organization. Scholarship on this network however, has in the meantime undergone several changes, providing us more and more with a nuanced understanding of Hizbullah's ideologies, activities, and institutions.

In the initial phase of the intensification of this particular Iranian-Lebanese network in the early 1980s, when large pictures of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini appeared on the streets in the southern suburbs of Beirut and the number of Shi'ite women wearing the so-called Iranian style *hijab* rose, this drastic change in the public space and its presumed resemblance to the public space in Iran led some scholars to speak of the “Iranization” of the Lebanese Shi'ites. Murals, for example, were often taken as an indication that the population interpreted them according to the intention of the producers. However, more recent scholarship has argued, and rightly so, that what flows in this transnational network, from economic support to ideologies, is reconfigured into a local context.

Later, scholars focused on how Hizbullah's public institutions fill a gap in Lebanese social services, and how Hizbullah has adapted and transformed some Iranian revolutionary discourses, fitting them into a particularly Lebanese sociopolitical context to advance its position in those fields. Some others have also paid attention on how the rule of the jurisprudent (*vilayat-i faqih*) gives meaning to Hizbullah members and produces a “society of resistance” for which Hizbullah is so well known. Such works have thrown light on the Shi'ite community's diversity and its complex identity politics and have shown how and to what end Hizbullah transforms “global ideologies.” Nevertheless, the scope of research has remained limited as a result of the rigidity and timidity with which Western decisionmakers view Iranian-Lebanese Shi'ite ties, and in particular Hizbullah and its projects as a stooge of the Iranian government.



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The academic knowledge produced so far partially reads — sometimes unintentionally — as a response to such claims. To counter the terrorist label and to destroy this simplistic image, these scholars have focused on providing as many examples as possible to show the “Lebaneseness,” the “modernity,” the independence, and the piety of Hizbullah members, and have sometimes elevated Hizbullah members to ideal Lebanese citizens and romanticized some of the group’s violent and coercive activities.

However, the politics of labeling has not been limited to Western governments and mainstream media but is also widespread in Lebanon across sectarian lines, including among many non-Hizbullah Lebanese Shi’ites. Interestingly, the logic of some of this labeling can itself be viewed as one of the impacts of the Iranian revolution in Lebanon. The intensification of post-revolutionary Iranian-Lebanese Shi’ite ties has affected the Lebanese Shi’ite community in such an array of fields that it would be almost impossible to list them all. Depending on one’s interest, one could give preference to some over others. But in my view, the most important influence has been that the support of the Iranian government, the religious networks, and their outreach organizations has led to institutionalizing difference within the Lebanese Shi’ite community along a discourse of piety,

Iran officially sponsors a vision of piety in Lebanon by naturalizing the link between the support of the Palestinian cause and what it declares as legalistic and authentic Shi’ism. In other words, the Iranian activists since the early 1980s have not simply supported a split in the Shi’ite community along the lines of two political parties (Amal and Hizbullah), but they have helped reconfigure how Shi’ites envision the Lebanese nation and its identity; how they express their loyalty to the Lebanese nation; and how they imagine their own position as citizens there. By backing the creation in a weak state of a variety of well-functioning social institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and orphanages, in addition to its relatively successful resistance activities, where a certain vision of piety is taught, practiced, and developed, Iranian officials have encouraged to create a new mode of competition in the Shi’ite community over leadership positions.

References to piety are now preconditions to access symbolic and political power. Each Shi’ite party, in order to propagate its own interpretation of Lebanese Shi’ite piety competes in form of institutionalization, believes such establishments to be productive avenues for not only disseminating the group’s particular vision of piety and ideal citizenship but also to produce loyal followers.

Leadership piety politics has led to a *de facto* improvement of the social conditions of many Shi’ites, regardless of how these Shi’ites themselves envision the relation between piety and social services. It has also resulted in the emergence of a nascent culture of self-reliance and civil society. As compared to the late 1970s, where there was only one regular school for Shi’ites in Beirut with almost 2,000 students, there is now a multitude of Shi’ite-run schools all over Lebanon where more than 20,000 students receive a decent education. As such, the impact of the Iranian revolution has not been

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simply an Islamicization of a section of the Shi'ite population, but more importantly, it has been the Islamicization of the citizenship discourse among Shi'ites in Lebanon in addition to radically politicizing social institution-building as a crucial component of political legitimacy.

Finally, what has changed in Iran's foreign policy in Lebanon in the past 30 years? Certainly, from its inception, ideological and financial backing of Hizbullah has been crucial to Tehran's claim to be *the* main patron of the Palestinian cause. While Iran's vision of the triangle relation between its government, Hizbullah, and the Palestinian cause has transformed little, the rhetoric of its own relation with Hizbullah has changed considerably. The discourse about Hizbullah's independence from Iran and its loyalty to the soil of Lebanon has taken over the language of support for establishment of an Islamic government in Lebanon. Instead of former calls to pan-Islamic and pan-Shi'ite unity, "solidarity and strategic alliances" are the vocabulary the Iranian and Lebanese leadership now uses to describe these ties. This adjustment of discourse reflects as much the power struggles on the Lebanese national scene as it does the political dynamics in Iran between the so-called reformists, hardliners, and the leader 'Ali Khamene'i. But to merely trace the change of discourse to ideological disagreement reduces the complexity of Iranian politics. Such transformation of discourse suggests also that an entire bureaucracy in Iran now owes its life to both charisma building as well as to the routinization of this transnational network. Not surprisingly, such officials are often members and close allies of the Iranian religious ruling elite.

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**The discourse about Hizbullah's independence from Iran and its loyalty to the soil of Lebanon has taken over the language of support for establishment of an Islamic government in Lebanon.**

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# The Syrian-Iranian Alliance

*Raymond Hinnebusch*

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Syria and Iran have been referred to as the “odd couple:” to some, an alliance between a Persian Islamic theocracy and an Arab nationalist secular republic has appeared as a bizarre and temporary marriage of convenience. Given the internal dissimilarity of the two regimes, one might therefore profitably look to shared geopolitical threats — Iraq and Israel — to explain the alliance. But a state’s conceptions of enmity and threat are less objectively given than shaped by its identity.



Iran under the Shah was aligned with Israel and the United States, and suspicious of Syria. However, in redefining Iran as an Islamic state opposed to imperialism and Zionism, Iran’s revolutionary elite also redefined its friends and enemies: Israel’s occupation of Jerusalem and victimization of the Palestinians as well as America’s backing of Israel and intervention in Iranian politics made them enemy states while Syria (where some Iranian revolutionaries had spent their exile), shared their anti-imperialism and was, hence, seen as a natural ally.

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Moreover, to assert the relevance of its Islamic revolution beyond Iran’s Shi’a community, Iran needed to break out of its marginalization from the Arab world; the Syrian alliance served this end. Syria, also locked in a struggle with a US-Israeli “imperialist” alliance, responded with alacrity to the possibility of breaking the Israeli-Iranian pincer on the Arab world. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat’s 1979 peace treaty with Israel meant that Syria not only faced Israel alone, but also faced a hostile Iraq. Although it was not a substitute for the Egyptian army on Israel’s southern front, Islamic Iran was a valuable asset to Syria in the Arab-Israeli power balance.

During the 1980s, the strategic interests of the two states converged in the face of increased security threats. First, the Iran-Iraq War sharpened Iran’s and Syria’s shared animosity toward Iraq. The historic rivalry of the Syrian and Iraqi regimes escalated over their contrary views of Iran: For Saddam Husayn, Iran was a strategic threat, while for Syria’s Hafiz al-Asad, Iran’s Islamic revolution had made an ally of Israel into a partisan of the Arab cause, and Saddam’s invasion of Iran had taken both Iran and Iraq out of the Arab-Israeli power balance. Once Asad had earned Saddam’s deep enmity by siding with Iran, he had an interest in preventing an Iraqi victory that would allow Saddam to seek revenge. Iran bought substantial amounts of Eastern bloc arms through Syria while the latter’s shutdown of the trans-Syria pipeline damaged Iraq’s capacity to finance the war. Syria helped prevent Iraq from depicting the war as an Arab-Persian struggle. Syria,

in return, was provided with cheap Iranian oil that limited the economic pressures Syria's Gulf Arab aid donors could put on its foreign policy.

Syrian and Iranian objectives also converged in countering the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Iran, in order to export its revolution and acquire a role in the struggle with Israel needed access to the Lebanese Shi'a, which Syria facilitated. The Lebanon war enabled Iran to establish a foothold in Lebanon and become a player in Arab politics. Syria, for its part, needed any help it could get in mobilizing a Lebanese coalition against the Israeli invasion, the Gemayal government Israel helped install, and the US-backed Lebanese-Israeli accord of May 17, 1983 that would have made Lebanon an Israeli satellite. The effectiveness of the Iranian-sponsored Islamic resistance in Lebanon taught Israel the costs of interventionism and, in helping to foil a mortal threat to Syria, proved to Asad the strategic value of the Iranian alliance. Later, Syrian opposition to the continuing hostage crisis perpetrated by Iran's Lebanese clients strained relations, but once 'Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani came to power in Iran he helped Syria take credit in the West for hostage releases. By the end of the 1980s, the alliance had important consequences for the regional power equation. It balanced the Israeli-American coalition in Lebanon and the pro-Iraq Arab coalition during the Iran-Iraq War; in both cases, revisionist (Israeli, Iraqi) ambitions were blunted, thus maintaining the regional *status quo*.

That the alliance survived the dramatic 1990s global systemic changes wrought by the end of the Cold War, and the 1990-91 Gulf crisis and war suggested that it was more than a mere "marriage of convenience." Syria's use of the 1990-91 Gulf war crisis to realign toward the United States in lieu of its declining Soviet patron and to join the Arab-Israeli peace process and the Damascus Declaration (the latter an exclusively Arab Gulf security pact) might have spelt the end of the alliance. But Iran similarly used the Gulf crisis to demonstrate its moderation to the Western powers. With the demonstrated ability of the United States to intervene in the region in the absence of any countervailing Soviet power, Iran and Syria both needed to ease hostilities with the West.

The alliance provided the two states with a number of benefits: helping Tehran to counter US efforts to isolate Iran; strengthening Syria's hand in negotiations by the offering the prospect that a peace settlement might break the alliance; fostering the collaboration in armaments development, especially missile deterrents; and balancing the emerging Israeli-Turkish alignment. Israel's expulsion by Hizbullah from south Lebanon in 2000 was a joint victory that boosted the prestige of both states. While the two regimes disagreed over the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, with Iran apparently regarding this action as an opportunity as well as threat and Syria adamantly opposed, they shared an interest in blocking the establishment of a US client state in Iraq.

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Increased US pressure, including economic sanctions on Syria over the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri

and on Iran over its nuclear program, drew them to coordinate in the economic as well as the security realms. Once forced out of Lebanon, Syria was dependent on Iran-backed Hezbollah to prevent a pro-Western takeover there and an orchestration of the Hariri murder tribunal to engineer regime change in Damascus.

The 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war over Lebanon pitted the Syrian-Iran alliance not only against the United States and Israel, but also put it at odds with pro-American Sunni Arab states such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia that feared a “Shi-‘a” axis — more appropriately, a “nationalist coalition” — of Iran, the Iraqi Shi‘a, and Hezbollah. A 2007 Saudi bid to detach Iran from Syria in the Lebanon crisis failed, and the May 2008 victory of Hezbollah over the US-Saudi backed Lebanese ruling factions, again demonstrated the value of Hezbollah as a joint strategic asset. The alliance was therefore pivotal to the ongoing struggle over the Middle East between the United States and its client regimes on the one hand, and the last remaining states that cling to the banner of indigenous nationalism and are more attuned to the largely Arab and Islamic identities of the regional public on the other.

The durability of the Iran-Syria alliance is attributable to common enemies, the shared disquiet of the two states at the ever advancing US penetration of the region, the balanced benefits each derives from it, and a certain institutionalization of consultation. The relationship also benefits from intra-elite trust rooted in the experience of each that the other will come to its aid when it is most in need and that each will defer to the other’s vital interests — Syria’s in the Levant and Iran’s in the Gulf. The alliance has, against all expectations, not only lasted a quarter century, but has also become a major component of the regional power balance and the main obstacle to unchallenged US hegemony over the Middle East.

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# Twists and Turns in Turkish-Iranian Relations

*Mustafa Kibaroglu*

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**B**ilateral relations between Turkey and Iran have been marked by relative peace and stability for the past four centuries. Since the founding of the modern Republic of Turkey in 1923 and the creation of an absolutist monarchy in Iran in 1925, the ruling regimes of both countries have sought to consolidate their domestic power and to pursue an independent foreign policy. Neither Turkey nor Iran has viewed one another as an immediate threat to the attainment of these vital objectives.



During the Cold War, fearing Soviet expansionism and Soviet influence in their domestic affairs, Turkey and Iran aligned with the pro-Western camp. As founding members of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), Turkey and Iran became regional allies. The United States supported their efforts to cooperate bilaterally and multilaterally. In 1964 Iran and Turkey, along with Pakistan, founded the Regional Cooperation and Development Organization to promote economic, technical, and cultural cooperation among the members. Turkey perceived Iran as a *status quo* power, and thus non-threatening to its security or position in the region.

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The 1979 Islamic Revolution shook the stability of Turkish-Iranian relations. The Islamic Republic of Iran’s militant Islamist statements and foreign policy fuelled tension and mutual distrust. However, both countries sought to prevent conflict or a rupture in relations. This reluctance to escalate the tensions stemmed largely from their desire to protect their economic interests, given that Turkey was an exporter of goods to Iran and Iran was a major energy supplier for Turkey.

The end of the Cold War paved the way for a rivalry to emerge between Turkey and Iran in Central Asia and the Caucasus. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, Iran and Turkey sought to increase their influence and power in the newly independent former Soviet republics. Both countries underlined their common history, values, and linguistic and religious affinities with the peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus.<sup>1</sup> Western countries, especially the United States, which feared the spread of political Islam in the area and regarded Turkey as a “model” to the former Soviet republics, supported Ankara’s efforts.

The improvement of Turkish-Israeli relations has been a source of tension between Iran

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1. John Calabrese, “Turkey and Iran: Limits of a Stable Relationship,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (1998), pp. 75-94.

and Turkey. Having recognized the State of Israel in 1949, Turkey always has been cautious in its relations with Israel in order to avoid offending its Arab neighbors.<sup>2</sup> However, the advent of the Madrid peace process between the Arab states and Israel paved the way for improved relations between Turkey and Israel. When both countries signed a comprehensive defense and security cooperation agreement in 1996, Iranian officials expressed their suspicions regarding such an arrangement and voiced their opposition. This development pushed Iran to align with Iraq and Syria in order to balance the Turkish-Israeli military alliance.<sup>3</sup>

The 1990s also have witnessed a deterioration in Turkish-Iranian relations, especially due to the threat perceptions of these countries with respect to their domestic security. Turkish secularists and the military were suspicious of Iran's intentions. Turkey accused Iran of interfering in its domestic affairs by supporting radical Islamic organizations propagating against the secular regime in Turkey.<sup>4</sup> The events reached a peak on the night of February 1, 1997, when during the commemoration of the "Jerusalem Day" in Sincan (a small town in the environs of the Turkish capital of Ankara), posters of Hizbullah and Hamas were displayed and the participants strongly criticized the secular regime of the Turkish Republic. One of the participants, then-Iranian Ambassador to Turkey Mohammed Reza Bagheri, reportedly called for the institution of *Shari'a* in Turkey<sup>5</sup>

The Sincan incident alone shows how closely Iran's activities in Turkey were being monitored and how promptly and effectively the secular circles within the state structure confronted them. Hence, following the revelations in August 2002 by an Iranian opposition group of Iran's secret uranium enrichment and heavy water production facilities, which are clear indications of Iran's long-term nuclear ambitions, Turkey would be expected to have raised much more serious concerns about Iran's efforts to become a nuclear power.

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**Similar concerns about the probable consequences of developments in Iraq have caused the two countries' positions with respect to regional political issues to converge.**

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Nevertheless, in the post-September 11 period, Turkey adopted a substantially different attitude toward Iran. Following the events leading up to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the relationship between Turkey and Iran seemingly has entered a new phase. Similar concerns about the probable consequences of developments in Iraq have caused the two countries' positions with respect to regional political issues to converge.

Turkey's official stance toward Iran's nuclear program is clear. Turkey recognizes the right of Iran, which is a member of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to develop nuclear technology, provided that it remains on a peaceful track and allows for the application of full-scope safeguards inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in such a way that would lend the utmost confidence to the international community about its

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2. Hakan Yavuz, "Turkish Israeli Relations through the Lens of the Turkish Identity Debate," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1997), pp. 22-37.

3. Mustafa Kibaroglu, "Turkey and Israel Strategize," *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Winter 2002), pp. 61-65.

4. Calabrese, "Turkey and Iran," p. 85.

5. Yavuz, "Turkish Israeli Relations through the Lens of the Turkish Identity Debate."

intentions.

The consensus view among the Turkish political and security elite is that, contrary to its apparent low-profile stance, Turkey cannot stay aloof from Iran's nuclearization for long. The presence of nuclear weapons in the Iranian military arsenal will upset the delicate balance that exists between the two nations since the Kasr-i Shirin Treaty in favor of Iran.

Considering the fact that Turkey is a member of the United Nations Security Council for the period of 2009 to 2010 as well as a newly elected member of the Board of Governors of the IAEA, where Iran's nuclear program will continue to be the top agenda item, the nature as well as the extent of Iran's nuclear program is highly likely to have a decisive impact on the future of Turkish-Iranian relations.<sup>6</sup>

Bearing in mind the rivalry between the Turks and the Iranians throughout history, despite the fact that some common concerns exist as regards their national interests, the scope and the content of Turkish-Iranian relations may not go far beyond the present levels unless Turkey makes a radical turn in its relations with the West in general, and with the United States in particular, even if they may not be at satisfactory levels either.<sup>7</sup>

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**The presence of nuclear weapons in the Iranian military arsenal will upset the delicate balance that exists between the two nations since the Kasr-i Shirin Treaty in favor of Iran.**

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6. Mustafa Kibaroglu and Baris Caglar "Implications of a Nuclear Iran for Turkey," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (2008).

7. Tarik Oguzlu and Mustafa Kibaroglu, "Incompatibilities in Turkish and European Security Cultures Diminish Turkey's Prospects for EU Membership," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 6 (2008), pp. 945-962; Mustafa Kibaroglu and Tarik Oguzlu, "Turkey and the United States in the 21st Century: Friends or Foes?" *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (2008), pp. 357-372.

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# The Dichotomist Antagonist Posture in the Persian Gulf

*Riccardo Redaelli*

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Since the end of “Pax Britannica,” a zero-sum approach to Persian Gulf security has predominated. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s rhetoric and ideology in favor of “exporting the Revolution” to the Sunni Arab world coupled with the strong hostility of the Gulf Arab regimes toward the Islamic Republic of Iran reinforced a dichotomist mindset with respect to regional security. Iraq’s invasion of Iran and the taking of US diplomats as hostages by Iran (which compounded the severity of the fracture in US-Iran relations) exacerbated this trend.



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In 1981 the United States sponsored the creation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), with the idea of creating a balance of power to maintain a fragile peace in the area. Notwithstanding all the limits of that organization in the field of inter-Arab security policy integration and cooperation, the GCC in a way formalized this dichotomist posture and focused it on the “antagonist.”

After the end of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) and Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait and the consequent Gulf War of 1991, Washington’s “dual containment” strategy against Iraq and Iran crystallized this approach: Gulf security became hostage to the nature of the governments involved, without any conceptual development of the security frame.

Meanwhile in Tehran, an antagonist posture toward the West and toward the “moderate Arab” regimes became a distinctive characteristic of the post-revolutionary political elite; this posture still constitutes a pillar of the official ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran, well beyond its real regional and international policy. (Until Mahmud Ahmadinejad’s presidency, Iranian foreign policy often had been more pragmatic and rational than its regime rhetoric.)

During the reformist period (1997-2005) President Muhammad Khatami tried to deconstruct the theoretical basis of this radical confrontational policy, mainly by insisting on conducting a “dialogue of civilizations” and making an effort to foster mutual understanding with the other Islamic countries. Unfortunately, Khatami managed to adopt more moderate policies only toward Arab regional countries and the European Union. The ideological pattern of the Islamic Republic remained untouched.

In recent years, the political atmosphere in the region has worsened due to the post-9/11 US military presence all around Iranian borders (in Afghanistan, Central Asia,

the Caucasus, Iraq, and the Gulf); the questionable US decision to include Iran in the “Axis of Evil,” as articulated in President George W. Bush’s State of the Union speech in January 2002; the idea of promoting “regime change” in Tehran; and the crisis related to the Iranian nuclear program, which since 2002 has been the main issue of concern for the international community.

These factors reinforced Tehran’s feelings of isolation and strategic loneliness. Conservative and radical factions of the Iranian ruling elite seized on these developments to exaggerate the dangers and perils facing the country. Moreover, US policies of coercion and isolation contributed to the progressive “securitization” of Iranian foreign policy thinking and actions. Security and military forces have taken the reins of Iranian policymaking processes, subordinating all foreign decisions to a radical, distorted interpretation of the “security needs” of the country.

This process of securitization has yielded very negative domestic and international consequences. At home, it has provided a powerful excuse for cracking down on reformist and moderate voices; it has reinforced the regime’s paranoia about “fifth columnists” (i.e., enemies of the Islamic Republic working inside the country being coordinated by the United States); it has made it very risky to speak in favor of pragmatic, friendly policies toward the West; it has exacerbated the threat perception of “existential risk” of the Islamic Republic; and it has provided a perfect excuse for the failures of Ahmadinejad’s government. At an international level, it contributed to further mistrust and recrimination between Iran on the one hand, and the US and Arab countries on the other.

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**US policies of coercion and isolation contributed to the progressive “securitization” of Iranian foreign policy thinking and actions. Security and military forces have taken the reins of Iranian policymaking processes, subordinating all foreign decisions to a radical, distorted interpretation of the “security needs” of the country.**

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At the same time, a series of developments — the removal of Iran’s two main enemies in the region (the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Husayn in Iraq), the catastrophic post-invasion period in Iraq, the creation of a Shi’ite-dominated government in Baghdad, and the difficulties faced by NATO in Afghanistan — boosted Iran’s geopolitical importance in the Middle East. These changes subsequently provoked Sunni Arab oil monarchies’ fear of rising Shi’a power in the Gulf (where Shi’ite communities represent almost 50% of the population, but face political discrimination in several countries).

A growing number of analysts have pointed out that Iran has impressive “soft power” and growing connections with governments, parties, and political groups in the region (though this probably overestimates Iran’s influence). Nevertheless, the enhancement of Iran’s political role has made the ultra-radical government in Tehran more aggressive and even overconfident, which in turn has reinvigorated Arab fears. Iran again has become a dangerous antagonist whose main strategic goals are unclear.

It is well known that understanding the domestic political evolution of the Islamic Republic of Iran is notoriously dif-

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*Redaelli...*

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difficult, due to both its political fragmentation and the extraordinary complexity of its constitutional framework. Dealing with Iranian foreign policy is sometimes even more puzzling, since one has to add the dichotomy between the regime's official rhetoric and the more pragmatic policies it has often adopted.

However, there seems to be no option other than to try to move toward an inclusive regional security system, and to encourage Iran to perceive itself as less antagonistic *vis-à-vis* the other regimes. The international community should seek to nurture a process of desecuritizing Iranian foreign policy by pursuing a policy of selective engagement that exploits the convergence of interests on specific topics between Iran and the West for creating confidence and that ameliorates Tehran's isolation, thereby reducing Iranian perceptions of insecurity.

This is the only way to weaken the dichotomist pattern of imagined regional and international relations, which, after 30 years, still inform the actual security policies and conditions in the Middle East.

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**The international community should seek to nurture a process of desecuritizing Iranian foreign policy by pursuing a policy of selective engagement.**

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# Iran and the Gulf Cooperation Council

*Mehran Kamrava*

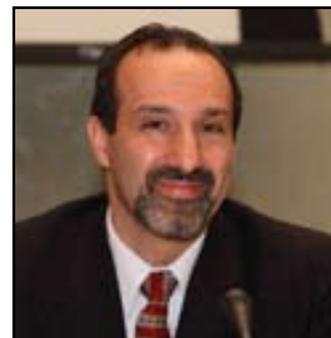
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Some three decades into the life of the Islamic Republic, the Iranian regime has yet to devise and implement a coherent national security policy or even a set of guidelines on which its regional and international security policies are based. In relation to the Persian Gulf region and the country's immediate neighbors, this has resulted in the articulation of regional foreign and security policies that at times have seemed fluid and changeable. Fairly consistently, however, Iranian foreign and national security policies are influenced far more by pragmatic, balance-of-power considerations than by ideological or supposedly "revolutionary" pursuits.

Appearances to the contrary, Iranian foreign and security policies in relation to the Persian Gulf region have featured certain consistent themes, or, more aptly, areas of continued attention as well as tension. The first feature revolves around the broader military and diplomatic position that Iran occupies in relation to the Persian Gulf itself. Equally influential in Iran's regional diplomacy is what Tehran sees as "the Saudi factor," namely Saudi Arabia's posture and pursuits in the region. Iran's regional security policy, in the meanwhile, is largely determined by the role and position of the United States in what Iran considers its rightful sphere of influence. By extension, for Tehran, questions about Saudi diplomatic and American military positions and intentions bear directly on the nature and direction of Iran's relations with Iraq and Afghanistan.

Also important are Iranian relations with its neighbors to the south, with a number of whom — namely Kuwait, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — Iran's relations have been tense and cooperative at the same time. The most problematic of these have been Iran-UAE relations and the tensions surrounding contending claims by both countries over the islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs. Again, both in relation to Iran-UAE tensions and Iran's regional diplomacy toward the other Persian Gulf states, the Saudi and American factors, especially the latter, are not unimportant.

Given the steady securitization of the region's politics since the 1980s, for both Iran and also for the other Gulf states, foreign and security policies are inseparable. Insofar as Iran's position in and relations with other Persian Gulf states is concerned, the US military presence in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf, Iran's dispute with the UAE over the three islands, and the potential for spillover from internal conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have all combined to create an environment in which security and diplo-



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matic issues are intimately interconnected. At least for the foreseeable future, therefore, any analysis of Iran's regional foreign policy needs to also take into account its security and strategic calculations.

Despite persistent tensions over the three islands, particularly since 1992, there is another, equally significant aspect to the relationship between the UAE and Iran — the commercial trade between them. According to one estimate, the volume of trade between the two countries, both officially and unofficially, was around \$11 billion in 2007.<sup>1</sup> There are an estimated 500,000 Iranian residents in Dubai alone, of whom some 10,000 are registered owners of businesses.<sup>2</sup> Dubai has emerged as perhaps the most significant *entrepot* used by Iranian businesses in their attempt to circumvent US and Western economic sanctions on Iran, with goods routinely re-exported from Dubai to various destinations in Iran.<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, by some accounts Iran has emerged as Dubai's biggest trading partner.<sup>4</sup> Despite persistent tensions over the disputed islands, therefore, relations between the two remain generally amicable because of their economic and commercial ties.

In many ways, Iranian-UAE relations are emblematic of Iran's relations with its other Arab neighbors, whether Iraq or Saudi Arabia or, for that matter, the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as a whole. A history of territorial and other disputes, often made all the more intractable by the advent of the modern state and by age-old cultural and linguistic differences, has resulted in deep-seated mutual mistrust and acrimony. At the same time, the two sides have convergent interests. Ultimately, pragmatic concerns and pursuits, rooted in ongoing assessments of Iran's capabilities and needs, have guided the country's foreign and national security policies, both in relation to the larger world and, particularly, insofar as the Persian Gulf region is concerned.

With pragmatism as its primary guiding force, the substance and underlying logic of Iran's relations with the GCC states, and with the outside world at large, have remained largely consistent since the mid- to late 1990s. This is despite the tenure in office in Tehran over the last decade of two very different presidents, one championing the cause of "dialogue among civilizations" and the other a radical rhetoric reminiscent of the early days of the revolution. This begs the question of why, then, did Iran's relations with the European Union and the United States deteriorate so dramatically during Ahmadinejad's presidency despite the continuity of his policies with those of Khatami? The answer has to do less with Iranian foreign policy than with larger international developments occurring around the time of changing administrations in Tehran, particularly significant improvements in US relations with a number of European powers that had become strained in the run-up to the US invasion and occupation of Iraq. Meanwhile, Mahmud Ahmadinejad's tactless speeches and his

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**Dubai has emerged as perhaps the most significant *entrepot* used by Iranian businesses in their attempt to circumvent US and Western economic sanctions on Iran, with goods routinely re-exported from Dubai to various destinations in Iran.**

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1. Sonia Verma, "Iranian Traders in Dubai Find Bush's Rhetoric is Bad for Business," *The Globe and Mail*, January 15, 2008, p. 12.  
2. Sonia Verma, "Bush Rallies Gulf Allies Against Iran," *The Times* (London), January 14, 2008, p. 35.  
3. Eric Lipton, "U.S. Alarmed as Some Exports Veer Off Course in the Mideast," *The New York Times*, April 2, 2008, p. 1.  
4. Verma, "Bush Rallies Gulf Allies Against Iran," p. 35.

confrontational personality made it significantly easier to vilify Iran and to present it as “a menacing threat” regionally and globally. In fact, at times Bush Administration officials appeared far more concerned about Iran’s threat to its neighbors than the neighbors themselves. In short, it was not the substance and nature of Iranian foreign policy or its security posture toward the Persian Gulf that changed from Muhammad Khatami to Ahmadinejad. Rather, it was American foreign policy objectives, and with it the evolving nature of America’s relations with its allies in Europe and in the UN Security Council that underwent dramatic changes before and after 9/11 and the US invasion of Iraq.

The future of Iran’s relations with the GCC, therefore, cannot be examined without also considering Iran’s relationship with the United States. It is difficult to imagine US-Iranian relations darkening further than they had during the administration of George W. Bush. Any reduction of tensions between Iran and the United States is likely to be welcomed by the regional states, many of whom have worried, with good reason, about the potential fallout of any open conflict between Tehran and Washington. But many regional actors also worry about the possibility that a warming of relations between Iran and the United States may lessen their luster in Washington’s eyes. A domestically weakened and internationally castigated Iran may be the preferred option of its neighbors, but whether this is a more likely scenario than an Iran which is more integrated into the international community, perhaps led by a different president, depends as much on larger international developments as it does on Iran’s domestic politics and policy preferences. Changes are surely in the offing. What remain to be seen are their degree, intensity, and direction.

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**Many regional actors also worry about the possibility that a warming of relations between Iran and the United States may lessen their luster in Washington’s eyes.**

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## Iran and Saudi Arabia: Eternal “Gamecocks?”

*Henner Fürtig*

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Almost immediately after the triumph of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini and the new Iranian leadership turned against Saudi Arabia and its ruling family. Iran’s supreme leader accused the “House of Saud” of “distorting the Islamic spirit ... The Saudi monarchy has totally turned into an American satellite and Saudi Arabia has been rapidly becoming Americanized in every respect.” Later, *The New York Times* quoted him as saying, “Mecca is now in the hands of a group of infidels who are grossly unaware of what they should do.” Yet, the chastised Saudis paid back in kind, calling the Iranian leadership on Radio Riyadh a “corrupt bunch of thieves” that had created a “slaughterhouse” in Iran and was degenerating Islam. The “Iranian butchers are a mentally distorted and ignorant gang, agents of Satan, who behave as [if they are] going nuts, as a fascist regime.” One might think of these statements as lapses of the early post-revolutionary period; otherwise both governments would still be insulting each other today.



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Ayatollah ‘Ali Khamene’i, Khomeini’s successor, did not tire of calling on “all of the oppressed people of the world such as those of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Africa and America” to follow the Iranian example and get rid of their oppressors. Such comments have triggered Saudi accusations that Iranian-backed militias have been behind the unrest in Iraq, the Palestinian territories, the Gulf region, and Lebanon. Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal frankly told reporters in May 2008 that “Iran’s actions support the violence in Lebanon.” When traditional Arabian-Persian dualism, the Sunni-Shi’a dichotomy, discordance in trade and economy, differences in foreign policy orientation, and other matters are considered alongside these mutual accusations, a picture of Iran and Saudi Arabia as “eternal” rivals, as tireless gamecocks, emerges almost inevitably. Yet, is it accurate?

We should remember the 1960s and 1970s, when Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi and the Saudi kings Faysal and Khalid — united by the interest in ensuring a stable flow of oil — developed a staunch partnership in the fight against leftist and radical-nationalist influences in the Gulf region. Additionally, from 1968 onwards, both countries became cornerstones in US President Richard Nixon’s attempt to appoint “deputies” for certain strategic areas of the world (the Nixon Doctrine). Both Iran and Saudi Arabia were suitable, as they both were conservative and anti-communist. In addition, they had the potential — although in different ways — to assume regional leadership functions. Ultimately, Iran and Saudi Arabia formed two solid pillars, together supporting a conservative and pro-Western policy in the region. There was no place in the world during the

1970s where the Nixon Doctrine was more evident than in the Gulf. More importantly, the relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia was never as friendly as between the years 1968 and 1979.

However, if 1979 was the year in which the Iranian-Saudi relationship took a turn for the worse, then the Islamic Revolution was the linchpin. Similar to all “great” revolutions in modern times, the Iranian revolution developed a strong universalist approach — assuming the role of a model for the world’s Muslims and demanding a leading position within the *umma*. This directly challenged the core identity of the Saudi state and ruling family. The Al Saud did not fear Shi’a ideas and visions as such, but were extremely upset about the fact that the competition had now primarily shifted to the field of religion, an area previously seen as their monopoly. The Iranian revolutionaries claimed that the Al Saud led only an isolated sect and were therefore not worthy to secure the safety of Islam’s holiest places; that Arabs acknowledged Iran’s spiritual primacy as the “Redeemer Nation;” and that Iran was more committed to Islam and was more capable of interpreting it. These claims must have been seen as an attack at the heart of the Al Saud’s pretension to rule — an attack more dangerous than republicanism, nationalism, or socialism had been. Without doubt, by making religion the most important tool in the struggle for hegemony in the Persian Gulf, the Iranian leadership had hit the bullseye. To make things even worse for the Saudis, Ayatollah Khomeini stated several times that Islam and a monarchy were mutually exclusive and that a monarchy was a deviation of Islam’s content and intention.

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The war between Iran and Iraq (1980–88) worsened the situation. During the conflict, Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic relations with Tehran, supported Iraq, and helped create an Arab alliance against Iran. The experience of being besieged and isolated by the Arab camp — which was decisively influenced by Saudi Arabia — has affected the Iranian leadership ever since.

Considering the fact that the basic nature of both regimes did not change throughout the 1990s, the remarkable *détente* between Tehran and Riyadh during this decade must come as a surprise, or even as disproof of previous assessments. Diplomatic relations were restored in 1991, and negotiations between both governments, ranging from political and economic to security matters, became commonplace. Yet, two distinctive developments have to be taken into account. First, Saddam Husayn’s Iraq, by occupying neighboring Kuwait and directly threatening the Saudi Kingdom in 1990, turned out to be a more acute enemy of Saudi Arabia than Iran had been in the previous decade. Saddam’s aggression led the Saudis to close ranks with Iran. Second, a more pragmatic leadership had taken power in Iran after the *de facto* defeat in the war with Iraq and the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989. Internationally isolated and even confronted with the danger of extinction, the new leadership around Supreme Leader Khamene’i, President ‘Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Foreign Minister ‘Ali Akbar Velayati concentrated their efforts on the reconstruction of Iran and put national interests above matters of religion or the “export of the revolution.” It was President Mahmud Ahmadinejad who tried to reverse Iran’s overall foreign policy direction after 2005 by proclaiming a “Renaissance of Imam Khomeini’s

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ideas.” Relations with Saudi Arabia promptly deteriorated.

The periods of more or less “normal” relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia prove that enmity between both countries is not inevitable, but is rather due to specific circumstances. If an aggressive hegemonic pretension is dressed in a religious or ideological garment, the rivalry is especially tense, whereas in periods where “normal” national interests prevail, the political system in the Gulf region has achieved a balance. The Third Gulf War (2003) has severely disturbed the triangular balance between Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia by considerably weakening Iraq. Thus, *détente* and stability in the Gulf is not only a concern for Iran and Saudi Arabia, but also for Iraq. Yet, this is another story.

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# *The Global Arena*

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# The European Union and Iran

Walter Posch

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European governments initially reacted to Iran's Islamic revolution by a careful testing of the ground with the new regime. But relations deteriorated quickly, as Iran accused some European countries of siding with Iraq in the Iran-Iraq War and Iranian agents killed Iranian opposition figures in European capitals.

Not until the 1992 Edinburgh European Council did the European Union (EU) decide to look for new ways to organize their relations with the Islamic Republic. Hence the idea of a "critical dialogue" was born. However, EU-Iranian relations deteriorated again in 1995. Only after the surprise election of the malleable Muhammad Khatami and the commencement of Iran's reforms did the EU re-engage with the Islamic Republic in a "comprehensive dialogue."

EU negotiations with Iran continued even after a secret Iranian nuclear facility was disclosed in summer 2002. There were two reasons for this: first, the Europeans were still confident that their engagement with the Islamic Republic would strengthen the reformists and thus further de-radicalize the regime, and second, the international community was already preoccupied with the Iraq crisis.

In summer 2003 the EU's foreign policy apparatus was still too cumbersome to act quickly and imaginatively. Hence the Foreign Ministers of the EU's "big three" — Germany, France, and the United Kingdom (E3) — took the initiative, travelling to Tehran in order to convince their Iranian counterpart to cooperate more closely with the IAEA and to sign the Additional Protocol to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

After an initial understanding with the Iranian side, the E3 involved the EU's foreign policy czar, Javier Solana, who quickly became the main negotiator with the Iranians, in cooperation with the E3 Foreign Ministers and, it can be conjectured, with some backchannel involvement from the US. By 2004 all EU policies towards Iran were coordinated by the E3 plus Solana (the so-called E3/EU format), with the Council secretariat playing a central role as the clearing house and main policy "driver."

Iran's nuclear file came to dominate the Islamic Republic's relationship with the EU (though this did not mean that other issues such as human rights, economic relations, and security interests were neglected). The now famous Paris Agreement of November



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2004 obtained Iran's voluntary (Tehran insisted on the phrasing "legally non-binding") suspension of uranium enrichment, which lasted for almost two years and was widely understood as a goodwill gesture and confidence building measure on behalf of the Iranians. By spring 2005 there were legitimate reasons for optimism that a mutually acceptable agreement could be reached. Yet, positions were, in the end, irreconcilable as Iran insisted on the "right" to uranium enrichment, which it saw threatened by seemingly endless negotiations with the EU, whereas the Europeans were concerned about the potential military aspects of Iran's nuclear program. When the EU finally presented its offer (shortly after the Iranian elections but before the new president was sworn in), the Iranians furiously rejected it.

Tehran criticized the offer as too vague and too demanding, and most importantly saw the EU as being incapable of obtaining a security guarantee from Washington. The outlandish remarks of the newly elected Mahmud Ahmadinejad on the Holocaust shocked the EU deeply, scarred Iran's image in Europe, and destroyed the fine web of cultural and university relations between the EU and Iran that had been carefully built up during the Khatami years and before.

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**Contrary to the regime's propaganda, the EU never denied Iran's right to modern nuclear technology, but objected to its potential military aspects.**

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European decision-makers were careful not to allow their outrage to determine the outcome of the nuclear negotiations. They stuck with their belief that there is no military answer to Iran's nuclear file. Contrary to the regime's propaganda, the EU never denied Iran's right to modern nuclear technology, but objected to its potential military aspects. Hence it was willing to offer the Iranians an acceptable package deal. On the other hand, in the case that there was no movement on the Iranian side they were also ultimately willing to refer Iran's nuclear file to the Security Council. This was less a gesture towards the US, where the EU's continued engagement with Iran did not have many supporters, than a logical consequence of the Europeans' effort to allow the international community to play a significant role with regard to the Iranian file.

In 2006 EU-Iranian negotiations reached an impasse and consequently the Europeans referred Iran's nuclear dossier to the UNSC. This meant that the same policy — offering the Iranians economic and political cooperation on one hand and going for sanctions when the Iranians stall, was transferred to a higher political level. As a result the EU's Iran policy became intertwined with the UNSC's Permanent 5 (China, Russia, USA, France, and the United Kingdom). This new international consensual format (P5+Germany+EU, or E3/3+EU) was from now on the main framework to engage with Iran. Javier Solana was tasked with the continuation of talks with his Iranian counterpart and he delivered the letters written on behalf of the international community to Iran. (This happened in 2006 with the new offer and in June 2008 with the final package.) Ever since, the international community — and with it the EU — has been awaiting Iran's answer.

Since 2007 the stalemate over Iran's nuclear file has put all other EU policies with Tehran on hold. Internally, there have been critical voices bemoaning the "nuclear centric" nature of the EU's Iran policy. It has been suggested that the focus shift to European energy security instead, where the increasing reliance on Russia has become a major concern. This

debate continues to this day although there was never (and will never be) a real chance that Iran's nuclear file would become just one issue among others in the EU's relations with Iran. The main reason is that the EU has simply invested too much prestige and effort to find a mutually acceptable negotiated solution.

Internal differences notwithstanding, the European position towards sanctions has been clear from the beginning. Brussels never thought of sanctions as a tool for regime change nor as some kind of economic warfare. Rather, the EU insisted that sanctions must focus on enterprises and individuals involved in the Iranian nuclear program and should aim to bring Iran back to the negotiation table. In fact, targeted sanctions have imposed a cost, and Tehran hides its nervousness behind the smokescreen of stark polemics.

Although Iran continues to muddle through, mere survival was not the aim of the regime. Rather Tehran wanted to achieve international acceptance and legitimacy for its presumably peaceful nuclear program. This also poses a domestic problem for Tehran because the regime has preferred to frame any critique of the conduct of its nuclear file as "Western aggression" against the progress of the Iranian nation. Therefore, acting in a consensual manner with Russia and China counters the regime's basic argument. If for nothing else, the EU must be credited for having been able to keep the enlarged P5+1 together and functioning, thus making it clear to the Iranian public that the regime is acting in defiance of the international community, and not of the "imperialist" West. But most of all, it put the ball firmly in Iran's camp; after all, there is an offer on the table and Tehran is free to reengage any time.

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The P5+1 format will remain intact should direct US-Iranian talks indeed materialize, if only as some kind of a safety net should the talks fail. As a consequence for better or worse, EU-Iranian relations remain dependent on the development of Iran's nuclear file, and thus are likely to deteriorate.

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# Iran and France: Shattered Dreams

*Pirooz Izadi*

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When Iran's 1979 revolution took place, many Iranians predicted that relations between Iran and France would improve in an unprecedented way. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, spent the last four months of his 14-year in exile in France. The revolutionaries in Tehran lauded French leaders for being hospitable toward their spiritual leader. They had no hatred of France, which lacked colonialist aspirations regarding Iran.



However, several factors hindered the improvement of relations between the two countries and in some cases even led to the suspension of their relations: conflicting worldviews; France's Arab policy; EU constraints; clashing interests in the region; and the US "factor."

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## *THE FIRST PERIOD: 1979 TO 1989*

Especially after the fall of the transitional government of Mehdi Bazargan, France saw revolutionary Iran as a destabilizing force — seeking to subvert conservative Arab governments; spreading its influence in the Islamic world through fostering radical groups, especially Shi'a in Lebanon and hardline Palestinian factions; and supporting violent actions against Western interests everywhere in the world. France believed that these efforts could threaten the secure and free flow of oil through the Persian Gulf, as well as the stability and security of the Middle East and the West.

Such views made France suspicious of Iran's intentions. These suspicions culminated in the "War of Embassies" in September 1986 following the bombings in Paris that killed or injured 100 people. French officials accused Iranian diplomats of being involved in these attacks. At the same time, other events, such as France's decision to give political asylum to Iranian dissidents and opposition leaders, provoked Tehran's suspicion of France.

Similarly, the US hostage crisis led France to join other Western countries in imposing a series of sanctions on Iran. Here, the US factor played a major role in orienting French policy with respect to Iran.

During the Iran-Iraq War, France provided significant military aid to Iraq. In fact, France's Arab policy (*Politique Arabe de France*, or PAF) — that of seeking Mediter-

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ranean *profondeur* (depth) as a means of counterbalancing Germany in Europe and the Anglo-American relationship across the Atlantic by developing close ties with Arab states — was the main factor responsible for tilting Paris toward Baghdad. Not surprisingly, this fuelled Iran’s mistrust of France.

Finally, on February 14, 1989, Ayatollah Khomeini issued his famous *fatwa* condemning Salman Rushdie for his book *Satanic Verses*, which was considered a horrendous insult to Muslims. Following this *fatwa*, Britain severed its diplomatic relations with Iran, and other European Community (EC) members recalled their ambassadors. In this case, constraints imposed on France resulting from its commitments to the EC were partly responsible for the downturn in its relations with Iran. During this period, almost all of the abovementioned factors influenced bilateral relations in some way.

#### *THE SECOND PERIOD: 1989 TO 1997*

The end of the Iran-Iraq War and the beginning of reconstruction efforts by the Iranian government led to some changes in Iran’s foreign and economic policies. At the same time, the collapse of the Soviet empire created major change in international politics. Iran tried to adopt a kind of *détente* policy towards its Arab neighbors and Western countries.

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**For the Europeans, including France, Iran was an attractive large market and a source of energy supplies.**

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Iran sought foreign loans, credits, and investments with which to pursue reconstruction. Europe, especially France, was regarded as an important potential source of these funds, since US sanctions were still in force. For the Europeans, including France, Iran was an attractive large market and a source of energy supplies.

During this period, when both Iran and France explored an expansion of their ties, two major events shaped the Iranian-French bilateral relationship: the freeing of French hostages in Lebanon through Iran’s mediation efforts; and the contract made between the French oil company Total and the Iranian government, which took place despite US sanctions against foreign companies investing in the Iranian oil industry.

Iran’s rapprochement with Arab countries removed one of the obstacles to the improvement of Iranian-French relations. At the same time, European countries, including France, tried to resolve their differences with Iran, which were mostly related to their conflicting worldviews by beginning a “critical dialogue” with Iran. In their opinion, interaction with Iran could be more effective in moderating Iran’s behavior than imposing sanctions.

This period witnessed an overall improvement in political and economic relations between Iran and France. But in the latter part of the period, the killing of four Iranian Kurdish dissidents in a Berlin restaurant, known as the “Mykonos affair,” produced another setback, as European ambassadors were once again recalled and critical dialogue was suspended. Constraints related to France’s membership in the EU along with conflicting worldviews were involved in these developments.

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*THE THIRD PERIOD: 1997 TO 2005*

With the coming to power of a reformist government in Iran in 1997, there was much hope in Paris and other European capitals that the new government in Iran would display a moderate version of Islam, making possible a kind of compromise between their conflicting worldviews.

The level of contacts between Iran and France heightened, with President Muhammad Khatami visiting Paris. The volume of trade soared to an unprecedented level. And “comprehensive dialogue” with the EU began. However, political circles in Iran came to believe that France did not take adequate steps to take advantage of the opportunity provided by a moderate government in Iran. In this case, some considerations, including residual suspicions resulting from different worldviews, hindered closer relations.

In 2003, Iran’s nuclear dossier became a controversial subject in the UN’s International Atomic Energy Agency. EU-3 foreign ministers (including the French Foreign Minister), seeking a solution to the problem, reached an agreement with Tehran on October 21, 2003 to suspend its enrichment program. France, as a state possessing nuclear weapons, did not agree with the enlargement of the nuclear club, but at the same time did not want to impose sanctions on Iran. For this reason, France supported negotiations with Iran.

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**The policies adopted by Sarkozy in the new environment of the Middle East, Iran’s nuclear program and the radical positions taken by the Iranian president against Israel, led to confrontation between the two countries.**

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*THE FOURTH PERIOD: 2005 TO THE PRESENT*

In 2005, Iran, which was dissatisfied with the results of negotiations with the EU-3, resumed uranium enrichment activities. Soon thereafter, a new government headed by Mahmud Ahmadinejad came to power. Meanwhile, the balance of power in the Middle East drastically changed, especially in Iraq and Lebanon, increasing Iran’s influence. As a result, the conflict of interests between Iran and France emerged once again at the regional level.

In May 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy was elected as the new French President. He intended to pursue a foreign policy more convergent with the US in order to increase France’s freedom of action and influence throughout the world. He also tried to establish closer links with Israel.

The policies adopted by Sarkozy in the new environment of the Middle East, Iran’s nuclear program and the radical positions taken by the Iranian president against Israel, led to confrontation between the two countries. Here again, factors such as the United States, a conflict of interest at the regional level, and conflicting worldviews were responsible for aggravating the situation.

*CONCLUSION*

Conflicting worldviews have been influential in all periods. It even may be assumed that the two other factors, EU constraints (which were influential during the second and third periods) and the US (which was very influential in the first and fourth periods) are indirectly affected by conflicting worldviews. On the other hand, the factor of France's Arab policy, although it only gained prominence during the first period, continued to be an irritant during the subsequent periods. One can expect that conflicting worldviews will continue to play an essential role in the relations between the two countries.

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# The Spectrum of Perceptions in Iran's Nuclear Issue

*Rahman G. Bonab*

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The relationship between Iran and the West has been marked by mutual mistrust and confrontation for the past 30 years. Iran's nuclear standoff with Western countries is currently regarded as the main symbol of that confrontational relationship. Iran insists that its nuclear program is exclusively peaceful, while Western countries are suspicious of Tehran's intentions. There are polarized and incompatible views about this complicated and multidimensional issue. The main source of incompatibility is that this issue is seen from different perspectives.



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Skeptics argue that Iran has the technological capability and a sufficient amount of Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) to make a nuclear bomb within six months if it were to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Others remind us of the legal and political difficulties of using Article 10 of the NPT regarding withdrawal from this treaty and the negative impact this would have on Iran's national interests. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has not given Iran a clean bill of health despite nearly five years of intrusive random and regular inspections. During this time, inspectors have not been able to find satisfying evidence of Iran's diversion from peaceful nuclear activities. The latest IAEA Safeguard Report says that this watchdog organization does not have any document related to a military dimension of Iran's nuclear activities other than the UF<sub>4</sub> (uranium tetrafluoride) document. Iran is continuing uranium enrichment and sanctions have not been able to persuade the country to suspend its enrichment activity.

Since 2003, the Western media have frequently said that Iran is very close to make a nuclear bomb. None of these predictions has been realized yet, and we have not reached a "point of no return" in using diplomacy. If the latest assessments were not accurate and scientific, then it is time to review the recent policies. The current stalemate in Iran-IAEA cooperation may be an opportunity in this context. In its recent attempts to exert pressures on Iran, the United States has given documents related to Tehran's alleged studies to the IAEA in order to show the hard copies to Iran for the first time since 2004. The United States has not explained the authenticity, source, and accuracy of these so-called Laptop documents, although Iran denied their veracity.

A mutual lack of confidence is the main obstacle to reconciliation between Iran and the West in the nuclear issue. The constructivists are right to say that a perception of threat

is more important than the threat *per se*. The West is sure that even a nuclear Iran is not able to pose an existential threat. Meanwhile, Iran is aware that without Western help, it won't be able to realize its development plans. However, Iranian decision-makers are suspicious of Western countries' intentions. One of the reasons for this distrust may be a lack of cognition between the two sides. While the West and, to a lesser extent, China and Russia see Iran's nuclear activities within the framework of a neo-realist approach, Iran's decision-makers comprehend it mostly via domestic and local criteria.

A neo-realist approach supposes that Iran has sufficient motivations to make a nuclear bomb in order to be confident of its survival in an anarchic and unipolar post-Cold War world and a war-burdened and unstable region. Iran's security environment is the dominant analytical concept in this approach. According to this approach, the Bush Administration's offensive and provocative policies have intensified the sense of insecurity among Iran's political elites and have encouraged them to pursue nuclear deterrence.

Proponents of this view ignore the realities of nuclear reversals in the last decades and the complexities of nuclear decision-making. Comparative studies of various nuclear decision-making systems demonstrate that security concerns are not the most important variables in nuclearization or nuclear reversal. Furthermore, having a fuel cycle does not automatically lead to making bombs. Japan, Brazil, the Netherlands, and Argentina all have uranium enrichment capability, but they have not decided to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and make bombs.

Inside Iran, political elites apprehend Iran's nuclear issue mostly through the prism of domestic politics and the West's long-standing double standards in dealing with the Islamic Republic of Iran during the last 30 years. According to them, accepting the Western preconditions on the nuclear issue would only be an introduction to being forced to comply with the West's intrusive demands in other areas, such as human rights, terrorism, and Israel. Furthermore, history plays an indisputable role here. The outcome of the last 30 years of interactions between Iran and the West cannot be neglected by either side, at least in the short term.

Both sides have tested many policies *vis-à-vis* Iran's nuclear issue, and they have implicitly admitted that Iran's nuclear game is not zero-sum. The legitimacy of the Iranian regime is deeply reproduced by the political mobilization of people, and the nuclear issue will have considerable impact on the mobilization policy. The 5 + 1 group and especially the Obama Administration should pay attention to this basic fact in dealing with Iran's nuclear issue. It seems that the main assumption of polyheuristic theory in foreign policy is correct here: The concerns of Iranian policy makers are domestic rather than foreign. The main characteristic of Iran's decision-making system is delaying, not recognizing. The West has not paid balanced attention to these two important aspects of the Iranian decision-making system. It looks at the *outcome* rather than the *process* of decision-making. In March 2005, Iran proposed a package of objective guarantees

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and even accepted permanent inspections of its nuclear activities and ratification of the Model Additional Protocol. The EU-3 missed this historic opportunity.

The present deadlock on the nuclear issue may encourage the West to reassess its policies. Iran's nuclear issue is an opportunity for the West to recognize the capacities of Iranian political system, especially in domestic politics. The reproduction of distrust during the last years has made it too difficult to find a face-saving and middle solution. Here the role of academics is important. Instead of spawning this atmosphere and sticking to theories, they should try to help decision-makers deepen their knowledge of both sides. We have learned from diplomats that it is possible to find solutions, even in apparent deadlocks. Going beyond stereotypes is a prelude to finding a solution to this problem.

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**Iran's nuclear issue is an opportunity for the West to recognize the capacities of Iranian political system, especially in domestic politics.**

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# Iran's Islamic Revolution and Its Future

*Abbas Maleki*

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As one of the most important events of the past three decades in the Middle East, the Islamic Revolution not only has sustained itself, but the Islamic Republic which it spawned celebrated its 30th anniversary in February 2009.

Regime sustainability despite different internal crises and foreign threats underlines the fact that Iran enjoys a relatively rational decision-making process. The central slogan of the Iranian Revolution was “Independence, Freedom, and Islamic Republic.” Today, Iran is an independent state, as it does not belong to an Eastern or a Western bloc. Although the country has not realized its ambition of economic independence, the revolution has provided economic welfare. Rural development has improved people’s lives by providing villages with water, electricity, and infrastructure. The essence of independence also referred to the specific relations between the Iranian monarchy and the United States. The US-sponsored 1953 coup against the popular Muhammad Mosaddeq government made Iran an American client state, leading to Iranian dependence in all aspects.



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Iran has 1% of the world’s population and about 7% of global mineral resources.<sup>1</sup> Yet, the country’s post-revolutionary economic performance has remained well below its actual potential, due to war and regional crises as well as internal problems such as mismanagement and other ills. Nonetheless, in recent years, Iran has witnessed a period of sustainable growth with GDP growth rates above the world average — a trend that is likely to continue.

Over the past three decades, Iran’s foreign policy has moderated significantly and meaningfully. Whereas Tehran initially rejected the prevailing norms of the international system, today the government largely benefits from opportunities emerging from the international system. Despite President Mahmud Ahmadinejad’s rhetoric, he participates at UN General Assemblies, meets with other leaders, and gives interviews to the US media. In seeking to project its influence and protect its interests, Iran has increasingly yielded to realist principles.

To predict the future of the country, one could look at new driving forces, rationales, plots and scenarios. What follows is a summary of some important and discernible trends in Iran and projections about the country’s future.

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1. Including 10% of proven oil and 16% of natural gas resources.

In terms of domestic political developments, state decision-making will become broader and more complex. Younger institutions, such as the Expediency Council and Supreme National Security Council will gain in significance. Some look at the “Chinese model” as the way forward; that is, economic reforms and cultural liberalization alongside political orthodoxy. However, differences between Chinese and Iranian cultures and history would impede the application of this model. The Islamic Republic enjoys the loyalty of many ordinary people (mainly the rural population) who have benefited from the post-revolutionary improvements. However, economic problems (e.g., inflation, unemployment, brain drain, underdevelopment of non-oil sectors, etc.) overshadow the overall development. As such, the main threat against the regime is from within, especially fed by economic and social dissatisfaction. The growing urban middle class and its interdependence with socio-political stability will make a violent upheaval impossible, but the regime could theoretically collapse. Though unlikely, given high oil prices, severe economic problems could lead to an acute paralysis leading to an implosion. Therefore, a growing number of stakeholders will focus on providing the basis for continued economic growth.

With regard to energy sector developments, Europe’s need for energy diversification is an opportunity for Iran. In a bid to reduce dependency on Russia, the European Union (EU) is looking for new energy resources, especially in natural gas. There is substantial potential for energy cooperation between Europe and Iran, the holder of the world’s second largest gas reserves. Growing global energy consumption has imparted great importance to Iran, which has a combined oil and gas reserve of 315 billion BOE.<sup>2</sup> With footholds in the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea, Iran has the potential of becoming a major energy player. Due to the depletion of its oil resources and the desire to remain a strategic oil and gas exporter, Iran feels an urgent need to develop nuclear energy. The current tensions surrounding Iran’s nuclear program could ease if Tehran were to adopt a three-pronged strategy: normalizing its nuclear file through greater cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); carrying out cost/benefit analyses for its nuclear industry; and using public diplomacy more effectively to present its intentions and performance.

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**Facing continued challenges, Iran sees “survival in becoming a regional power.”**

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Concerning foreign policy, it is important to emphasize that is geo-strategically located in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, and the Caspian region. Iran’s foreign policy is therefore regionally focused. However, Iran’s own internal problems, compounded by US efforts to isolate Iran, hamper investments in the region. For the first time since 1979, Tehran is positioning itself to be an economic and technological power. Facing continued challenges, Iran sees “survival in becoming a regional power.” Therefore, regionalism will be the main component of Iran’s foreign policy for decades. Without exaggerating Iran’s role, it is fair to say that Tehran has contributed to the region’s economic development and political stability — a trend that will continue, even though modestly on the economic level. While Iran’s regional engagement has not led to any loss of sovereignty, Iranian officials recognize that in order to derive the benefits of regionalism, Iran will have to join its neighbors in introducing governance mechanisms between the global and the

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2. BOE = barrels of oil equivalent.

national levels. Iran joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to reduce its concern over military and security threats from two sources — the Taliban-style extremism and radicalism as well as the American military presence in the region. However, the SCO cannot diminish US threats against Iran.

Specifically concerning US-Iran relations, it is open to question how long Iran can go without a diplomatic breakthrough. Some argue that the objective of economic progress necessitates at least economic relations with the United States. Others argue that it will be the United States that will need Iran, especially in the light of the current financial crisis. Some believe that re-establishing ties with the US would lead to the collapse of the Islamic Republic. They argue that the pillar of this regime has been anti-Americanism; therefore, the regime would face many challenges relations to resume. Others believe good relations with Washington would not bring prosperity and development for third world countries perform. Furthermore, Iran's economic, political, and social problems are rooted in cultural and historical trends which would not be resolved overnight through a resumption of relations. The hardliners in Iran state that America's power is in decline and that Tehran should take advantage at this juncture.

However, they leave two questions unanswered: First, will American power diminish before it can damage Iran? Second, will the end of American dominance coincide with the appearance of a new unipolar power or with the creation of a multipolar world system? If the latter, will Iran be prepared for a multipolar environment?

There is a lively debate among Iranian intellectuals on these very questions. Emerging from this debate is the suggestion that the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has survived 30 years without ties with a superpower and which has withstood various sanctions, would probably be more stable should it decide pursue a rapprochement. As in the past, Iran's future will determined by the complex interplay between key domestic political and economic factors on the one hand, and the country's relations with its neighbors and with the United States.

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**As in the past, Iran's future will determined by the complex interplay between key domestic political and economic factors on the one hand, and the country's relations with its neighbors and with the United States.**

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# Maps



Map No. 3891 Rev. 1 UNITED NATIONS  
January 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations  
Cartographic Section

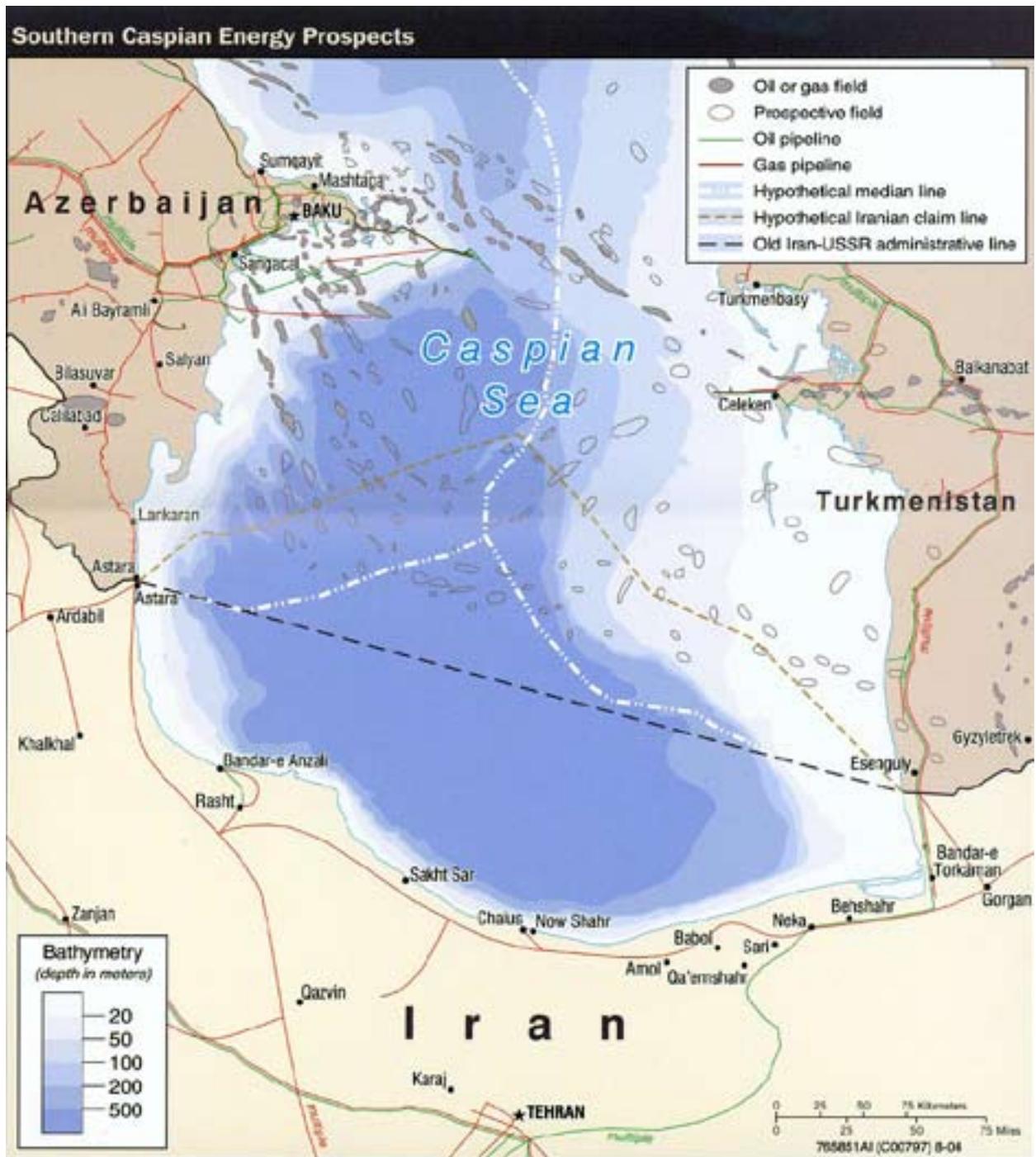
All maps from the US government unless otherwise noted.

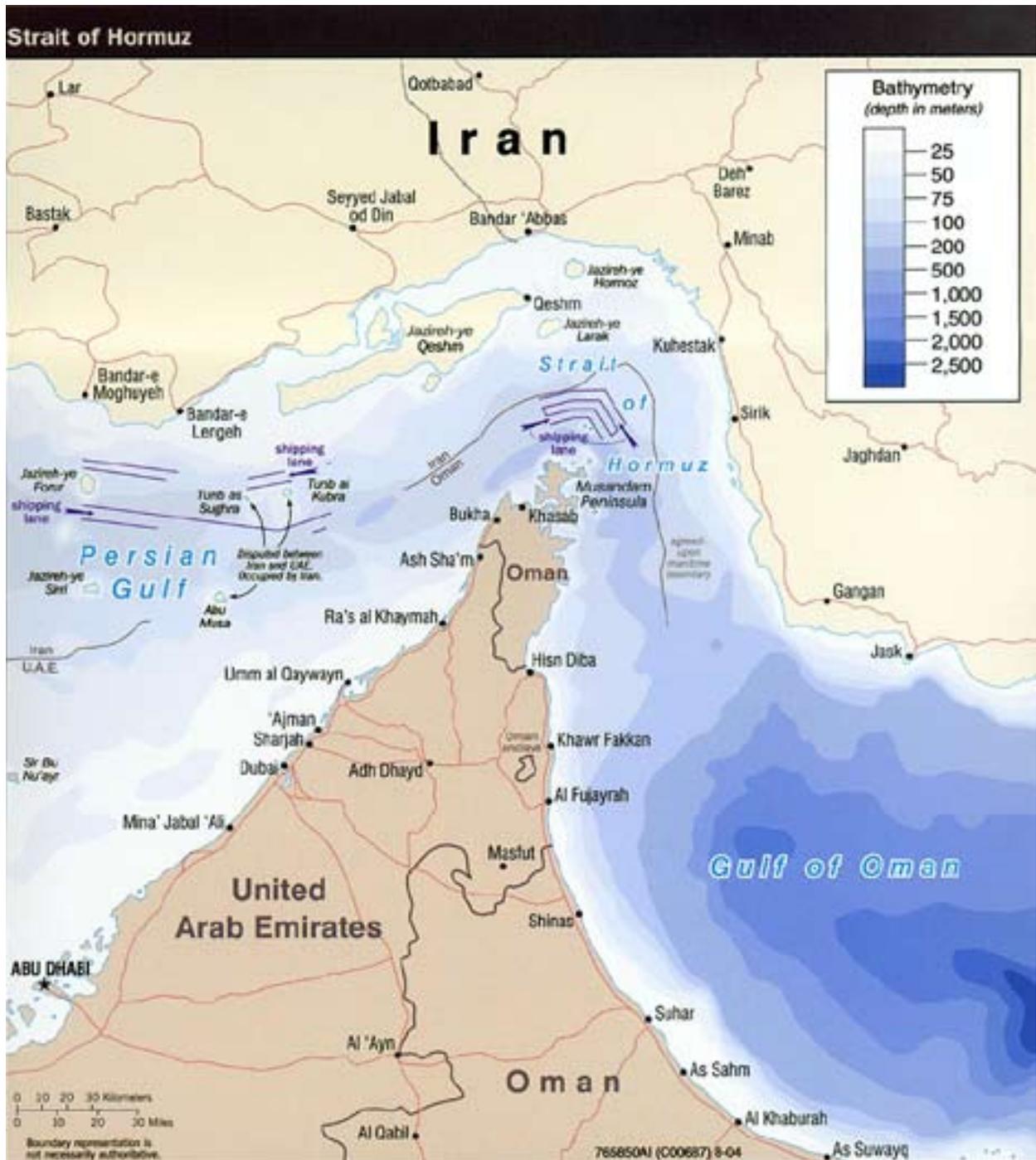


## Ethnoreligious Distribution









### Caspian Region Oil Pipelines (U)



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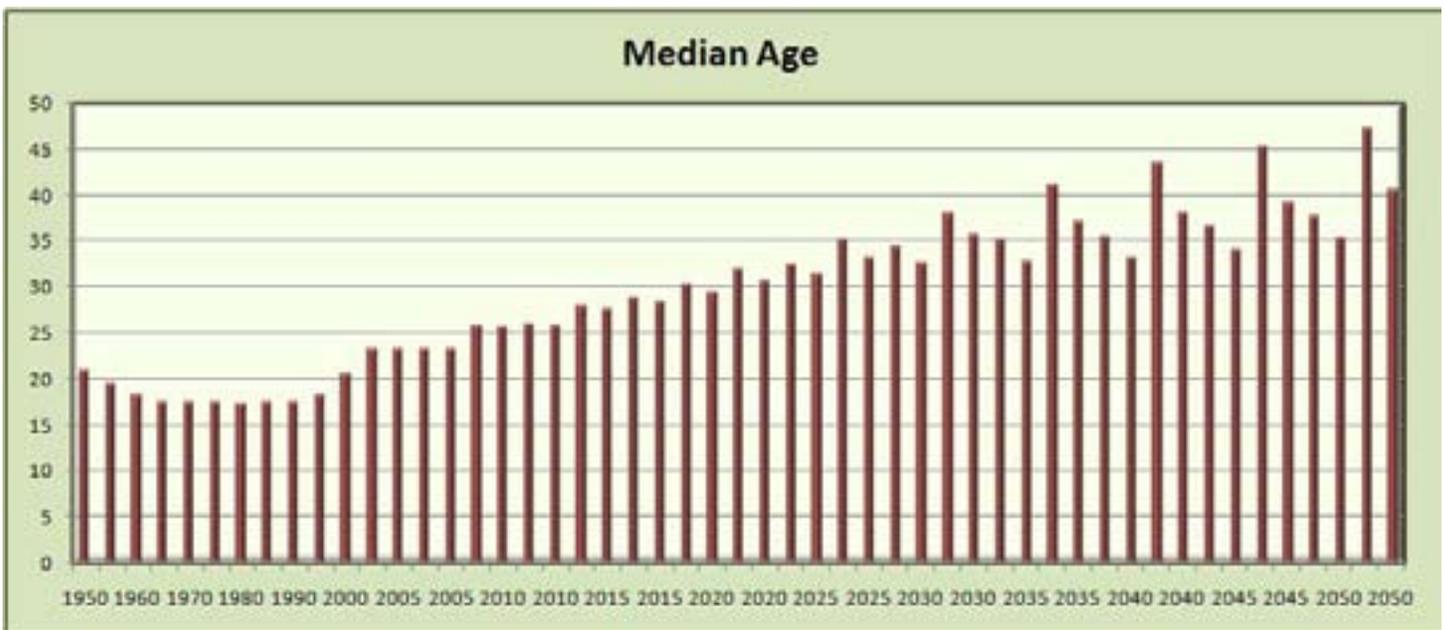
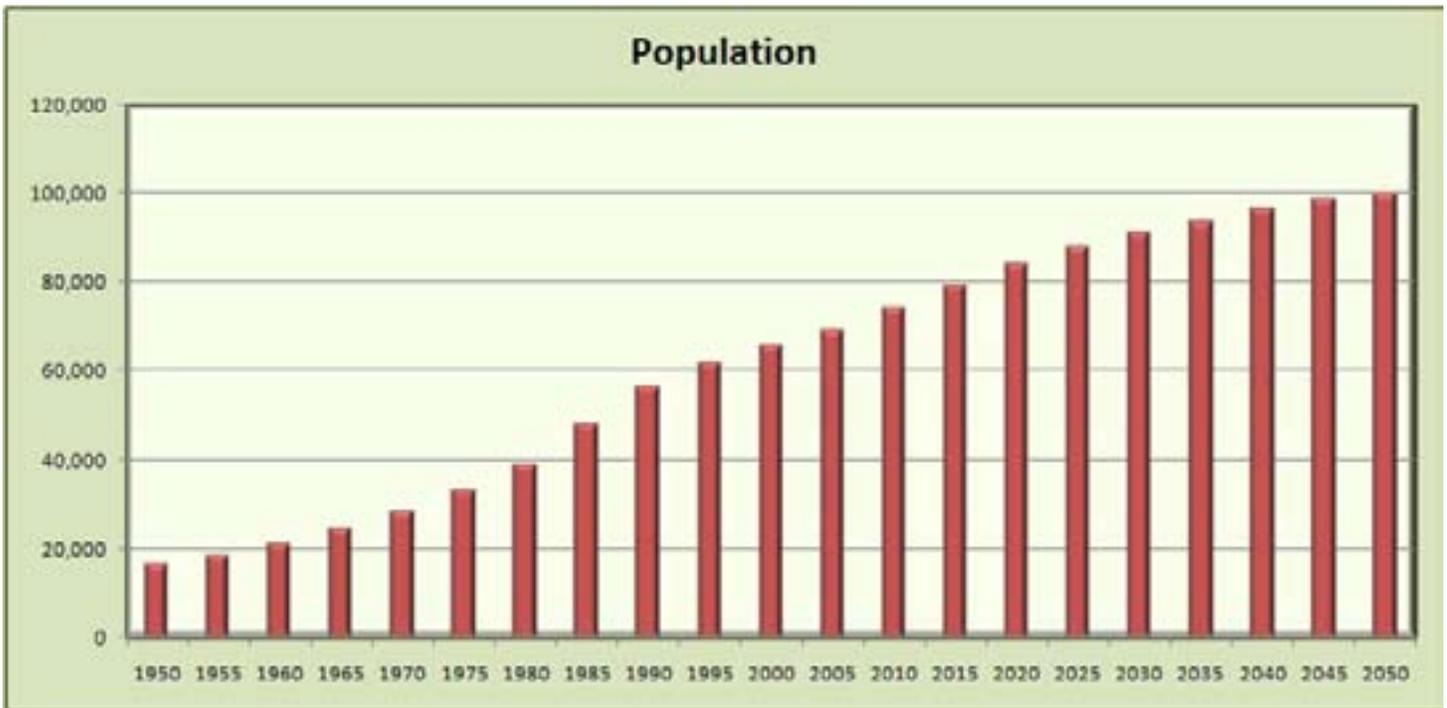


©Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Deadly Arsenals* (2005), [www.ProliferationNews.org](http://www.ProliferationNews.org)

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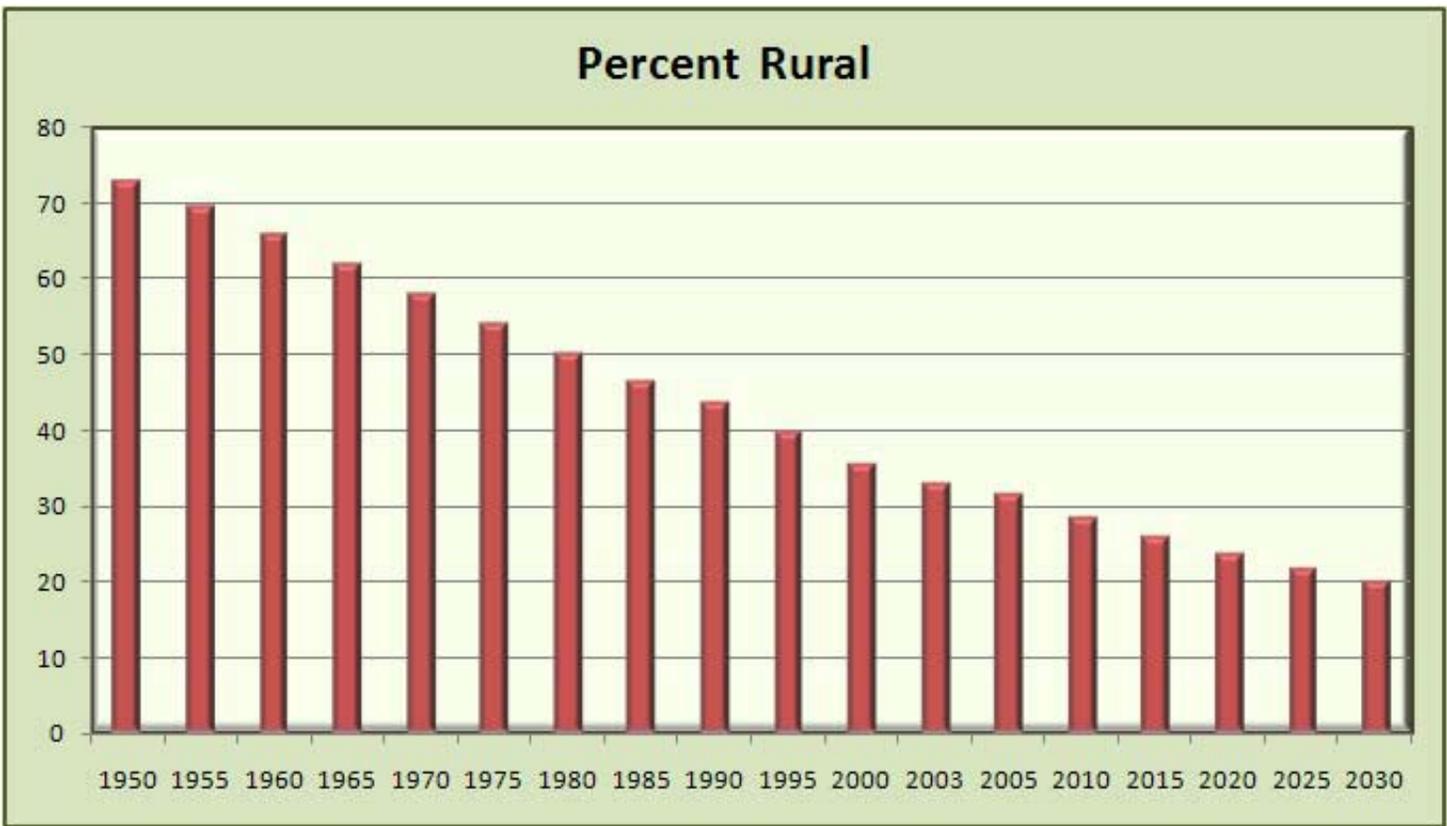
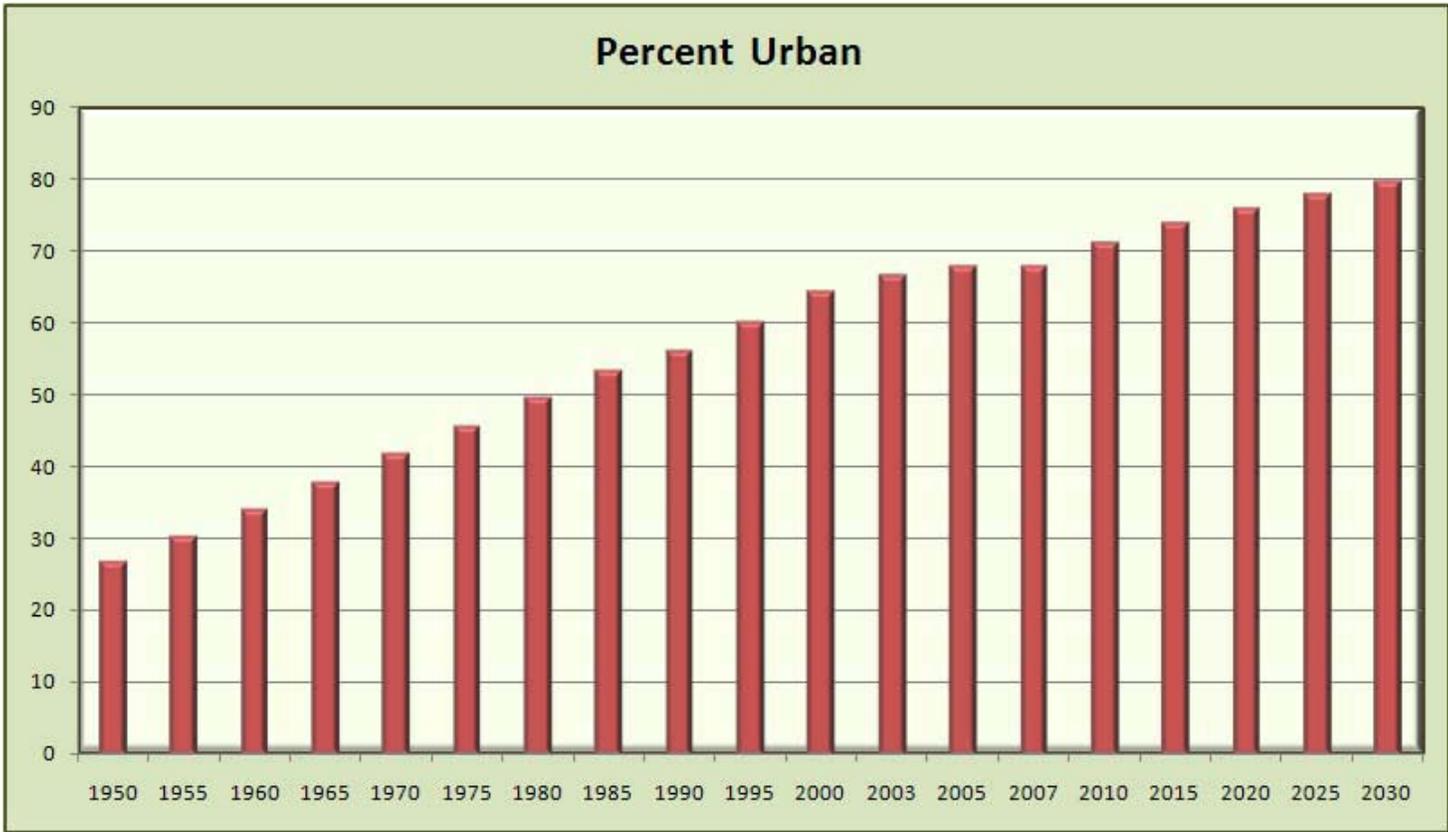
# Statistics

# Demographics

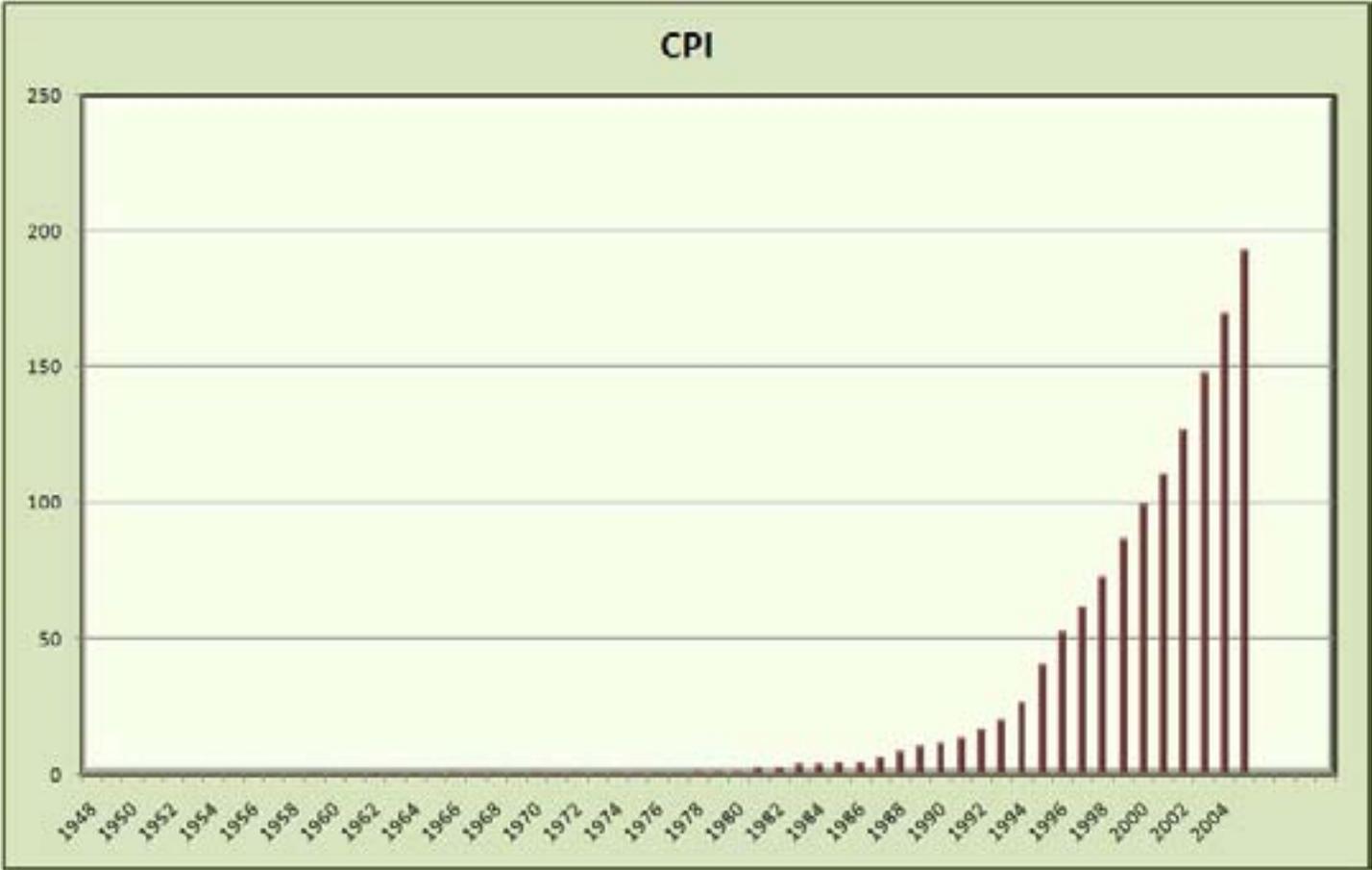
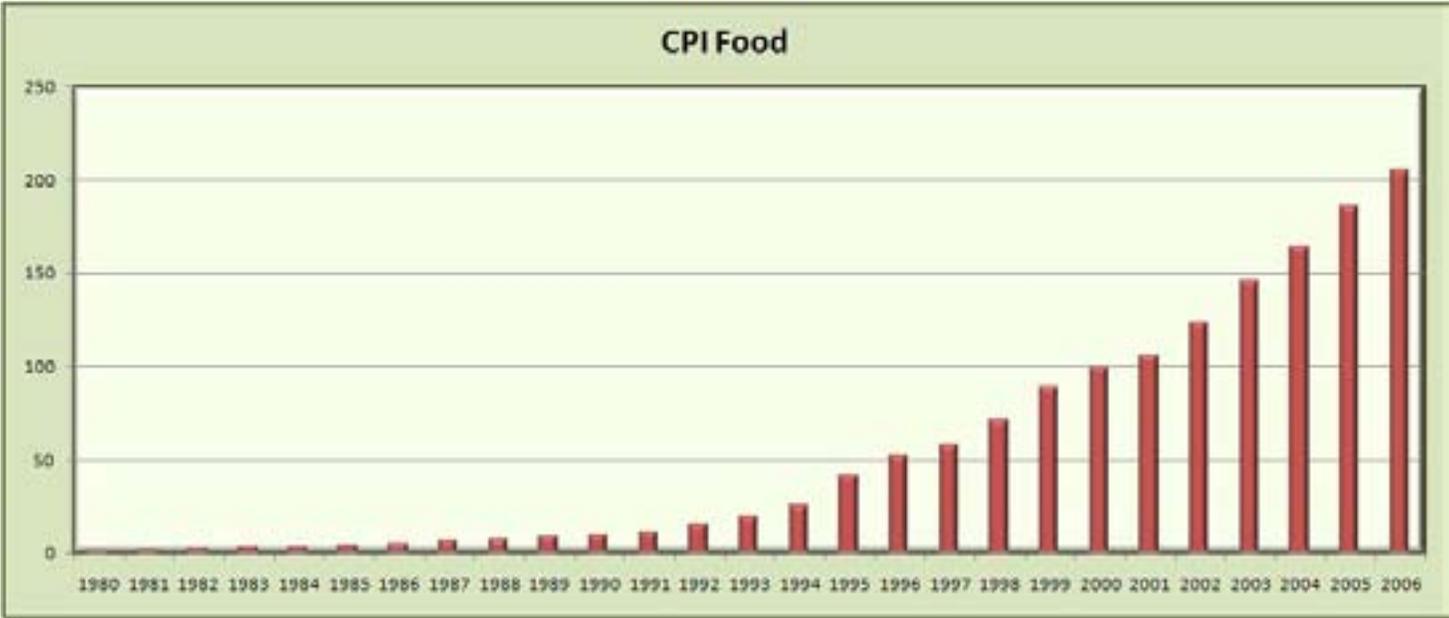


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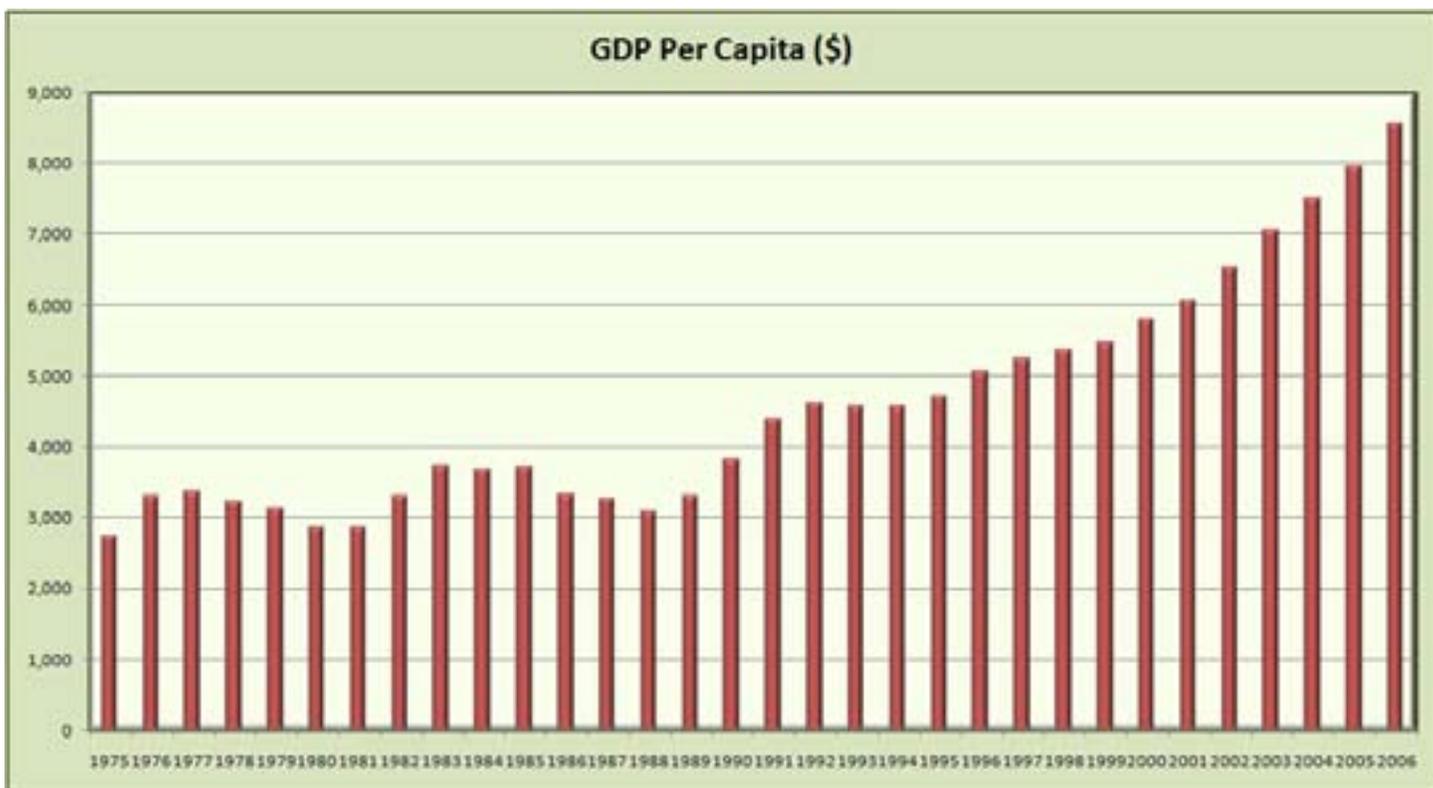
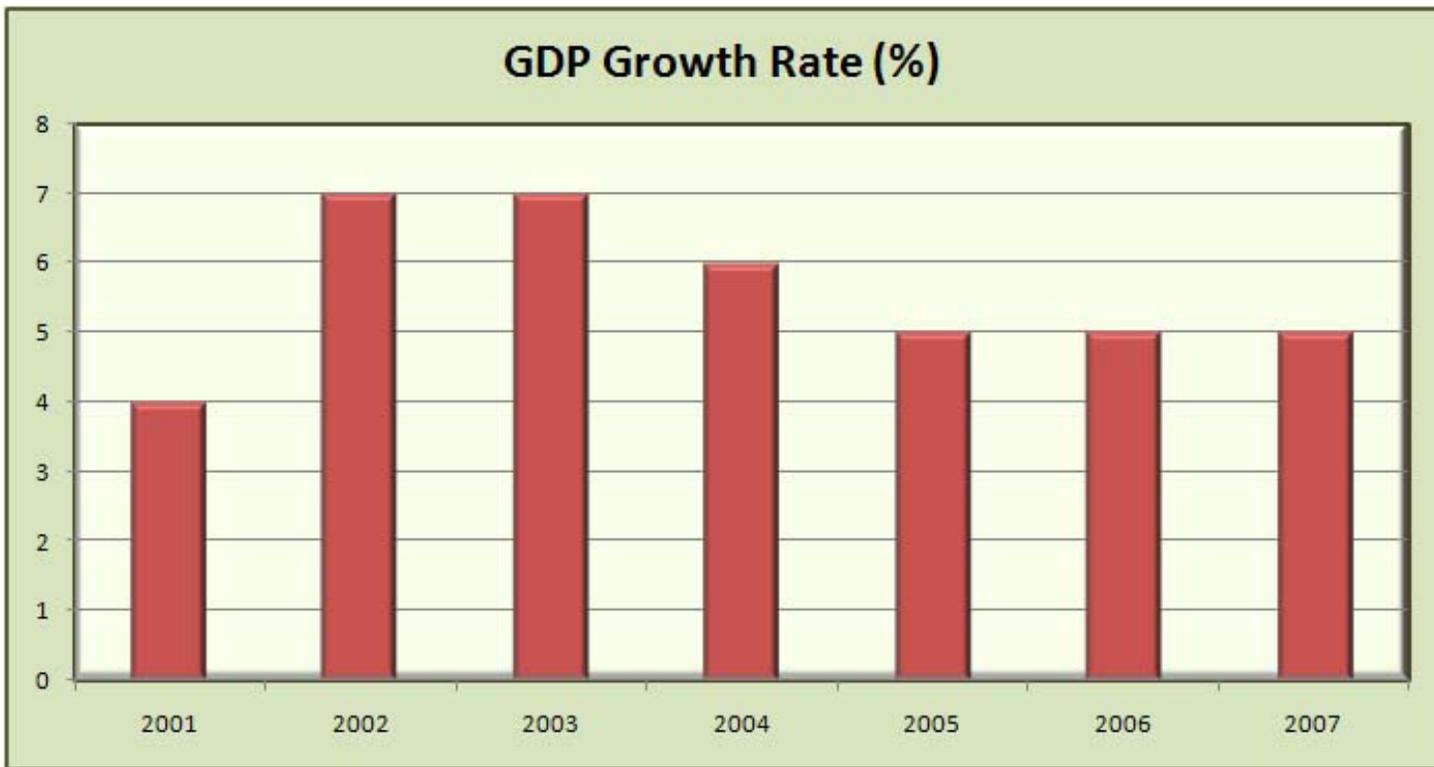


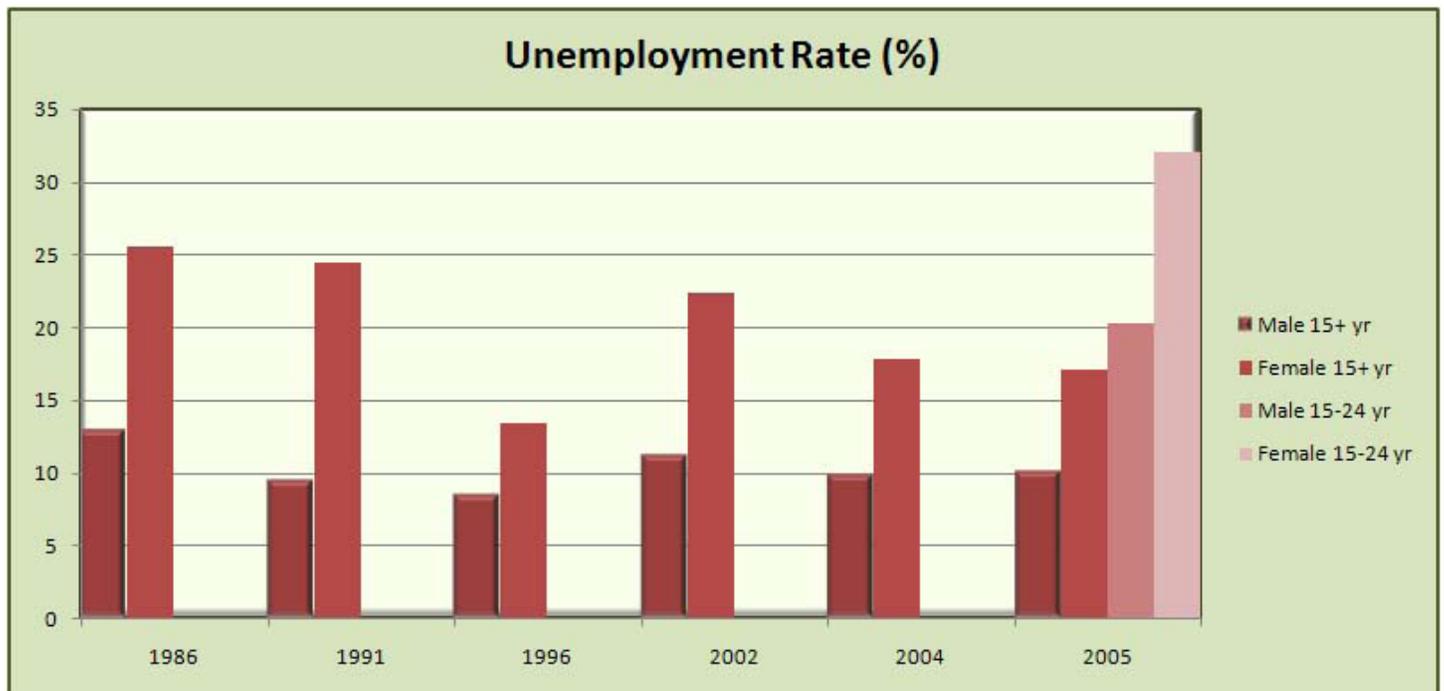
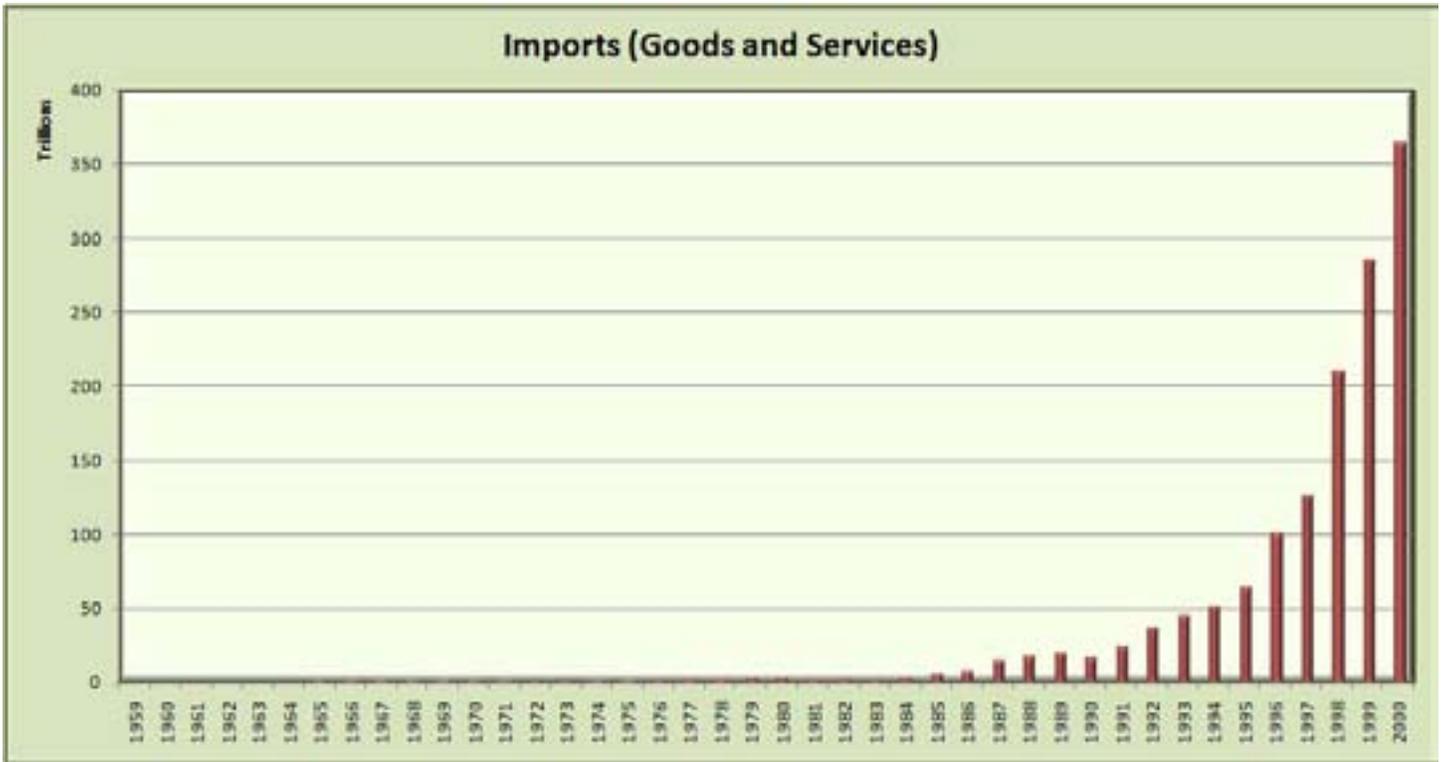


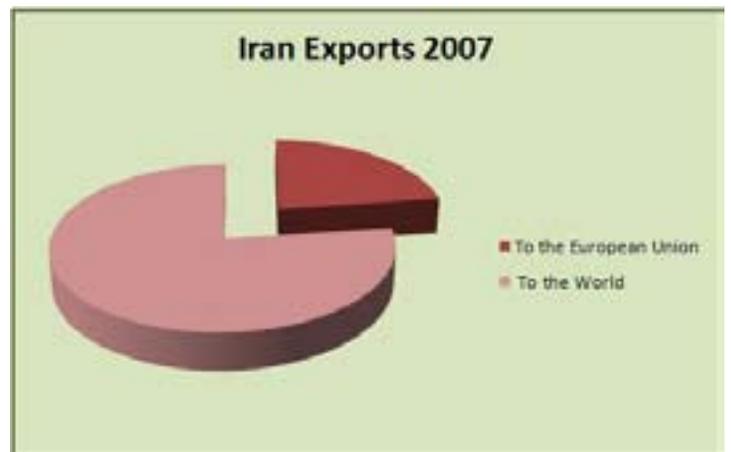
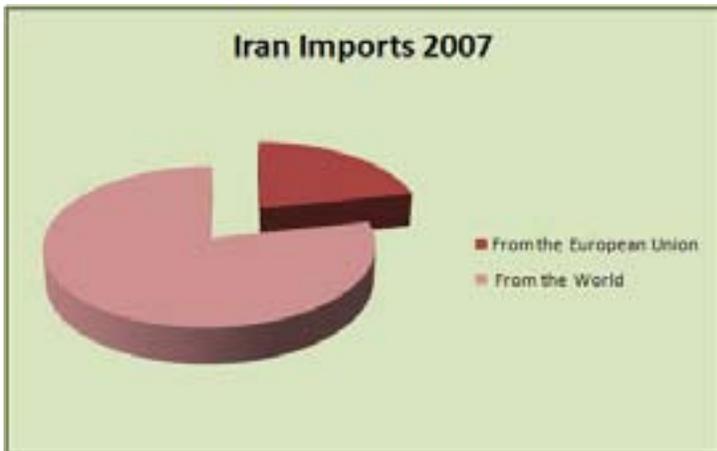
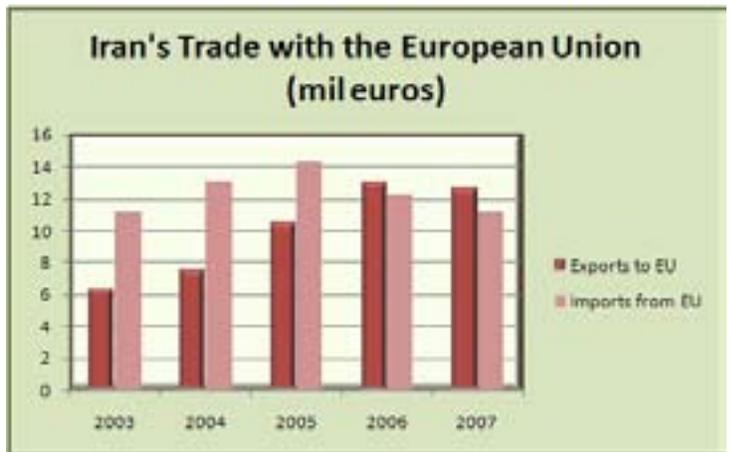
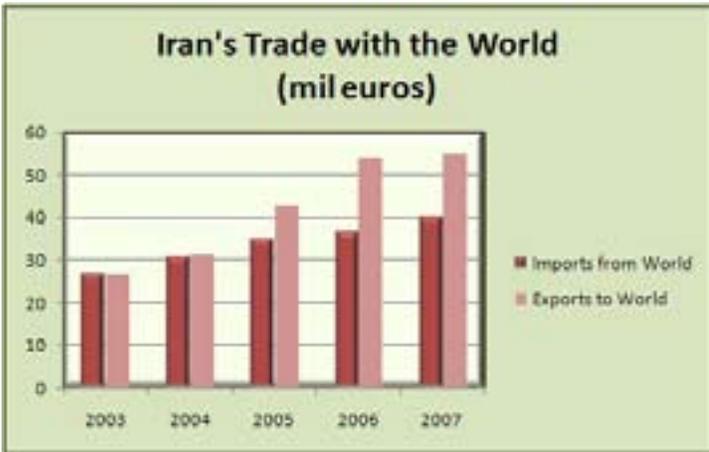
# Economy



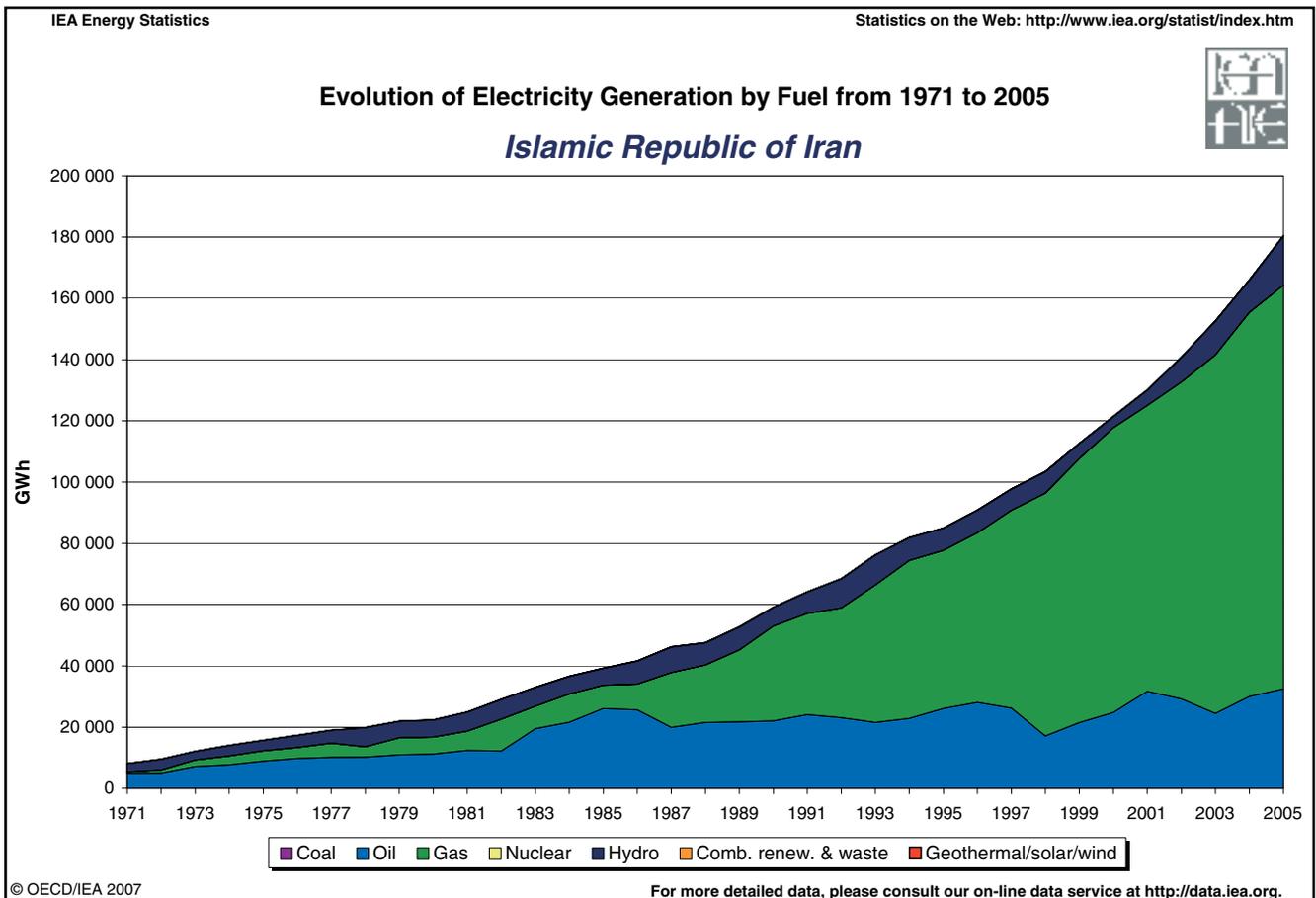
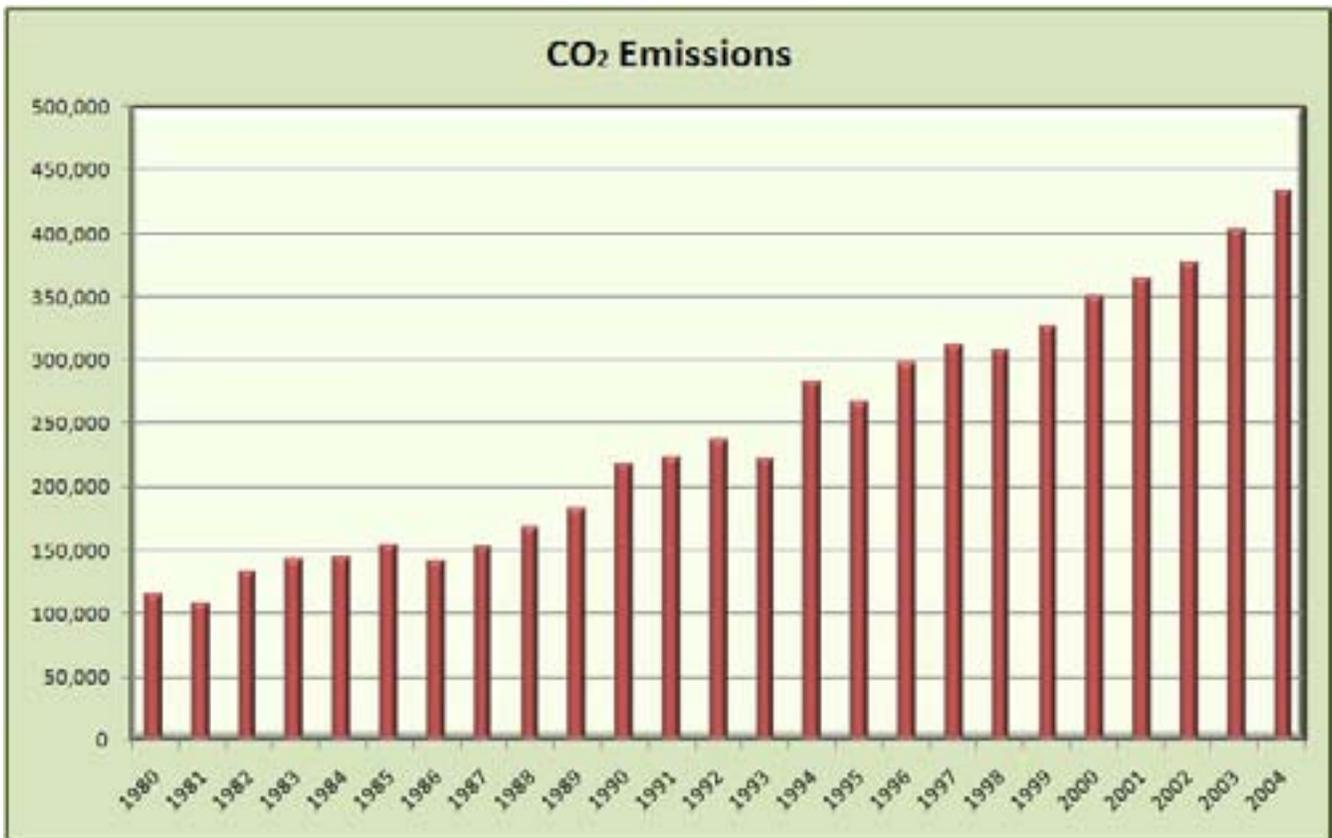




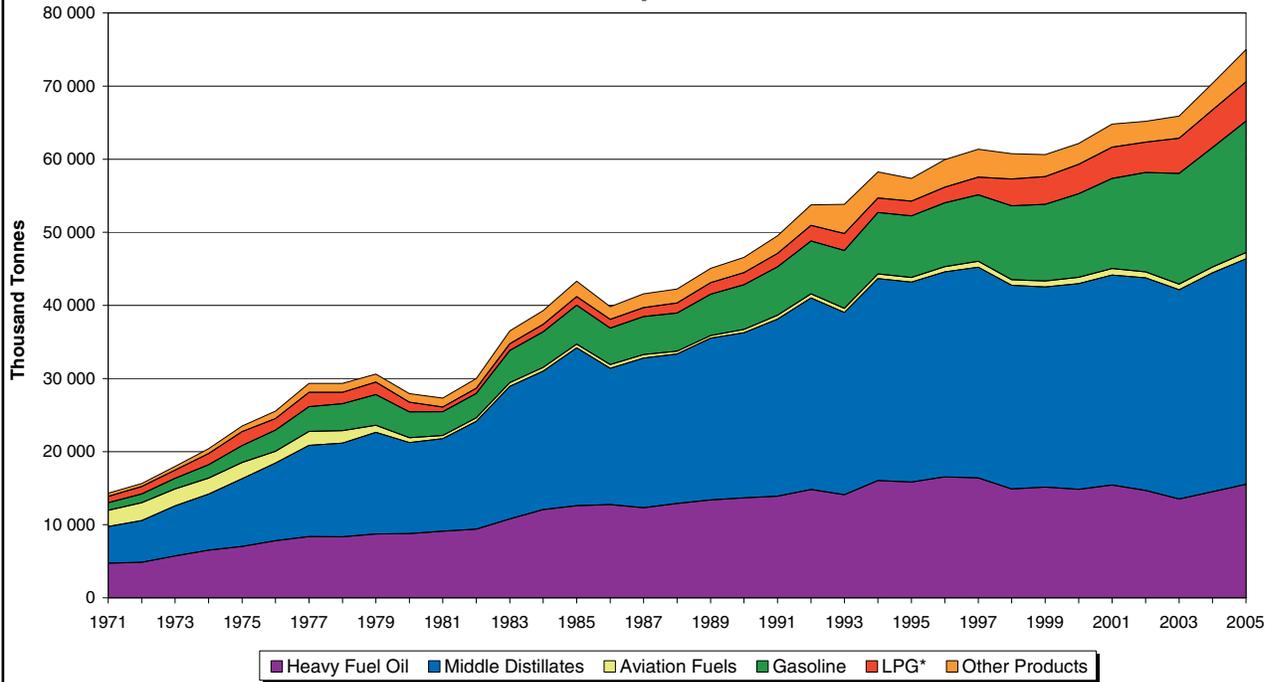




# Energy



### Evolution of Oil Products Consumption from 1971 to 2005 *Islamic Republic of Iran*

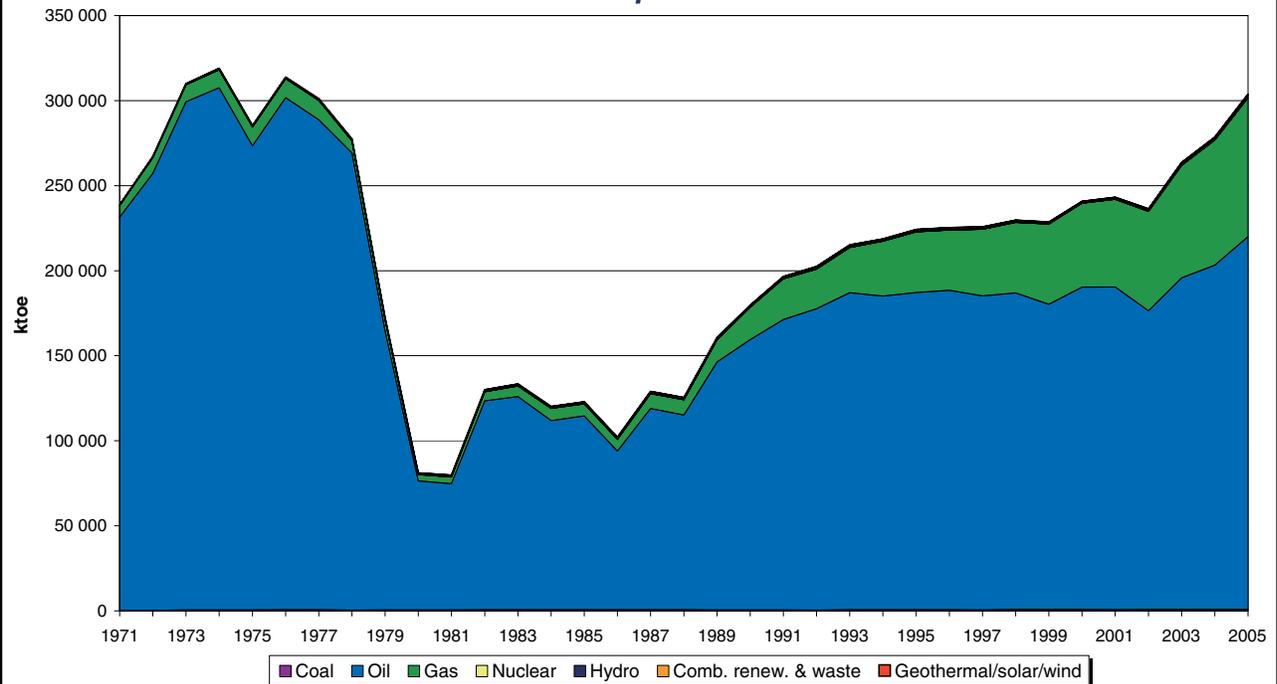


© OECD/IEA 2007

\* Includes LPG, NGL, ethane and naphtha.

For more detailed data, please consult our on-line data service at <http://data.iea.org>.

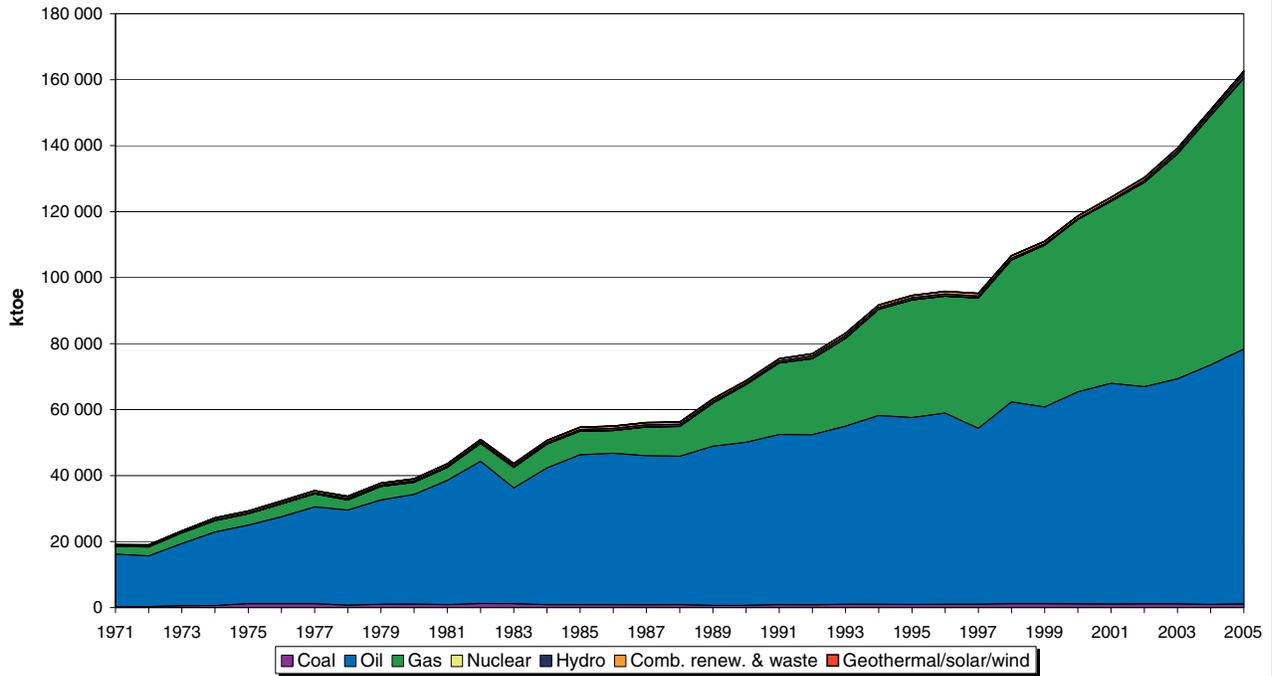
### Evolution of Total Production of Energy from 1971 to 2005 *Islamic Republic of Iran*



© OECD/IEA 2007

For more detailed data, please consult our on-line data service at <http://data.iea.org>.

### Evolution of Total Primary Energy Supply\* from 1971 to 2005 *Islamic Republic of Iran*

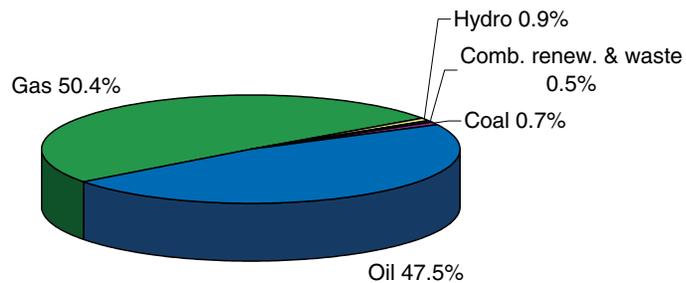


\* Excluding electricity trade.

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For more detailed data, please consult our on-line data service at <http://data.iea.org>.

### Share of Total Primary Energy Supply\* in 2005 *Islamic Republic of Iran*



**162 504 ktoe**

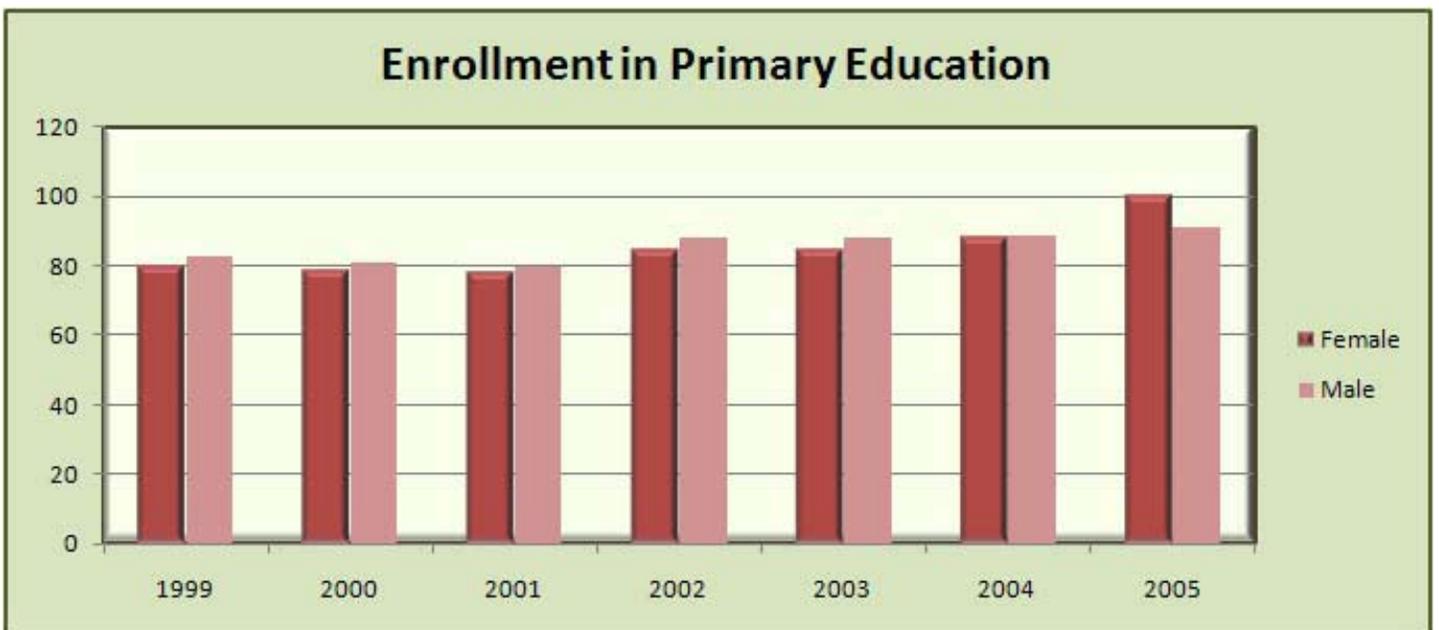
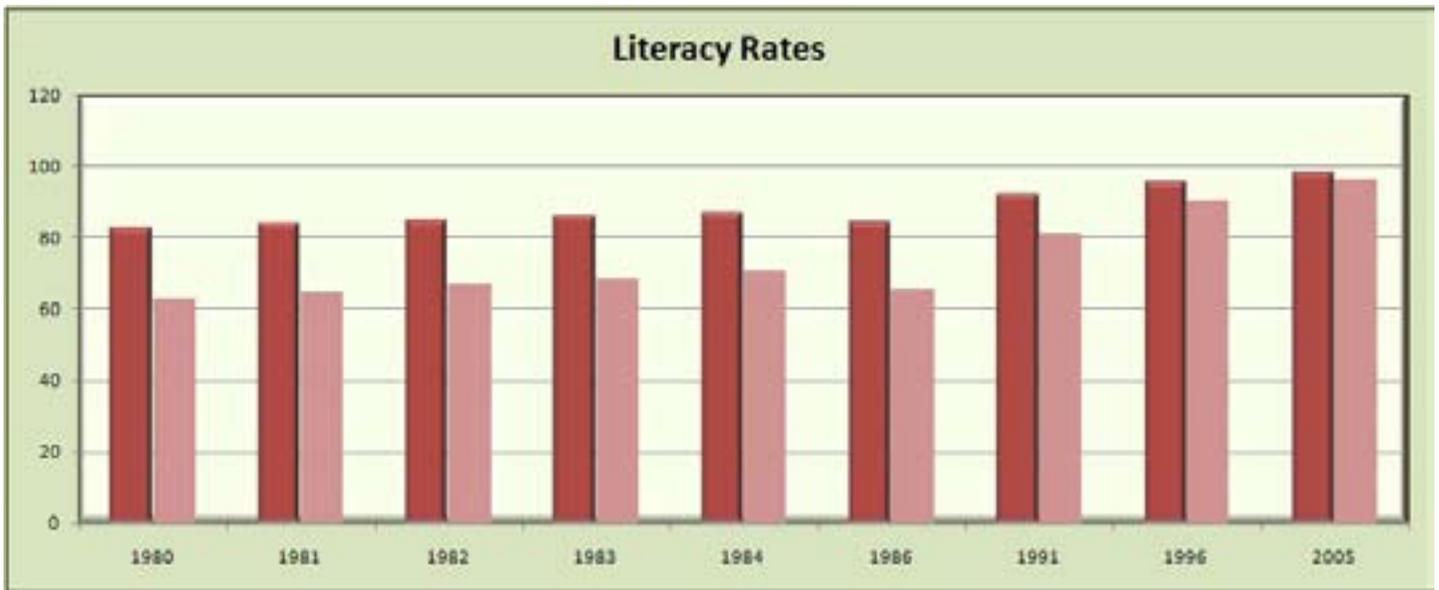
\* Share of TPES excludes electricity trade.

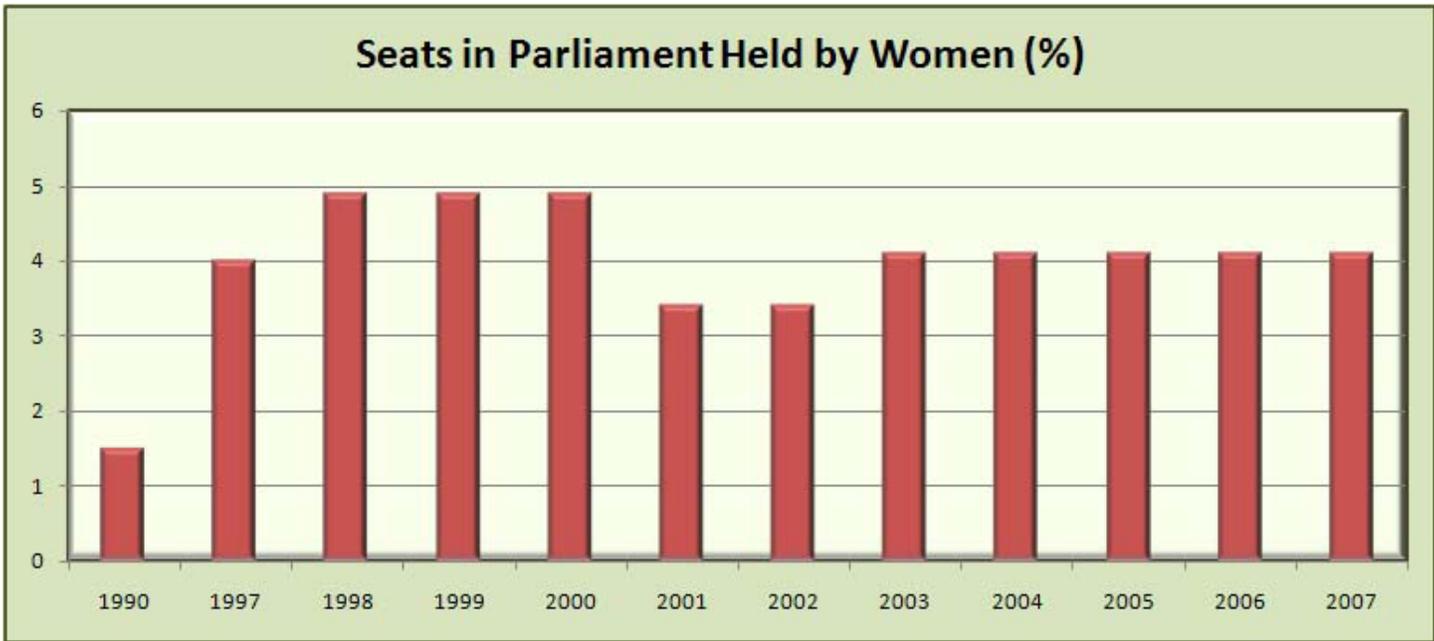
Note: For presentational purposes, shares of under 0.1% are not included and consequently the total may not add up to 100%.

© OECD/IEA 2007

For more detailed data, please consult our on-line data service at <http://data.iea.org>.

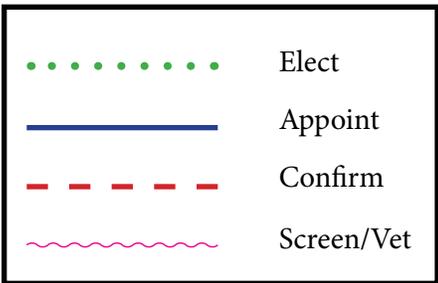
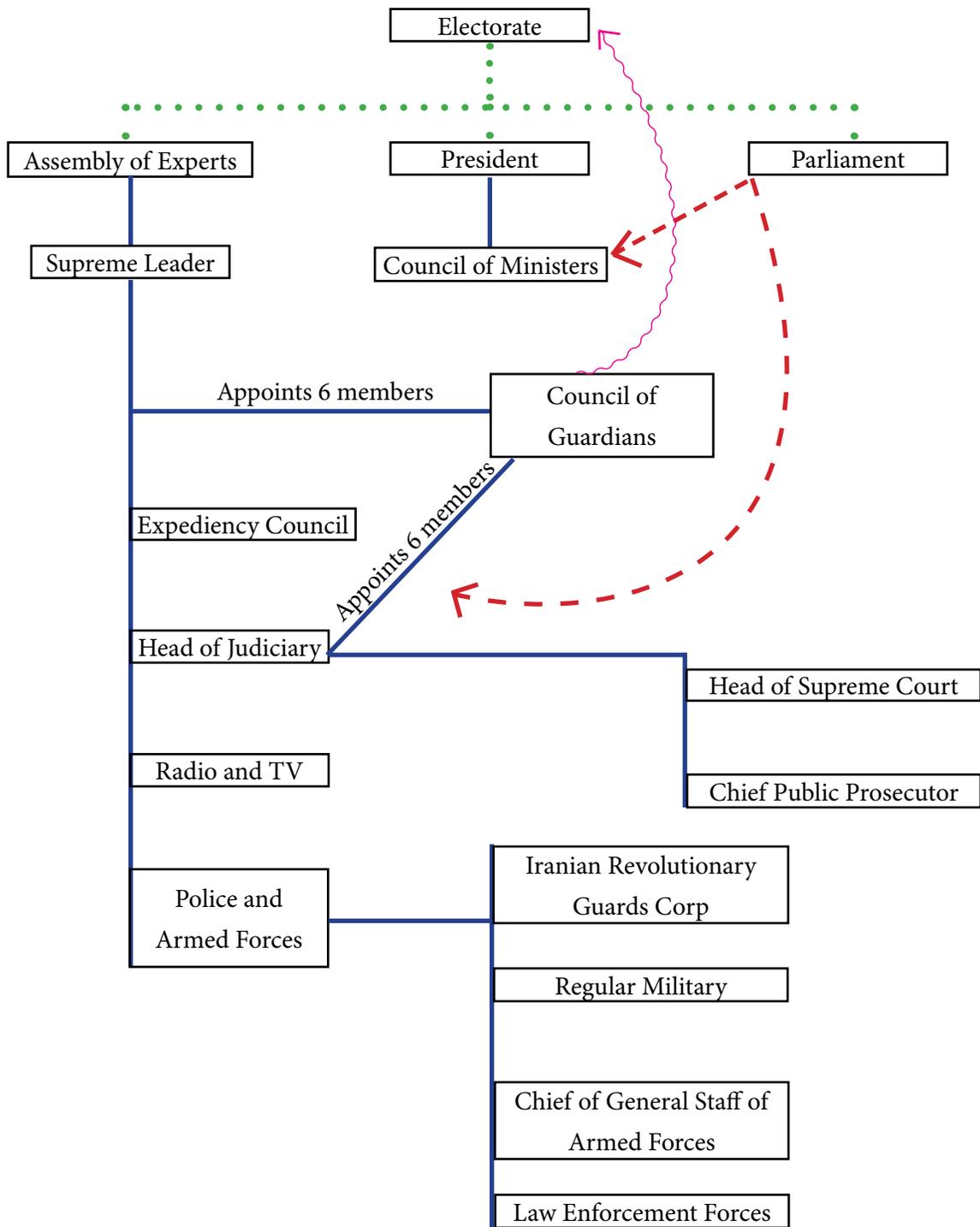
# Gender



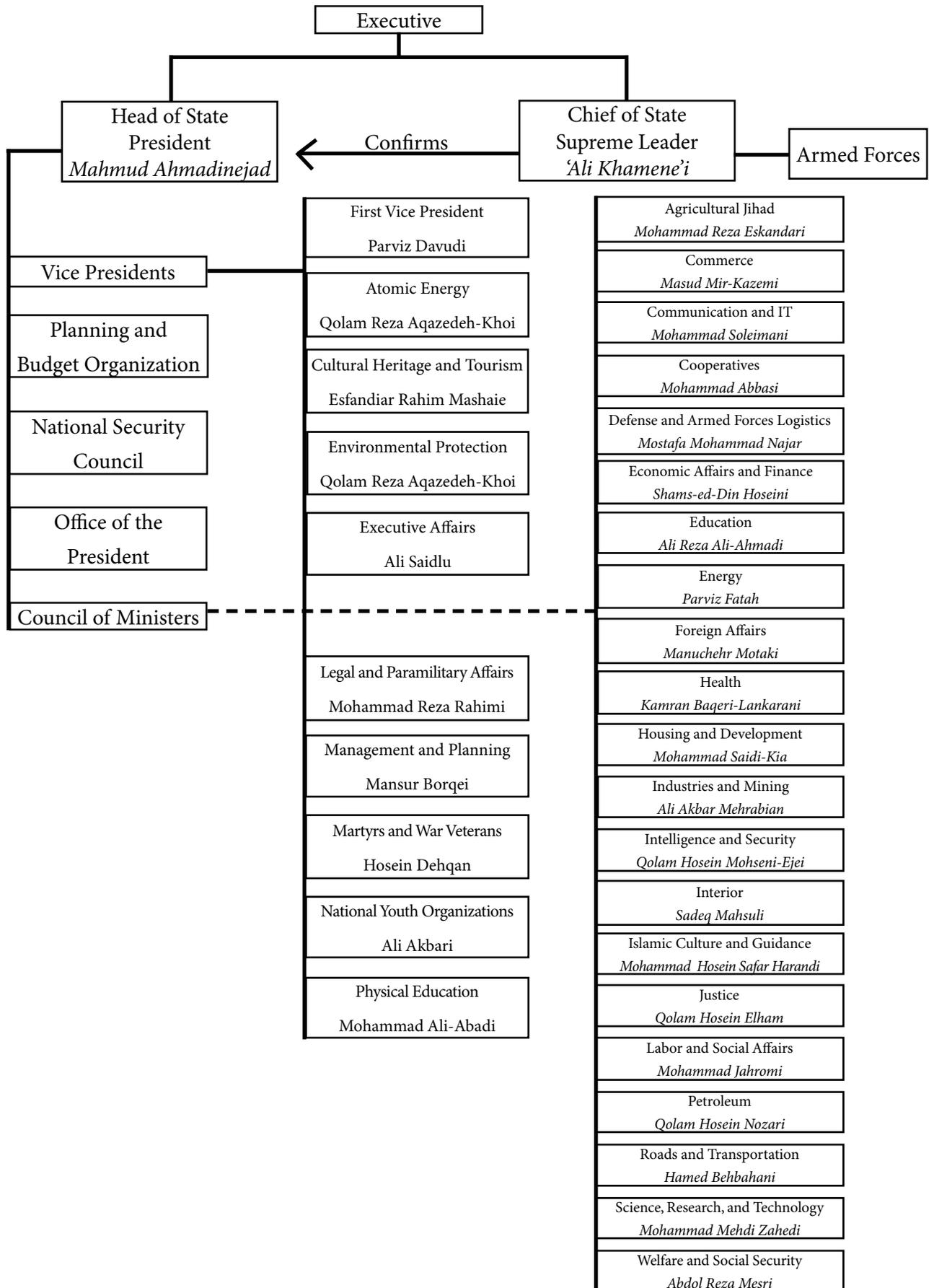


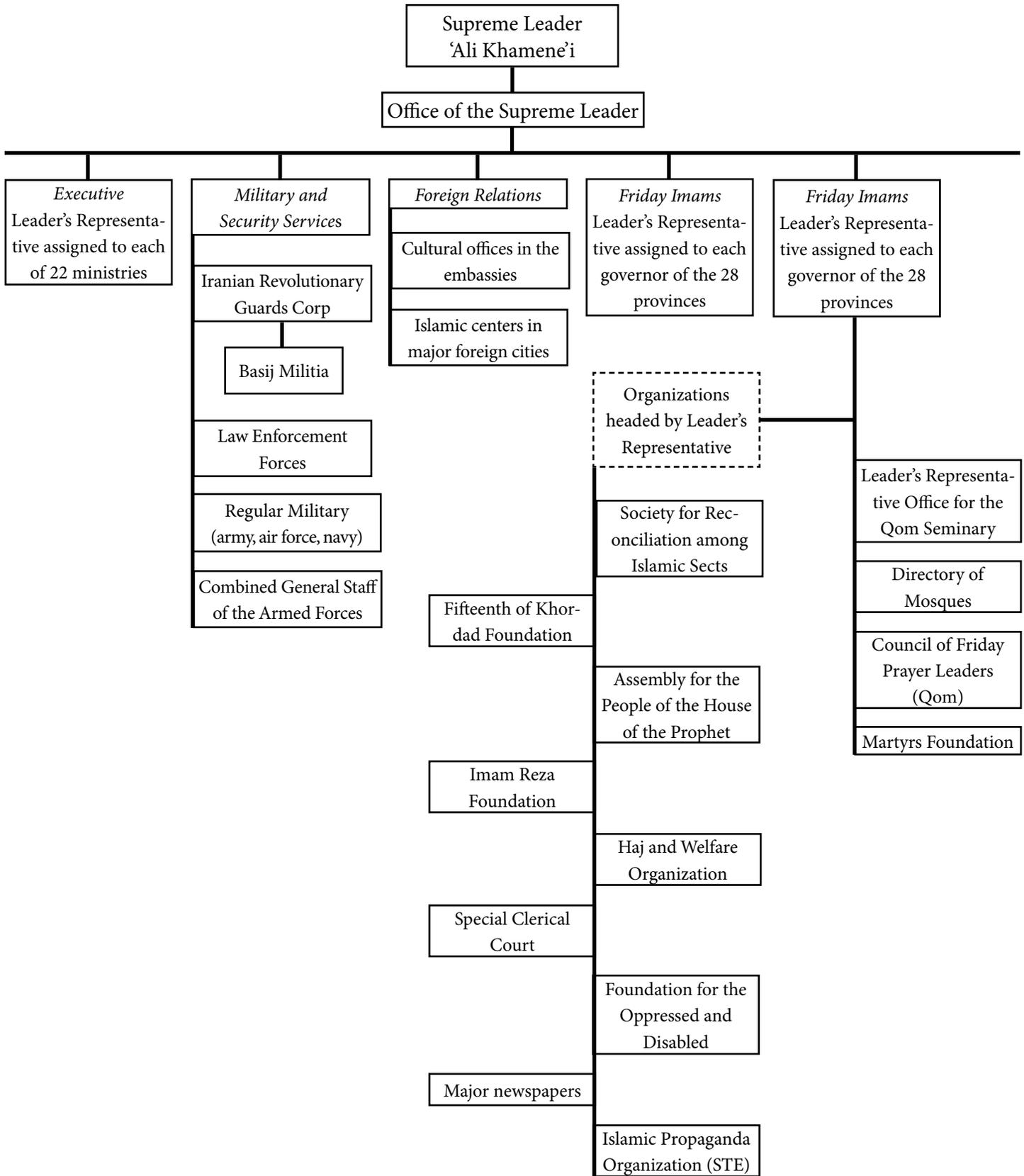
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# Political Power Structure



All charts adapted from Wilfried Buchta, *Who Rules Iran?* (2001).





**From the pages of *The Middle East Journal's* “Chronology:”  
Iran in 1979**

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Since it began publication in 1947, each issue of *The Middle East Journal* has contained a section chronologically detailing events of note in the region for the preceding three months. Today, this section is dubbed the “Chronology,” although in the earliest issues of the *Journal*, it was called “Developments of the Quarter.” The Chronology is organized by country and issue, with each section providing a day-by-day account of the relevant events and developments. Mirroring the *Journal*, the Chronology’s coverage of the region spans from North Africa in the west to formerly Soviet Central Asia, to Pakistan in the east.

Given the longevity of *The Middle East Journal*, the Chronology is an indispensable resource to those interested in the politics and history of the modern Middle East — in the pages of the *Journal*, readers can essentially read a daily accounting of the events in a particular country from 1947 through today. Entries for the Chronology are written as they occur and represent a real-time window not only into the events of the region, but into the overall context of the time and place in which they occurred.

The following pages contain reproductions of the Chronology entries written for Iran during 1979, as the Islamic Revolution unfolded. They provide a unique and detailed look into a series of events that have left an indelible mark upon the region.

- Dec. 26: Petroleum exports halted as production declined to the level of domestic consumption. [NYT]
- Dec. 27: Soldiers in Tehran fired into a funeral procession in Tehran, killing their own colonel and 5 other people. [NYT]  
Demonstrations in Tehran turned into riots. [NYT]  
The US said it believed the Shāh had "an important role to play" in the transition to a stable political situation. [NYT]
- Dec. 28: Strikes closed the central bank and the state airline. Oil refineries stopped production. Oil rationing began. [NYT]  
Demonstrations continued in Tehran. [NYT]  
The Communist Party newspaper *Pravda* said that a "special group" had been sent to the US Embassy in Tehran to help keep the Shāh in power. [NYT]
- Dec. 29: A National Front leader, Shāhpūr Bakhtiyār, said the Shāh had asked him to form a government. [NYT]  
US officials said an aircraft carrier task force had been ordered to depart from the Philippines for possible movement to the Persian Gulf. [NYT]  
The US State Department said the Shāh's mother had arrived in the US. [NYT]
- Dec. 30: The National Front expelled Bakhtiyār. [NYT]  
Demonstrators in Mashhad hanged 3 police agents. Troops arrived on the scene and fired into the crowd. [NYT]
- Dec. 31: Rioting was reported in Mashhad and other cities. [NYT]  
Troops clashed with demonstrators in Mashhad. [NYT]  
The US advised dependents of Americans in Iran to leave the country. Similar recommendations were made by Canada and Great Britain. [NYT]
- 1979
- Jan. 1: The government said the death toll from violence in Mashhad the previous 2 days was 170. [NYT]  
The Shāh said he would like to take "a vacation" if the situation permitted. [NYT]  
Air traffic controllers struck in Tehran, closing down the airport. [NYT]
- Jan. 2: Violence in Kazvin left an undetermined number of casualties. [NYT]  
Troops at Tehran airport were reinforced to enable foreigners to depart the country. [NYT]  
Iranian demonstrators marched on the home of the Shāh's sister in Beverly Hills, California, setting fires and causing damage. [NYT]
- Jan. 3: Bakhtiyār said he had formed a Cabinet. Both houses of Parliament passed "votes of intent" formally inviting him to head a government. [NYT]  
The Shāh appointed 'Abbās Qarāhbāghī Chief of Staff. [FBIS]
- Jan. 4: The Shāh signed a decree appointing Bakhtiyār Premier and then left Tehran for a holiday in a nearby resort. [NYT]  
The US said it was prepared "to cooperate fully" with the new government. [NYT]  
Army Commander Ghulām 'Alī Uvaysī left Iran for the United States. It was reported that he had resigned. [NYT]
- Jan. 6: The Cabinet was presented to the Shāh:  
Shāhpūr Bakhtiyār: *Premier and Interior*  
Yaḥyā Šādiqī Yazdī: *Justice*  
Farīdūn Jām: *War*  
Aḥmad Mīr Fandaraskī: *Foreign Affairs*  
Muḥammad Amīn Riyāhī: *Education & Training*  
Manūchīhr Razmārā: *Health & Welfare*  
Manūchīhr Āryāna: *Labor & Social Affairs*  
Javād Khādīmī Aḥmad Ābādī: *Housing & Urban Development*  
Sīrūs Āmūzgār: *State and Supervisor of Information & Tourism*  
Rustum Pirāstah: *Economic Affairs & Finance*  
Luṭf 'Alī Samī'ī: *PTT*  
Manūchīhr Kāzīmī: *Agriculture & Natural Resources*  
'Abbās 'Alī Bakhtiyār: *Industries & Mines*  
Muḥammad Mušhīrī Yazdī: *Deputy Premier* [FBIS]  
The Āyat Allāh called the new Cabinet illegal and a "plot against the people". [NYT]  
The Shāh appointed Mīhdī Raḥīmī military governor of Tehran. [FBIS]  
Newspapers were published for the first time in 2 months. [NYT]  
The Shāh said he would "take a rest" after he was "confident about what is happening in the country." [NYT]
- Jan. 7: Demonstrations took place in Tehran and other cities. [NYT]
- Jan. 8: It was reported that Jām had refused to serve as War Minister. [NYT]  
An anti-government demonstration was held in Qum. [NYT]  
US officials said the US had advised the Shāh it would be best for stability in Iran if he left the country temporarily. [NYT]  
It was reported that Azhārī had left the country for health reasons. [NYT]
- Jan. 9: Strikes and demonstrations continued in Tehran and other cities. [NYT]  
It was announced that the Shāh would turn over the private holdings of the royal family to the Pahlavi Foundation. [NYT]  
The government ended martial law in Shiraz. [MEED]  
The Shāh named 'Abd al-'Alī Badrā'ī Commander of the Army. [FBIS]
- Jan. 10: The Āyat Allāh said relations with the US "would be good" as long as the US left Iran to decide its own destiny. [NYT]
- Jan. 11: Ja'far Shafaqat was named War Minister. [NYT]  
US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance said that the US felt a decision by the Shāh to form a regency

- council and leave the country had been "a sound decision" and said the new government should be given "every chance" to find a peaceful solution. [NYT]
- Bakhtiyār pledged to disband SAVAK, to abolish martial law and free all political prisoners. He announced that 868 political prisoners had been released earlier in the day. [NYT]
- Jan. 12: The US said it had "urged the military to give its full support" to the government. [NYT]
- Jan. 13: A regency council that would carry out the duties of the Shāh after his departure was announced. Its members were: Bakhtiyār, 'Abdallāh Intizām, Jalāl al-Dīn Tihirānī, Muḥammad 'Alī Vārāstah, 'Abd al-Ḥusayn 'Alī Ābādī, 'Abbās Qarabāghī, 'Alī Qulī Ardalān, Muḥammad Sajjādī and Javād Sa'īd. [NYT]
- The Āyat Allāh announced the formation of a Council of the Islamic Revolution that would be charged with selecting and installing a "provisional government" in Iran. [NYT]
- Demonstrators marched in Tehran after ceremonies reopening Tehran University had taken place. [NYT]
- Jan. 14: Demonstrations in support of the Āyat Allāh were held in Tehran. [NYT]
- Jan. 15: The Senate approved the appointment of Bakhtiyār. [NYT]
- An American engineer was murdered in Kerman. [NYT]
- Ten diplomats at the Iranian Embassy in the US said they would not work with Ambassador Ardashīr Zāhidī. [NYT]
- Jan. 16: The Shāh left Iran and flew to Aswan, Egypt. He was met by Egyptian President Anwar al-Sādāt. [NYT]
- The Āyat Allāh hailed the departure of the Shāh as "the preface to our victory." [NYT]
- The Majlis approved the appointment of Bakhtiyār. [NYT]
- An earthquake struck Khurasan province. At least 129 people were killed. [NYT]
- Jan. 17: The Āyat Allāh called on Cabinet ministers to resign their "illegal posts." [NYT]
- Carter urged the Āyat Allāh to give the present government "a chance to succeed." [NYT]
- The death toll from the earthquake reached 199. [NYT]
- "Renegade" troops in tanks and jeeps fired on anti-government demonstrators in Ahwaz. Newspaper accounts put the death toll at more than 10 people. [NYT]
- The New York Times* reported that Justice Minister Yazdī had resigned. [NYT]
- Jan. 18: Āyat Allāh Sharī'atmadārī expressed fear that Iran might be faced with "terrible turmoil" if the government were toppled suddenly. [NYT]
- The head of the Regency Council, Jalāl al-Dīn Tihirānī travelled to France to meet with the Āyat Allāh. [NYT]
- Clashes between demonstrators and troops took place in Ahwaz and Dizful. [NYT]
- Jan. 19: The Āyat Allāh refused to see Regency Council head Tihirānī unless he resigned his post. [NYT]
- Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators marched in Tehran in support of the Āyat Allāh. [NYT]
- Jan. 20: The Āyat Allāh said he would return to Iran "in a few days." [NYT]
- Jan. 21: Bakhtiyār said he was the "legitimate ruler" of Iran and would defend his post. [NYT]
- Jan. 22: Āyat Allāh Maḥmūd Ṭālagḥānī warned that the Iranian people might undertake a "holy war" against the army if it attempted a *coup*. [NYT]
- Tihirānī resigned from the Regency Council and delivered his resignation to the Āyat Allāh. [NYT]
- The Shāh arrived in Marrakesh on a "private visit" and was met by Moroccan King Hasan. [NYT]
- Chief of Staff Qarabāghī said the military would support the Bakhtiyār government. [NYT]
- Jan. 23: About 1,200 special troops marched in support of the Shāh in Tehran. [NYT]
- Jan. 24: The State Department said the US had agreed to send 200,000 barrels of diesel fuel and gasoline to Iran. [NYT]
- Jan. 25: The government closed the airport in Tehran. [NYT]
- The Āyat Allāh postponed a scheduled return to Iran and condemned the government of "treasonously" closing the airport. [NYT]
- More than 50,000 people gathered in Tehran to demonstrate in support of the government. [NYT]
- The government said it would start enforcing a prohibition on public demonstrations. [NYT]
- Jan. 26: Demonstrations against the government were held in Tehran. At least 15 people were killed when soldiers fired on the demonstrators. [NYT]
- Troops clashed with demonstrators in Tabriz. [NYT]
- Jan. 27: Demonstrations against the government continued in Tehran after the closure of all airports was extended "until further notice." [NYT]
- It was announced that Bakhtiyār would fly to France "to discuss the future of the nation" with the Āyat Allāh. [NYT]
- Jan. 28: The Āyat Allāh said he would not meet with Bakhtiyār unless the Premier would first resign and he urged Iranians to struggle for an Islamic republic "to the last drop of blood." [NYT]
- Troops fired on demonstrators in Tehran, killing 35 people. [NYT]
- Jan. 29: The government announced it would reopen airports the following day. [NYT]
- Demonstrators rioted in Tehran. [NYT]
- The US Consul in Isfahan was beaten by a hostile crowd. [NYT]
- The government said a \$6.2 billion contract for construction of 2 nuclear plants by a French concern had been cancelled. [NYT]
- Jan. 30: The government authorized the return of the Āyat Allāh to Iran. [NYT]
- The US Embassy ordered all government dependents to leave Iran. [NYT]

- Jan. 31:* Columns of troops moved through Tehran in support of the government. [NYT]
- Feb. 1:* The Āyat Allāh returned to Iran from exile in France. At least 3 million people lined the streets to welcome him. [NYT]  
The Āyat Allāh said he would "arrest" Bakhtiyār if he refused to resign and condemned the presence of foreigners in Iran. [NYT]  
A US Air Force plane crashed south of Tehran, killing 5 people. [NYT]
- Feb. 2:* Bakhtiyār offered to accept his opponents into a government of "national unity." [NYT]  
The Āyat Allāh called on the people to "destroy the terrible monarchy and its illegal Government." [NYT]
- Feb. 3:* The Āyat Allāh said that his movement had drafted a republican constitution. [NYT]
- Feb. 4:* Demonstrations in support of the Āyat Allāh took place in Tehran. [NYT]
- Feb. 5:* The Āyat Allāh named Mihdī Bāzargān to head a "provisional government." [NYT]
- Feb. 6:* Peaceful demonstrations in support of the Āyat Allāh took place in Tehran. Military aircraft were flown over the demonstrations. [NYT]  
The US reiterated its support of the Bakhtiyār government and "the constitutional process" in Iran. [NYT]
- Feb. 7:* Peaceful demonstrations in support of the Āyat Allāh took place in Tehran, Isfahan and other cities. [NYT]  
US Ambassador to the UN Andrew Young praised Islam as "a vibrant cultural force in today's world" and said the Āyat Allāh would eventually be hailed as "somewhat of a saint." [NYT]
- Feb. 8:* More than 1 million demonstrators marched in Tehran in support of the Āyat Allāh. Armed forces personnel were among the demonstrators. [NYT]  
Clashes in Gurgan between demonstrators and security forces left 9 people dead. [NYT]
- Feb. 9:* Troops rounded up Air Force technicians loyal to the Āyat Allāh and killed at least 20 of them in Tehran. [NYT]
- Feb. 10:* Troops from the Imperial Guard clashed with deserting Air Force cadets and technicians at an air force base in Tehran. More than 100 people were killed. [NYT]  
A correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times* was killed in Tehran during a clash between soldiers and Air Force cadets. [NYT]
- Feb. 11:* The army Supreme Council ordered troops to return to their garrisons and announced its "neutrality" in the political crisis "to prevent further anarchy and bloodshed." [NYT]  
It was reported that Bakhtiyār had resigned following withdrawal of army support. [NYT]  
Military Governor of Tehran Raḥīmī was captured by revolutionary forces. [NYT]  
Rioters stormed the central prison in Tehran and freed the inmates. [NYT]  
The US said it was sending a detachment of marines and helicopters to Turkey for use in possible evacuation of US nationals in the future. [NYT]  
Commander of the Army Badra'ī was killed by supporters of the Āyat Allāh. [NYT]
- Feb. 12:* "Provisional government" Premier Bāzargān named 3 Deputy Premiers:  
Muḥammad Hāshim Ṣabāghī, Amīr Intizām and Ibrāhīm Yazdī. [NYT]  
Supporters of the Āyat Allāh captured Niavaran Palace and other centers of resistance in Tehran. A US military advisory mission in northern Tehran was attacked after erroneous reports were broadcast that "some Americans" were involved in fighting at the headquarters of the Imperial Guards. [NYT]  
Bāzargān named Muḥammad Walī Qaranah as Chief of Staff. [NYT]  
Sa'īd Mihdiyān was named Air Force Commander. [NYT]  
The Āyat Allāh called on his supporters to "leave the streets" and obey the orders of Bāzargān. [NYT]  
Turkey said it would allow the US helicopters into Turkey only if Iran approved an evacuation of Americans. [NYT]  
The US State Department said it had suspended plans to send the marines and helicopters to Turkey. [NYT]  
Carter said the US would "attempt to work closely with the existing government" of Iran. [NYT]  
Supporters of the Āyat Allāh took control of the Iranian Embassy in Washington. [NYT]  
Pakistan and the Soviet Union recognized the provisional government. [NYT]
- Feb. 13:* The following appointments to the Cabinet were made:  
Karīm Sanjābī: *Foreign Affairs*  
Dāryūsh Farūhar: *Labor & Social Welfare*  
Ahmad Ṣadr Javadī: *Interior*  
Muṣṭafā Katirā'ī: *Housing & Urban Affairs*  
Yūsuf Tāhiri Qazvīnī: *Roads & Transportation*  
'Alī Akbar Mu'īnfar: *State for Planning & Budget*  
Kāzīm Sāmī: *Health* [NYT]  
It was reported that Bakhtiyār had been arrested. [NYT]  
Rival guerrilla groups fought at the gates of Tehran University. [NYT]  
The Āyat Allāh called on Iranians to turn in their weapons and prevent attacks on government installations and public property. [NYT]
- Feb. 14:* Guerrillas attacked the US Embassy in Tehran, trapping the Ambassador and about 100 staff members. The Americans were later freed by forces of the Āyat Allāh led by Deputy Premier Yazdī. [NYT]  
Fighting was reported in Tabriz between supporters of the Shāh and revolutionary forces. [NYT]  
The People's Fidā'iyyīn issued a statement saying they would not obey the orders of the Āyat Allāh to turn in weapons because it was their "duty to safeguard the people's victories." [NYT]
- Feb. 15:* The following 4 generals were executed:  
Ni'mat Allāh Nāṣirī, Mihdī Raḥīmī, Manūchihr Khusrawdād, Rīzā Nāji. [NYT]  
Deputy Premier Ṣabāghī charged that the attacks

in Tehran on government installations and foreign Embassies were the work of the People's Fida'iyyin. [NYT]

The Shāh left Marrakesh to move into a residence in Rabat. [NYT]

Heavy fighting in Tabriz took place between supporters of the Āyat Allāh and "counter-revolutionary elements." [JP]

Feb. 9: Iraq and Syria signed an agreement in Baghdad providing for the transit of Iraqi crude oil across Syria. A second agreement for coöperation in development of oil fields in their border regions was also signed. [MEES]

Feb. 11: South Yemeni Chairman of the People's Supreme Council Presidium 'Abd al-Fattāh Ismā'īl arrived in Baghdad and met with Bakr. [FBIS]

## Iraq

(See also, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria)

### 1978

Nov. 18: Iranian Empress Farah arrived in Baghdad on a visit. [MEED]

Nov. 19: Italian Premier Giulio Andreotti ended a 2 day official visit to Iraq. [FBIS]

Nov. 21: UAA Petroleum Minister Māna' Sa'īd al-'Utaybah arrived in Baghdad from Jiddah on a tour of oil producing countries. [FBIS]

Nov. 28: Czechoslovak Premier Lubomir Strougal met with President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr in Baghdad. [FBIS]

Dec. 3: Turkish Premier Bülent Ecevit left Baghdad at the end of a 2 day visit to Iraq. [FBIS]

Dec. 11: Iraqi Vice Chairman of the Revolution Command Council (RCC) Şaddām Husayn arrived in Moscow for talks with Soviet leaders. [NYT]

Vice President Ṭaha Muḥyī al-Dīn Ma'rūf arrived in Vienna on a 3 day visit and was met by Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky. [AN]

Dec. 14: RCC Vice Chairman Husayn arrived in Havana for talks with Cuban leaders. [FBIS]

Dec. 15: An economic and technical coöperation agreement with Poland was signed in Baghdad. [FBIS]

Dec. 17: An economic coöperation agreement with Cuba was signed in Havana. [MEED]

Dec. 18: Husayn returned to Baghdad at the end of visits to the Soviet Union and Cuba. [FBIS]

### 1979

Jan. 3: Syrian Foreign Minister 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām met with Foreign Minister Sa'dūn Ḥammādi in Baghdad on bilateral relations. [JP]

Jan. 12: Vice President Ma'rūf returned to Baghdad from Paris where he had held talks on bilateral relations with French leaders during a 4 day visit. [FBIS]

Jan. 30: Husayn met with Syrian President Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad in Damascus. After the meeting Husayn returned to Baghdad. [FBIS]

Feb. 4: Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito arrived in Baghdad and met with President Bakr. [FBIS]

Feb. 5: Sweden declared 3 Iraqi diplomats *persona non grata* for illicit intelligence work. [AN]

## Israel

(See also, Arab Israeli Conflict, Lebanon)

### 1978

Nov. 16: US Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Joseph Califano ended a 4 day visit to Israel. [FBIS]

Nov. 17: The La'am faction of the Likud Party split into 2 parts. [JP]

Nov. 20: Israel appealed to West Germany not to apply its statute of limitations to Nazi war criminals. [NYT]

Dec. 1: Israel and the US signed an agreement under which Israel would receive \$785m to help finance commodity imports, rebuild foreign exchange reserves and reduce short term indebtedness. [NYT]

Dec. 8: Former Premier Golda Meir died in Hadassah Hospital, aged 80. [NYT]

Premier Menahem Begin arrived in Oslo to accept the Nobel Peace Prize. [NYT]

Dec. 10: A spokesman confirmed that Israel had requested the extradition from Holland of former Nazi Pieter Menten. [JP]

Dec. 11: Three Israelis seized the West German cultural center in Tel Aviv and took a hostage. It was reported that they had demanded the abolition of a West German statute of limitations concerning Nazi war crimes. The protesters surrendered to police. [NYT]

Dec. 12: Former Premier Meir was buried at Mount Herzl National Cemetery. [NYT]

Dec. 17: The Cabinet approved an amendment to liquidity regulations to stem an increasing inflow of dollar loans to Israel. [NYT]

Dec. 18: The Likud Bloc voted to bar 2 of its Knesset members from speaking on the Knesset floor because of a breach of party discipline in a recent vote. [NYT]

Dec. 25: High school teachers ended a 6 week strike. [NYT]

### 1979

Jan. 2: Officers of the Ethiopian Jews Association in Tel Aviv accused world Jewry of complacency toward the persecution of Ethiopian Jews. [NYT]

Knesset Member Shmuel Rechtman was found guilty in District Court of receiving a bribe. [JP]

## Bahrain

(See also, Arab Israeli Conflict, Jordan, Qatar)

1979

- Feb. 17:* British Queen Elizabeth II left Bahrain at the end of a visit and was seen off at the airport by Amir Shaykh 'Isā bin Salmān Āl Khalīfah. [NYT]
- March 8:* Heir apparent Shaykh Ḥamad bin 'Isā Āl Khalīfah returned to Bahrain at the end of a visit to Jordan. [FBIS]
- March 13:* Foreign Minister Shaykh Muḥammad bin Mubārak Āl Khalīfah returned to Manama at the end of a tour of the UAA and Oman. [FBIS]
- April 10:* Lebanese Premier Salim al-Ḥuṣṣ met with Amir Shaykh 'Isā in Manama. [FBIS]
- April 23:* UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim met with Foreign Minister Shaykh Muḥammad in Manama and then left for Singapore. [FBIS]

## Cyprus

1979

- April 9:* Foreign Minister of the "self-proclaimed" "Turkish Federated State of Cyprus" Kenan Atakol met with UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim in Zurich. [AN]
- April 13:* President Spyros Kyprianou returned to Cyprus at the end of a 5 day visit to Greece. [AN]

## Egypt

(See also, Arab Israeli Conflict, Oman)

1979

- Feb. 17:* Premier Muṣṭafā Khalīl was named to the additional post of Foreign Minister. [FBIS]
- 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ḥasan was appointed Minister of State for Youth and Sport. [FBIS]
- March 29:* President Anwar al-Sādāt arrived in West Germany to discuss economic aid with West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. [NYT]
- March 30:* A West German spokesman said that Chancellor Schmidt had assured President Sādāt that West Germany was prepared to provide Egypt with additional economic aid but it preferred to offer funds as part of a joint Western initiative. [NYT]
- April 12:* Sādāt began a tour of Upper Egypt to urge a favorable vote in a referendum on the peace

treaty with Israel and the dissolution of the People's Assembly. [NYT]

- April 21:* Sādāt dissolved Parliament and ordered new elections in June. [NYT]
- April 25:* Roumanian President Nicolai Ceausescu left Ismailia at the end of a visit to Egypt. [FBIS]

## Iran

(See also, Arab Israeli Conflict, Petroleum Affairs, Afghanistan, Iraq, United Arab Emirates)

1979

- Feb. 16:* The state radio reported that revolutionary forces had taken Tabriz from forces of former ruler Muḥammad Rīzā Shāh Pahlavī after 3 days of heavy fighting. [NYT]
- A US spokesman said the US had notified Iran of its "intention to maintain diplomatic relations" with the new provisional government. [NYT]
- The US protested to the Soviet Union against Soviet broadcasts of "false accounts of United States actions" in Iran. [NYT]
- Feb. 17:* Premier of the provisional government Mihdī Bāzargān said Iran would export oil as soon as possible "to all parts of the world, including the United States." [NYT]
- Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yāsir 'Arafāt arrived in Tehran for talks with religious leader Āyat Allāh Rūh Allāh Khumaynī. [NYT]
- Feb. 18:* Iran severed diplomatic relations with Israel. [AN]
- Feb. 19:* PLO leader 'Arafāt, joined by the Āyat Allāh's son, Aḥmad Khumaynī, opened PLO offices in Tehran at the former Israeli legation. [NYT]
- The following Ministers were appointed:
- 'Alī Ardalān: *Finance*  
 Asad Allāh Mubāshiri: *Justice*  
 Yad Allāh Saḥābī: *State*  
 Rīzā Ṣadr: *Commerce*  
 'Abbās Tāj: *Energy*  
 'Alī Muḥammad 'Izādī: *Agriculture* [NYT]
- Referring to Iranian Marxist groups defying the government, the Āyat Allāh denounced the "evil objectives" of a group of "bandits and unlawful elements." [NYT]
- The New York Times* reported that junior officers in Kazvin had forced Premier Bāzargān to withdraw the nomination of Ni'mar Allāh Mu'tamidī as Air Force Chief. [NYT]
- Feb. 20:* Four generals were executed: Parvīz Amīnī-Afshār, former Commander of the Imperial Guards; Manūchīhr Malik, former Commander of the Kazvin armored division; Ni'mar Allāh Mu'tamidī, former martial law administrator of Kazvin, and Ḥusayn

- Hamidanim, former chief of SAVAK. A government spokesman said the provisional government "knew nothing" of the executions. [NYT]
- The US State Department said a wounded US marine captured in an attack on the US Embassy in Tehran by gunmen the week before was being held by the Revolutionary Islamic Council of the Āyat Allāh. [NYT]
- The jetliner on which the Shāh had left Iran was returned from Morocco. It was reported that the crew had "hijacked" it back to Iran. [NYT]
- Feb. 21:** The People's Fidā'iyyīn cancelled a march through Tehran that was opposed by the Āyat Allāh. [NYT]
- The government said a general stationed at Mehabad in the Kurdish region had been wounded by Kurdish rebels. [NYT]
- A spokesman for the Kurds, Āyat Allāh 'Izz al-Dīn Ḥusaynī, issued a list of demands to the government. [NYT]
- Authorities released the wounded US marine. [NYT]
- US Ambassador to Iran William Sullivan met with Bāzargān. [NYT]
- Feb. 22:** The following Ministers were appointed:  
 Ahmad Madanī: *National Defense*  
 'Alī Shari'atmadārī: *Science*  
 Nāsir Mināchī: *Information*  
 Hasan Islāmī: *Telecommunications*  
 Ghulām Husayn Shukuhī: *Education* [NYT]
- Feb. 23:** The People's Fidā'iyyīn staged a rally in Tehran. More than 70,000 people attended. [NYT]
- Feb. 26:** The International Commission of Jurists called on the government to guarantee defense rights to persons accused of crimes. [NYT]
- Feb. 27:** Deputy Premier 'Abbās Amīr Intizām said rumors that Kurdish separatists were causing unrest in Kurdistan Province were "totally baseless." [NYT]
- Feb. 28:** Bāzargān said that if anonymous *komitehs* (committees) continued their activities, his government would be forced to resign. [NYT]
- The Swiss government decided to investigate assets held by the Shāh in Switzerland, but did not freeze the assets as requested by Iran. [NYT]
- March 1:** The Āyat Allāh arrived in Qum and was greeted by hundreds of thousands of supporters. [NYT]
- More than 20 Americans who had been at an electronic listening post near the Soviet border flew out of Iran. The government said it did not know the US was still operating the post. [NYT]
- March 3:** The government devalued the rial and said it would let it float on the free market. [NYT]
- March 4:** Iran broke diplomatic relations with South Africa. [NYT]
- March 5:** Two oil tankers began loading Iranian oil. [NYT]
- March 7:** The Āyat Allāh said that women in government ministries "must be clothed according to religious standards." [NYT]
- The Āyat Allāh called the provisional government "weak". [NYT]
- The Shāh said he had no intention of abdicating. [NYT]
- March 8:** Bāzargān travelled to Qum and met with the Āyat Allāh. It was reported that he had offered his resignation during the meeting. [NYT]
- About 6,000 women marched in Tehran to protest clothing requirements for women. [NYT]
- The director of the National Iranian Oil Company said that Iran would restrict its oil output to half what it produced under the Shāh. [NYT]
- March 9:** The Āyat Allāh said he had "full confidence" in the provisional government. [NYT]
- March 10:** Women demonstrated in Tehran for the third day against dress restrictions. About 15,000 people participated in one march. [NYT]
- Pakistani Foreign Affairs Adviser Agha Shahi met with Bāzargān in Tehran. [FBIS]
- March 11:** Women demonstrated in Tehran for women's rights. At least 4 demonstrators were stabbed by opponents of the protests. [NYT]
- March 12:** About 15,000 women marched through Tehran to protest for women's rights. [NYT]
- The press reported that the Āyat Allāh had agreed that the *chador* was a voluntary and not a required form of dress. [NYT]
- March 13:** Iran announced it was withdrawing from the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). [MEED]
- March 14:** Bāzargān spoke on television and called the summary trials a "disgrace". [NYT]
- Bāzargān said that because the Āyat Allāh was "kind, sensitive and good-hearted" he had been persuaded to "issue proclamations and orders that put us on the spot." [NYT]
- Five policemen were executed. [NYT]
- March 15:** Prosecutors at the trial of former Premier Amīr 'Abbās Huvaydā called for a sentence of death. [NYT]
- March 16:** *The New York Times* reported that Bāzargān had met with the Āyat Allāh in Qum the night before. [NYT]
- The Āyat Allāh ordered a halt to summary trials until new trial regulations could be drafted. He required that future trials must be under the "direct supervision" of the Revolutionary Islamic Council and the provisional government. [NYT]
- March 18:** Fighting broke out in Sanandaj between Kurdish tribesmen and Iranian troops. [NYT]
- March 19:** Fighting continued in Sanandaj. National radio announced that a ceasefire had been reached. [NYT]
- March 20:** Fighting continued in Sanandaj. [NYT]
- March 21:** Heavy fighting took place in Sanandaj. Āyat Allāh Maḥmūd Ṭālaghānī was sent to mediate the dispute. [NYT]
- March 23:** The Voice of the Revolution radio reported that the army had released 167 Kurdish prisoners in Sanandaj in return for a ceasefire. [NYT]
- March 25:** Former Premier Shāhpūr Bakhtiyār said from hiding that Iran had "replaced an old dictator-

- ship with a new one, plus disorder and anarchy." [NYT]
- The Kurd Ibrāhīm Yūnīsī was named provincial governor general of Kurdistan. [NYT]
- March 26:* Newspapers reported that the remaining Kurdish prisoners had been released by the army in Sanandaj. [NYT]
- March 27:* Chief of Staff Muḥammad Valī Qaranah resigned his post. [NYT]
- Turkomans battled government forces in Gunbad-i-Qawus. [NYT]
- An army spokesman said that Nāṣir Farbud had been named Chief of Staff. [AN]
- March 28:* The government announced a ceasefire for Gunbad-i-Qawus but fighting between Turkomans and government forces continued. [NYT]
- The government offered assurances that a proposed new constitution would pay special attention to ethnic minorities. [NYT]
- The US said that it had held informal discussions with Iran on buying back F-14 jet fighters and Phoenix missiles that it had sold to Iran. [NYT]
- March 29:* Fighting continued in Gunbad-i-Qawus. Āyat Allāh Ṭālagḥānī flew to the town in a helicopter but gunfire prevented a landing. [NYT]
- It was reported that unrest was occurring among Baluchi tribesmen in the eastern borders. [NYT]
- March 30:* Voters went to the polls in a referendum to approve or reject the formation of an Islamic republic. It was decided to extend the voting to a second day. [NYT]
- The Shāh arrived in the Bahamas for a visit. [NYT]
- March 31:* Voting ended in the referendum. [NYT]
- A French official said that former Premier Bakhtiyār was living in France. [NYT]
- April 1:* The Āyat Allāh declared a victory in the referendum and proclaimed April 1 "the first day of a Government of God." [NYT]
- Bāzargān announced he would order "all law-and-order forces" to take "positive action" unless fighting in the Turkoman areas stopped the following day. [NYT]
- April 2:* The government announced a ceasefire between Turkomans and government forces in Gunbad-i-Qawus. [NYT]
- April 5:* New trial procedures for revolutionary courts were announced. [NYT]
- April 6:* Three men were executed in Isfāhan. [NYT]
- Middle East Economic Digest* reported that Taqī Riyāhī had been appointed National Defense Minister after the resignation of Aḥmad Madanī. [MEED]
- April 7:* Former Premier Huvaydā was executed at Qasr prison. [NYT]
- April 9:* Four people were executed. Among them were former Labor and Social Affairs Minister Manūchīhr Āzmūn and former Air Force Commander Amir Husayn Rabīʿī. [FBIS]
- Tehran radio said that oil production had exceeded 4 million barrels a day for the first time since December. [NYT]
- April 10:* Four men were executed. [NYT]
- April 11:* Eleven people were executed. Former Foreign Minister 'Abbās 'Alī Khal'atbarī, former SAVAK head Ḥasan Pākrawān, former SAVAK head Nāṣir Muqaddam and former Agriculture Minister Manṣūr Ruḥānī were among those killed. [NYT]
- April 13:* Two sons and a daughter-in-law of Āyat Allāh Ṭālagḥānī were arrested by the Islamic militia of the Āyat Allāh and later released. [NYT]
- Ten former officials of the Shāh were executed. [NYT]
- The Shāh issued a statement saying he was "shocked and horrified" by the executions in Iran. [NYT]
- April 14:* Āyat Allāh Ṭālagḥānī went into hiding. It was reported that he had done so to protest "the way some committee members are doing things on their own." [NYT]
- April 15:* Foreign Minister Karīm Sanjābī resigned his post to protest the actions of the *komitehs*. [NYT]
- April 17:* Āyat Allāh Ṭālagḥānī said he had retired from politics so as "not to give a chance to dictatorship and despotism to return." [NYT]
- Former Foreign Minister Sanjābī charged that the Revolutionary Council set up by the Āyat Allāh was "despotic". [NYT]
- About 50,000 people rallied near Tehran University to protest the arrest of the relatives of Āyat Allāh Ṭālagḥānī. [NYT]
- April 18:* Āyat Allāh Ṭālagḥānī met with the Āyat Allāh in Qum. Supporters of each of the religious leaders demonstrated in Tehran. [NYT]
- The Revolutionary Council broadcast a statement praising Āyat Allāh Ṭālagḥānī. The statement said the Islamic militia was "not completely under the control of the Revolutionary Council." [NYT]
- April 19:* Āyat Allāh Ṭālagḥānī broadcast a statement saying he "accepted" the leadership of the Āyat Allāh and had "always approved" of his actions. [NYT]
- The Āyat Allāh said the *komitehs* must remain "until the authority of the Government has been established." [NYT]
- April 20:* Gunmen opened fire on a meeting of the Kurdish Democratic Front Party in the town of Naghadeh in Azerbaijan Province. [NYT]
- It was announced that 3 more people had been executed. [NYT]
- Supporters of the Āyat Allāh attacked a headquarters of the Fidā'iyyīn guerrillas in Abadan and arrested 41 people. [NYT]
- April 21:* Fighting broke out between Kurdish and Turkish minorities in Naghadeh. [NYT]
- April 22:* Fighting in Naghadeh intensified. Iran radio said at least 70 people had been killed. Troops were sent to the area but did not enter the town. [NYT]
- It was announced that Deputy Premier Ibrāhīm

- Yazdî would oversee the Foreign Ministry on behalf of Bâzargân, who would be the official Foreign Minister. [NYT]
- April 23:* Former Chief of Staff Qaranah was assassinated in Tehran. The Furqân Fighters claimed responsibility. [NYT]
- Army troops moved into Naghadeh where fighting continued. [NYT]
- Āyat Allāh Shaykh Muḥammad Ṭāhir Khāqāni, religious leader of Arabs in Khuzistan Province, threatened to leave Iran unless the power of the *komitehs* was curbed. [NYT]
- Thousands of people marched in Tabriz to protest against an article published by a member of the Revolutionary Komiteh that criticized Āyat Allāh Kāzīm Shari'atmadārī. [NYT]
- April 24:* Cabinet changes were announced: Ibrāhīm Yazdî: *Foreign Affairs*  
Husayn Banī Asadī: *Deputy Premier* [NYT]
- Bâzargân criticized the *komitehs* and called for an end to the "rule of revenge." [NYT]
- April 25:* A Kurdish spokesman accused the government of complicity with the Turkish minority in the Naghadeh area. Witnesses said the Iranian army force sent to the area was composed of Iranian Turks. [NYT]
- It was announced that the militia of the *komitehs* would be incorporated into a national police force. [NYT]
- April 26:* Libyan Premier 'Abd al-Salām Jallūd met with the Āyat Allāh in Qum to discuss bilateral relations. [NYT]
- Representatives from Khuzistan Province demanded autonomy for Arabs in the province. [NYT]
- More than 100,000 people demonstrated in Khuzistan Province in support of Āyat Allāh Khāqāni. [NYT]
- April 28:* A draft of the new Constitution was published. [NYT]
- May 1:* Āyat Allāh Murtaẓā Muṭaharri, a member of the Revolutionary Council, was assassinated in Tehran. The Furqân Fighters claimed responsibility. [NYT]
- May 3:* Āyat Allāh Muṭaharri was buried in Qum. [NYT]
- May 5:* Firing squads executed 4 people. [NYT]
- May 6:* *The New York Times* reported that the Āyat Allāh had ordered the formation of the *Revolutionary Guardians*, a special armed force, to be responsible to the Revolutionary Komiteh to "protect the Islamic revolution." [NYT]
- May 8:* Firing squads executed 21 people. Among those killed were former Majlis Speaker Javād Sa'īd, former Information Minister Muḥammad Rizā Āmalī Tihirāni and former Justice Minister Ghulam Rizā Khiyanpūr. [FBIS]
- May 9:* Firing squads executed 2 businessmen. One, a Jew, was accused of raising money for Israel. [NYT]
- May 12:* The newspaper *Ayandegān* ceased publication after the Āyat Allāh called it "depraved". [NYT]
- May 13:* The Āyat Allāh decreed that only those who had been "proven to have killed people" or who had "issued orders for the killing of people" could be sentenced to death. [NYT]
- May 15:* Journalists at the newspaper *Kayhan* walked out to protest encroachments on press freedom. [NYT]

## Iraq

(See also, Arab Israeli Conflict, Petroleum Affairs, Sudan, Syria, Yemen)

### 1979

- Feb. 19:* Iraq decided to expel 3 Swedish diplomats. Sweden had expelled 3 Iraqi diplomats from its territory 2 weeks earlier. [FBIS]
- Feb. 20:* Vice President Taha Muḥyi al-Dīn Ma'rūf left Baghdad for Warsaw, Poland. [FBIS]
- Feb. 26:* Vice President Ma'rūf left Budapest at the end of a trip to Poland and Hungary. [FBIS]
- March 1:* Kurdish leader Muṣṭafā Barzāni died in exile in Washington, aged 76. [NYT]
- Bangladesh President Ziaur Rahman met with President Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr in Baghdad. [FBIS]
- March 5:* Kurdish leader Barzāni's body was flown to Ushnuiyah in western Iran for burial. [NYT]
- March 8:* Yemeni President 'Alī 'Abdallāh Ṣāliḥ met with Iraqi leaders in Baghdad. [FBIS]
- March 26:* Jordanian King Husayn arrived in Baghdad and met with President Bakr. [FBIS]
- April 5:* Lebanese Premier Salīm al-Ḥuṣṣ arrived in Baghdad and met with Revolution Command Council (RCC) Vice Chairman Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. [FBIS]
- April 6:* Saboteurs bombed nuclear equipment at an industrial plant in France, destroying equipment that was to go to Iraq. [NYT]
- April 7:* Bakr returned to Baghdad at the end of a 5 day visit to Saudi Arabia. [FBIS]
- May 5:* A republican decree relieved Transport Minister Mukarram Jamāl of his post. [FBIS]
- May 8:* *The New York Times* reported that France had formally assured Iraq that it would replace the nuclear reactor destroyed by saboteurs. [NYT]

## Israel

(See also, Arab Israeli Conflict, Iran, Lebanon)

### 1979

- March 18:* The National Religious Party threatened to resign from the Israeli government unless it received assurance that Israel would retain control over the West Bank and Gaza. [NYT]

- May 18: President Spyros Kyprianou and President of the "self-proclaimed" "Turkish Federated State of Cyprus" Rauf Denktaş, met under the chairmanship of UN Secretary General Waldheim. [NYT]
- May 19: Following talks between the 2 Cypriot leaders, Waldheim disclosed that a 10 point agreement concerning the resumption of intercommunal talks had been reached. [NYT]
- May 31: It was announced that Minister to the President George Ioannides would head the Greek Cypriot delegation to intercommunal talks. [MEED]
- June 7: President of the "Turkish Federated State of Cyprus" Denktaş returned to Cyprus at the end of talks with Turkish leaders in Turkey. [MEED]
- June 15: Intercommunal talks were held in Cyprus. It was agreed to study the resettlement of Varosha. [NYT]
- The mandate for the UN peacekeeping forces in Cyprus was renewed by the Security Council for 6 months. [MEED]

## Egypt

(See also, Arab Israeli Conflict)

1979

- May 20: Saudi Arabian Defense Minister Prince Sulṭān bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said that Saudi Arabia would not sign an agreement on the purchase of US F-5 jet fighters by Saudi Arabia for Egypt. [FBIS]
- A "senior official" aboard a plane carrying US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance said that US Ambassador to Egypt Hermann Eilts had met with Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Fahd in Europe the week before as part of a mediation effort between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. [NYT]
- June 5: President Anwar al-Sādāt said that Egypt had concluded an arms deal with China. [NYT]
- June 7: The first round of elections for the People's Assembly was held. [MEED]
- June 11: The central bank of Iraq halted all financial dealings with Egyptian banks and companies. [NYT]
- June 14: The second round of elections for the People's Assembly was held. [MEED]
- June 18: President Sādāt asked Premier Muṣṭafā Khalīl to form a new Cabinet. [NYT]
- June 19: A new Cabinet was formed:  
 Muṣṭafā Khalīl: *Premier and Foreign Affairs*  
 Fikrī Makrām 'Ubayd: *Deputy Premier for People's Assembly Affairs*  
 Kamāl Ḥasan 'Alī: *Defense and War Production*  
 Aḥmad 'Izz al-Dīn Hilāl: *Petroleum*  
 Muṣṭafā Kamāl Ḥilmī: *Education & Scientific Research*  
 Ḥamīd 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Sayyīḥ: *Economy, Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation*  
 Muḥammad Nabawī Ismā'īl: *Interior*  
 Maḥmūd Amīn 'Abd al-Ḥāfīz: *Tourism & Civil Aviation*

- Amāl 'Abd al-Raḥīm 'Uthmān: *Social Welfare & Insurance*  
 'Abd al-Razzāq 'Abd al-Majīd: *Planning*  
 Ḥassaballāh Muḥammad al-Kafrāwī: *Construction & New Societies*  
 Buṭrus Buṭrus Ghālī: *State for Foreign Affairs*  
 Sa'd Muḥammad Aḥmad: *Manpower & Vocational Training*  
 Maḥmūd Muḥammad Aḥmad Da'ūd: *Agriculture*  
 Naṣīf 'Abd al-Maqsūd Ibrāhīm Tahūn: *Supply & Internal Trade*  
 Sulaymān Mutawallī Sulaymān: *Cabinet Affairs and State for Local Government*  
 Tawfīq Ḥamīd Kararāh: *Land Reclamation*  
 Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥādī Samahah: *Irrigation and State for Sudan Affairs*  
 'Abd al-Akḥir Muḥammad 'Umar 'Abd al-Akḥir: *State for People's Assembly Affairs*  
 'Alī Fahmī al-Daḡhīstānī: *Transport, Communications & Maritime Transport*  
 Muṣṭafā Mutawallī al-Ḥafnāwī: *Housing*  
 Ibrāhīm 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Aṭallāh: *Industry and Mineral Resources*  
 Muṣṭafā Kamāl Sabrī: *Electricity*  
 'Alī Jamāl al-Nazīr: *State for Economic Cooperation & External Financing*  
 Kamāl Tawfīq Aḥmad Nāṣīr: *State for War Production*  
 Mamdūh Kamāl Jābir: *Health*  
 'Alī Luṭfī Maḥmūd Luṭfī: *Finance*  
 'Abd al-Mun'im Aḥmad al-Nimir: *Awqāf*  
 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ḥasan Muḥammad: *State for Youth & Sports*  
 Anwar 'Abd al-Faṭṭāh Abū Sīhlī: *Justice*  
 Maṣṣūr Muḥammad Maḥmūd Ḥasan: *State for the Presidency* [FBIS]

July 6: US State Department officials said that a projected sale of 50 F-5E jet fighters to Egypt had been postponed. The officials noted that Saudi Arabia had delayed paying for the aircraft for Egypt. [NYT]

## Iran

(See also, Petroleum Affairs, Afghanistan, Oman, United Arab Emirates)

1979

- May 17: The US Senate passed a resolution expressing "abhorrence" at the "summary executions without due process" that were being carried out in Iran. [WP]
- May 18: *The Voice of the Islamic Republic* radio said that a police station had been attacked by opponents of the revolution in Masjid-i-Sulaiman. [NYT]
- One person was executed in Babul. He was the 213th person executed since the overthrow of former ruler Muḥammad Rīzā Shāh Pahlavī. [NYT]
- May 19: Clashes between government forces and

- "rebellious militiamen" took place in Masjid-i-Sulaiman. Seventeen people were arrested. [NYT]
- May 20: The government called the US Senate resolution "clear interference" in Iranian affairs and told the US to delay sending a new Ambassador to Tehran. [NYT]
- May 24: Āyat Allāh Rūh Allāh Khumaynī said that "anyone whose direction is separate from Islam" was an "enemy" of the revolution. [NYT]
- May 25: Gunmen shot and wounded Āyat Allāh Hāshimī Rafsanjānī in Tehran. He was believed to be a member of the Revolutionary Council. [NYT]
- People's Fidā'iyyīn members and followers of the Āyat Allāh held separate anti-American demonstrations in Tehran. Later clashes between the 2 groups occurred. [NYT]
- May 26: The Āyat Allāh told "America and other super-powers" that recent assassinations would not kill the revolution. [NYT]
- May 28: Director of the National Iranian Oil Company Hasan Nazih criticized a declaration by the Āyat Allāh that those who did not believe in the political leadership of religious leaders should be considered enemies of the revolution. [NYT]
- May 29: The Islamic revolutionary court in Tehran charged that the Furqān fighters, an Islamic group that had carried out assassinations in Iran, had been formed by the CIA. [NYT]
- The New York Times* cited "confidential files" of the Shāh as indicating that Iranian officials had in the past employed Mrs. Jacob Javits, wife of the US Senator, as a cover for efforts to create an influential "Iran lobby" in the US. [NYT]
- May 30: Arabs seeking autonomy in Khuzistan battled government troops in Khurramshahr. At least 21 people were killed. [NYT]
- May 31: Government forces secured the city governor's headquarters in Khurramshahr. Fighting diminished but the city remained in a state of emergency. [NYT]
- June 1: Two people were killed during demonstrations by Arabs in Khurramshahr. [NYT]
- June 2: The National Democratic Front accused the Āyat Allāh of "dictatorship" in Iran. [NYT]
- June 3: Governor General of Khuzistan Province Ahmad Madanī charged that Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine leader George Ḥabash was involved in "suspicious activities" with ethnic Arabs in the province. [NYT]
- The New York Times* reported that the 7 members of the National Iranian Oil Company board of directors had submitted their resignations as a "gesture of support and sympathy" for director Nazih. [NYT]
- June 4: *The New York Times* reported that Iran had rescinded its agreement to receive a new US Ambassador and had requested that a different Ambassador be selected. [NYT]
- The US said it had rejected the Iranian request that a different Ambassador be selected. [NYT]
- June 5: Government sources said that 3 Iraqi military planes had flown into Iranian territory in pursuit of Kurdish tribesmen and had bombed several villages, killing 6 people. [NYT]
- Governor General Madanī met with Arab religious leader Muḥammad Ṭāhir Khāqānī and signed an 8 point agreement aimed at relieving tensions between the government and the Arab minority. [NYT]
- June 8: It was announced in Iran that the government had taken control of private banks in the country. [NYT]
- June 9: Turkish Foreign Minister Gündüz Ökçün arrived in Tehran for talks on bilateral coöperation. [FBIS]
- June 10: The Shāh arrived in Mexico from the Bahamas. [NYT]
- June 20: Justice Minister Asad Allāh Mubāshirī resigned his post. [MEED]
- The following Cabinet changes were reported:  
Şadr Javādi: *Justice*  
Hāshim Şabaghīyān: *Interior* [FBIS]
- June 22: A rally of protestors calling for an elected assembly to draft a new constitution was broken up by followers of the Āyat Allāh. [NYT]
- June 25: The government announced the nationalization of private insurance companies. [NYT]
- June 27: Mexican officials denied reports from Iran that an attempt to assassinate the Shāh had taken place in Mexico. [NYT]
- July 1: A correspondent of *The Los Angeles Times* was expelled from Iran because of the "general negative tone" of his dispatches. [NYT]
- The Cabinet met with the Āyat Allāh in Qum. [FBIS]
- July 3: The Revolutionary Council announced an amnesty for security and armed forces except those accused of torture and murder. [NYT]
- July 5: Further nationalizations of industries were announced. Industries assembling cars, ships and aircraft parts were affected. [NYT]
- July 7: An explosion damaged 2 Khuzistan pipelines carrying oil to an Abadan refinery. [NYT]
- July 8: A religious supporter of the Āyat Allāh was assassinated in Tehran. The Furqān fighters claimed responsibility. [NYT]
- July 9: The Āyat Allāh declared a general amnesty covering all people "who committed offenses under the past regime" except those involved in murder or torture. [NYT]
- The Commander of the military police, Sayf Amir Raḥīmī, charged that there was a conspiracy in the armed forces "to discredit the Islamic Republic." [NYT]
- The Defense Ministry ordered the dismissal of Commander of the military police Raḥīmī but he refused to leave his post unless ordered to do so by the Āyat Allāh. [NYT]
- The *Pars News Agency* said that production at the Abadan oil refinery had been reduced by more than 80% as a result of explosions at major pipelines over the weekend. [NYT]
- July 10: A spokesman for the Āyat Allāh said that

- Rahimī had been "told to stay in his post" by the Āyat Allāh. [NYT]
- July 11: *The New York Times* reported that a pipeline had been damaged by saboteurs during the night. The Arab group Black Wednesday claimed responsibility. [NYT]
- July 12: Three women and a man were executed for sex related crimes. [NYT]
- July 13: Gunmen clashed with Revolutionary Guards in Marvan, leaving 13 Guards dead. [FBIS]
- July 15: Hujjat al-Islām Raḡī Shirāzi, chief of an Islamic *komiteh*, was shot and wounded in Tehran by unknown assailants. [NYT]
- Clashes between Turkish villagers and Islamic Revolutionary Guards took place in Mishkinshahr in Azerbaijan. [NYT]
- The house of Āyat Allāh Khāqāni was machine gunned. Four of his guards were killed. [NYT]
- Terrorists threw grenades into a crowd at a mosque in Khurramshahr, killing 5 people. [NYT]
- July 16: *The New York Times* reported that a total of 5 Arabs had been executed in Khurramshahr during the night and in the morning. [NYT]
- Āyat Allāh Khāqāni was forcibly removed from his home by Islamic Revolutionary Guards. [NYT]
- Defense Minister Taqī Riyāhi resigned. [NYT]
- July 18: Premier Miḥdī Bāzargān met in Qum with the Āyat Allāh. The meeting was attended by Rahimī. [MEED]
- It was disclosed that Iran had cancelled the construction of a natural gas pipeline that was to have supplied gas to the Soviet Union. [NYT]
- July 19: Premier Bāzargān announced that 4 members of the Revolutionary Council would become members of the government:
- Āyat Allāh Mahdavi Khāni: *Deputy Minister of Interior*  
 Āyat Allāh Hāshimī Rafsanjāni: *Deputy Minister of Interior*  
 Āyat Allāh Bahonar: *Deputy Minister of Education*  
 Ahmad Bani Šadr: *Deputy Minister of Economy & Finance*
- Bāzargān also announced that some Cabinet members would participate in the Revolutionary Council. [NYT]
- July 21: A radio broadcaster of religious programs was assassinated in Tehran. [NYT]
- The *Paris News Agency* reported that Chief of Staff Našir Farbud had been dismissed and said that Ḥusayn Shakari would replace him under the title Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. [NYT]
- July 22: The government ordered *The New York Times* correspondent in Tehran to leave the country. [NYT]
- July 23: A new press code was adopted to control foreign correspondents in their work. [NYT]
- The Āyat Allāh banned the playing of all music on Iranian radio and television because music was "no different from opium" in its effects on people. [NYT]
- July 26: A woman and 7 men were executed. [NYT]
- July 28: Pakistani Foreign Affairs Advisor Agha Shahi met with the Āyat Allāh while on a visit to Iran. [FBIS]
- July 31: Former Premier Shāhpūr Bakhtiyār held a news conference in Paris and said that the continuing disorders in Iran were leading to a "catastrophe." [NYT]
- Aug. 2: The Muslim People's Republican Party, made up of followers of Āyat Allāh Kāzim Sharī'atmadari, and the National Front said they would boycott upcoming elections. [NYT]
- Aug. 3: Elections for a constituent assembly were held. Twenty political groups boycotted the elections. The Āyat Allāh accused the boycotters of being "enemies of the revolution." [NYT]
- Aug. 7: Islamic Revolutionary Guards occupied the offices of the newspaper *Ayandagān* and confiscated the day's issue. It was announced that the editors of the newspaper would be prosecuted for "counterrevolutionary policies and acts." [NYT]
- Aug. 9: Protestors demonstrating against the new press law clashed with supporters of the law in Tehran. [NYT]
- Aug. 10: A government spokesman said that Iran had cancelled \$9 billion in US arms deals made by the previous régime. [NYT]
- Aug. 12: Islamic militants attacked a demonstration called by the National Democratic Front to protest the closure of the newspaper *Ayandagān*. Hundreds of people were injured. [NYT]
- A press law controlling the national press was announced. [NYT]
- Aug. 13: Backers of the Āyat Allāh raided the offices of groups opposed to the régime and wounded some of the opponents. [NYT]
- Restrictions on foreign news correspondents were announced. [NYT]
- Aug. 14: Supporters of the Āyat Allāh clashed with opponents of the régime in Tehran. [NYT]

## Iraq

(See also, Petroleum Affairs, Jordan, Lebanon, South Yemen)

1979

- May 16: A cultural and technical agreement with Yugoslavia was signed in Baghdad. [FBIS]
- May 25: Pakistani Foreign Affairs Advisor Agha Shahi arrived in Baghdad to meet with Iraqi leaders. [FBIS]
- May 28: Indian Foreign Affairs Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee left Baghdad at the end of an official visit. [FBIS]
- June 2: Yemeni Premier 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd al-Ghani arrived in Baghdad and met with President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr. [FBIS]
- June 12: *Tehran Domestic Service* reported that Iraqi authorities had arrested Āyat Allāh Muḥammad Baqir Šadr, leader of the Iraqi Shī'is in al-Najaf. [FBIS]
- June 16: Syrian President Ḥafīz al-Asad arrived in Baghdad for talks on unification. [FBIS]

Nov. 11: Egyptian Premier and Foreign Minister Muṣṭafā Khalīl meet with US Ambassador Atherton. [FBIS]

Egyptian Minister of Petroleum Aḥmad 'Izz al-Dīn Hilāl announced to the People's Assembly that Egypt would not sell the 2 million tons of oil agreed upon until after the normalization of relations between Egypt and Israel, nor would this oil be sold at preferential prices. [FBIS]

## Iran

(See also, Arab Israeli Conflict, Petroleum Affairs, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey)

1979

Aug. 16: Kurdish forces seeking autonomy captured the town of Paveh, near the Iraqi border, from government troops. [NYT]

Three secret policemen of the previous régime were executed, bringing the total number of executions since the overthrow of Muḥammad Riẓā Shāh Pahlavī to 405. [NYT]

Aug. 18: Government forces acting on direct orders by Āyat Allāh Rūḥ Allāh Khumaynī moved into Paveh and clashed with Kurdish rebels. [NYT]

Aug. 19: Government forces converged on Sanandaj at the orders of Āyat Allāh Khumaynī to crush a reported Kurdish rebellion. The governor general of Kurdistan said, however, that there was "no unrest" in the town. [NYT]

Eleven Kurds captured at Paveh were executed in Kermanshah for waging war on "God and his representatives." [NYT]

The Council of the Revolution declared the election of secretary general of the Kurdish Democratic Party 'Abd al-Raḥmān Qāsimlū to the Council of Experts to be null and void. [NYT]

The Āyat Allāh termed the Kurdish Democratic Party leadership corrupt and called for their arrest. [NYT]

Aug. 20: Twenty-two opposition newspapers, including that of the National Democratic Front, were ordered closed. [NYT]

Aug. 21: Eighteen Kurdish rebels were executed. [NYT]

The US Commerce Department said that US exporters had been authorized to export \$47m worth of home heating oil and kerosene to Iran. [NYT]

The government ordered 5 European journalists to leave the country. [NYT]

Aug. 22: The Āyat Allāh ordered that a day's oil revenues be put at the disposal of Kurdistan Province. [NYT]

US President Jimmy Carter said he had personally

approved the sale of kerosene and heating oil to Iran. [NYT]

Aug. 23: *The New York Times* cited *The Pars News Agency* as reporting that 23 government troops had been killed in a clash on the way to reinforce the garrison of Saqqiz. [NYT]

Heavy fighting took place in Saqqiz between government forces and Kurdish rebels. [NYT]

Kurdish spiritual leader Shaykh 'Izz al-Dīn Huṣaynī charged in Mahabad that the government was "moving toward a new dictatorship." He said the Kurdish people would "not stop the fight" for basic rights. [NYT]

Aug. 24: Government forces struck at Kurdish guerrillas in Saqqiz and at points near Mahabad with tanks and helicopter gunships. [NYT]

Aug. 25: A column of government soldiers reached the besieged garrison at Saqqiz. Heavy fighting with Kurdish rebels in the town continued. [NYT]

Aug. 26: Government troops began "mopping-up" operations at Saqqiz as Kurdish insurgents withdrew from the area. [NYT]

Two supporters of the Āyat Allāh were assassinated in Tehran. The publisher of the newspaper *Kayhān* was wounded in the attack. It was reported that the Furqān Fighters had claimed responsibility. [NYT]

Aug. 27: Representatives of the Kurds began preliminary peace talks in Tehran. They said a ceasefire had been agreed upon. [NYT]

*The Pars News Agency* said that 2 Iraqi military officers had been captured during the fighting at Paveh. [NYT]

State radio said 11 people had been executed in Sanandaj. [NYT]

Aug. 28: The government executed 20 people in Saqqiz for their involvement in the Kurdish rebellion. Nine of the executed were soldiers accused of aiding the rebellion. [NYT]

Aug. 31: Premier Miḥdī Bāzargān said he "would be pleased to be relieved of my post." [NYT]

Sept. 1: Chairman of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Ḥasan Nazīh warned that Iran might be forced to revise its agreement to sell oil to the US because of "all the hullabaloo" over a US agreement to sell heating oil and kerosene to Iran. [NYT]

Sept. 2: The state radio said that government troops had captured 2 cities near Mahabad. It was reported that Kurdish guerrillas had repulsed troops advancing on Mahabad itself. [NYT]

Chairman of the NIOC Nazīh said that Iran might cancel the purchase of US heating oil and send 2 tankers carrying the oil back to the US. [NYT]

Sept. 3: Iranian troops pushed to the outskirts of Mahabad. Kurdish forces withdrew to surrounding hillsides. [NYT]

Sept. 4: Iranian tanks took up positions in the center of Mahabad. [NYT]

*The Associated Press* was ordered to close its Tehran bureau and withdraw its 4 correspondents from Iran. [NYT]

- Sept. 5: A reporter for the magazine *Middle East* was ordered to leave the country. [NYT]
- Sept. 6: *The Pars News Agency* said that government troops had captured the town of Sardasht, near the Iraqi border. [NYT]
- The Ministry of Social Welfare said that 240 cases of cholera had been confirmed in Iran. [NYT]
- Sept. 7: Three Lebanese Shī'ah Muslims protesting the disappearance of Shī'ah religious leader Imam Mūsā Ṣadr in Libya in 1978 hijacked an *Alitalia* airliner on its way to Rome. [NYT]
- Sept. 8: The Lebanese hijackers flew to Tehran and surrendered to Iranian authorities. [NYT]
- The government seized all assets of the newspaper publishing groups *Iṣṭilā'āt* and *Kayhān*. [NYT]
- Sept. 9: *The Pars News Agency* reported that Education Minister Ghulām Ḥusayn Shukūhī had resigned. [MEED]
- Sept. 10: Āyat Allāh Maḥmūd Ṭālagḥānī died, aged 68. The official announcement of his death named him as the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council. [NYT]
- Sept. 18: A government spokesman announced that Minister of Defense Taqī Riyāhī had resigned his post. [FBIS]
- Sept. 24: A bomb exploded at the residence of the Saudi Arabian Ambassador. [MEED]
- Three people, including former Senator Muhsin Khajaniūri, were executed. [NYT]
- Sept. 25: A broadcast from Kermanshah reported that Kurdish rebels had attacked the radio station in Qasr al-Shirin the night before. [NYT]
- Sept. 26: The government ordered the expulsion of the Tehran correspondent of *The Wall Street Journal*. [NYT]
- Sept. 27: *The New York Times* reported that the special representative of the Āyat Allāh in Kuwait and 18 members of his family had been deported and stripped of Kuwaiti nationality. [NYT]
- Sept. 28: The Cabinet was reshuffled:  
 'Alī Ispahbādī: *Labor & Social Affairs*  
 'Alī Akbar Mu'īnfar: *Oil*  
 Maḥmūd Aḥmadzādah: *Industry & Mines*  
 Muṣṭafā 'Alī Chamrān: *National Defense*  
 Ḥasan Ḥabībī: *Science & Arts*  
 Dāryūsh Farūhar: *State Without Portfolio*  
 Ḥusayn Banī Asādī: *State for Executive Affairs*  
 Yadallāh Sahābī: *Training & Research* [MEED]
- Nazīh was dismissed from his post. [NYT]
- Three people were executed in Mahabad. [MEED]
- Sept. 30: Guerrillas blew up a microwave station in southwestern Iran, cutting telephone communications with Abadan. [NYT]
- Oct. 2: Islamic Revolutionary Guards broke up a demonstration by unemployed workers outside the office of Premier Bāzargān. [NYT]
- US officials said that the US and Iran had agreed on the appointment of a new US Ambassador. [NYT]
- Oct. 3: A bomb exploded on a train near Khurramshahr, killing 5 people. [NYT]
- Oct. 4: A firing squad executed 8 men found guilty of sabotage and rebellion in Khuzistan Province. [NYT]
- Oct. 5: The US Pentagon said the US had resumed delivery of aircraft spare parts to Iran. [NYT]
- Iranian Minister of Energy Abbās Tāj signed an agreement with the Soviet Union for the construction of a power station in Isfahan. [MEES]
- Oct. 6: An explosion damaged a pipeline near Ahwaz in Khuzistan. [NYT]
- Oct. 10: Chief of Staff Ḥusayn Shākīr confirmed that a column of Revolutionary Guards had been ambushed near the Iraqi border by Kurds and that heavy casualties had been inflicted on the Guards. [NYT]
- Oct. 11: *The New York Times* reported that guerrillas supported by Kurdish villagers had destroyed a frontier post at Hanigarmeleh during the night after government defenders had left the post. [NYT]
- Oct. 12: Guerrillas attacked the police department in Mahabad and killed the police chief. [NYT]
- Oct. 14: The Council of Experts approved a constitutional clause naming the Āyat Allāh head of the armed forces and giving him power of veto over the election of a president. [NYT]
- A West German businessman was assassinated in Tehran. The Furqān Fighters claimed responsibility. [NYT]
- Oct. 16: *The Pars News Agency* reported that Iran had suspended oil exports to the Philippines because of the persecution of Muslims there. [MEES]
- Oct. 20: Government forces battled Kurdish rebels in Mahabad. It was reported that much of the city was in the control of the Kurds. [NYT]
- Oct. 21: Fighting between Kurdish guerrillas and government troops took place in Mahabad. [NYT]
- Oct. 22: Kurdish forces and government troops traded fire in Mahabad. [NYT]
- The deposed Shāh was flown secretly to New York from Mexico for medical tests. [NYT]
- Oct. 25: Surgeons removed the Shāh's gall bladder and took tissue samples to test for cancer. [NYT]
- Oct. 26: Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators marched in Tehran in support of the Āyat Allāh. [NYT]
- The New York Times* reported that medical tests showed that the Shāh had "advanced lymph node cancer." [NYT]
- Oct. 29: Health Minister Kāzīm Sāmī resigned his post. [MEED]
- Oct. 30: Hundreds of students demonstrated in Tehran for better high school facilities. Some of the protestors were attacked by opponents of the demonstrations. [NYT]
- Oct. 31: *The New York Times* reported that Kurdish guerrillas had retaken control of Mahabad. [NYT]
- Nov. 1: *Tehran Domestic Service* broadcast a statement by the Āyat Allāh in which he urged students to "expand with all their might their attacks against the United States and Israel" in order to force the return of the Shāh. [FBIS]
- Demonstrators marched on the US Embassy in Tehran. [NYT]
- Gunmen shot and wounded Āyat Allāh Qāzī Ṭabāṭabā'ī. [NYT]

*Nov. 2:* Interior Minister Hāshim Šabāghīyān and 2 other officials arrived in Mahabad and announced that the government was prepared to give some form of self-rule to the Kurdish provinces. [NYT]

*Tehran Domestic Service* reported that Āyat Allāh Tabārabāī had died of his wounds. [FBIS]

US National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski met in Algiers with Bāzargān. [NYT]

*Nov. 4:* Armed students protesting the presence of the Shāh in the US stormed the US Embassy in Tehran and took 100 hostages, including Americans, Pakistanis, South Koreans and Bengladeshis. [NYT]

A spokesman for the Āyat Allāh said in Qum that the occupation of the Embassy had the personal support of the Āyat Allāh. [NYT]

The US State Department said that the government of Iran had given "assurances" that it would try to resolve the situation at the Embassy. [NYT]

Seven Iranian students chained themselves to railings at the Statue of Liberty in New York City and demanded that the Shāh be returned to Iran. [NYT]

*Nov. 5:* The Iranian government cancelled the 1957 Treaty of Military Coöperation with the US. [NYT]

The Iranian government cancelled the 1921 Treaty with the USSR which granted the right of military intervention in Iran. [NYT]

Students occupied the British Embassy for 5 hours. [NYT]

Followers of the Āyat Allāh seized the US consulates in Tabriz and Shiraz. No Americans were at either building. [NYT]

The US rejected Iranian demands that the Shāh be returned to Iran. [NYT]

*Nov. 6:* Physicians treating the Shāh discovered a gallstone and indicated the necessity for further surgery and radiation treatment for a neck tumor. [NYT]

Carter met with Vance, Brzezinski and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown in a specially convened session of the National Security Council. [NYT]

Bāzargān's provisional revolutionary government was dissolved and the Āyat Allāh ordered the Revolutionary Council to take over the government. [NYT]

The Revolutionary Council issued a request that all Ministers continue in their posts until "a final resolution of their position" could be reached. [FBIS]

Hasan Raḥmān, spokesman for the PLO UN delegation, announced a PLO mission to Tehran to seek the release of the American hostages. [NYT]

Armed attackers fired on the Kermanshah Governor General's office. Sixteen of the attackers were killed and 32 injured. [FBIS]

*Nov. 7:* Former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark and William G. Miller of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence met with Carter and Vance at the White House, then departed on a special mission to meet with Iranian authorities. [NYT]

PLO officials were quoted as saying that a two-member delegation headed by an al-Farḡ group had arrived in Tehran. A State Department official indicated that the Palestinians had not reached Tehran,

nor were Iranians "interested" in a dialogue with them. [NYT]

The Office of the Prosecutor General issued a warning to the Shāh to "turn himself in" to the Islamic Revolution Court in Tehran. [FBIS]

A village in Abadan was attacked by rocket fire from the Iraqi border region. A hospital and several houses were destroyed. No casualties were reported. [FBIS]

National Iranian radio and television headquarters in Urumiyeh were attacked by local "anti-revolutionaries." No damages were reported. [FBIS]

Residents of Mahabad staged large demonstrations in support of the US Embassy takeover. [FBIS]

The Āyat Allāh granted amnesty to all criminals sentenced to less than 2 years in prison. [FBIS]

The Āyat Allāh in a radio broadcast forbade members of the Revolutionary Council and other responsible officials to meet with President Carter's special envoys. [FBIS]

The Central Committee of the Tudeh Party announced its full support for the Revolutionary Council's assumption of power in Iran. [FBIS]

*Nov. 8:* The US authorized Clark to meet with the PLO. US State Department spokesman Hodding Carter, III, stated that it would be "a highly responsible action in a situation in which they [the PLO] may have some influence. We would welcome such assistance." [NYT]

Clark held talks in Istanbul with a PLO official. [JP]

Iranian authorities agreed, then the Āyat Allāh declined, to meet with the US special delegation headed by Clark, saying that the US Embassy was "an espionage place against us . . . thus my meeting with the envoys is by no means possible." [NYT]

A special mission from the Āyat Allāh arrived in Sardasht for talks with local representatives. A crowd of 5,000 staged demonstrations in support of the Āyat Allāh's policies. [FBIS]

The Shāh offered to leave the US to ease the crisis. He was dissuaded by his physicians. [NYT]

US representatives to the UN decided to postpone the formal request for convening the UN Security Council on the Iranian crisis. [NYT]

*The New York Times* quoted Abū Walid, the PLO official dispatched to Iran, as saying that he would not mediate the crisis because "the situation is only related to the revolution of Iran." [NYT]

Acting Apostolic Nuncio to Iran Monsignor Annibale Bugnini delivered a message from Pope John Paul II to the Āyat Allāh, asking him to insure the safety of the hostages. [NYT]

Government spokesman Šādiq Tabārabāī was quoted as saying that documents found in the US Embassy proved that the US had a hand in the Kurdistan crisis. [FBIS]

An automobile in Sanandaj was hit by rifle fire; two passengers died. Later, 15,000 residents marched to protest the Corps of the Revolutionary Guards' participation in the killing. [FBIS]

Muḥammad 'Alī Mawlavī, chairman of Iran's cen-

tral bank, resigned his post, citing medical reasons. [FBIS]

Representatives of the Red Lion and Sun Society and the International Red Cross visited the hostages and reported them all to be in good health and "only suffering from mental worries." [FBIS]

Students occupying the US Embassy displayed photographs to show that their hostages were unharmed. [FBIS]

The Revolutionary Council commissioned the Ministry of the Interior to prepare the preliminary stages of the referendum on the draft constitution. [FBIS]

Nov. 9: NIOC notified some three dozen oil companies of a 5% supply cut retroactive to October 1, citing "operational difficulties." [NYT]

The US halted the shipment of \$300 million in military spare parts purchased by Iran. [NYT]

White House press spokesman Jody Powell issued a statement by Carter asking Americans to suppress their outrage, anger and frustration and to support Washington's efforts to obtain the release of the hostages through "quiet diplomacy." [NYT]

Nine hundred Iranian students exchanged "epithets and obscenities" with several thousand Americans chanting "deportation" in a demonstration in downtown Washington. Two Americans were arrested. [NYT]

The UN Security Council met for two hours at the request of the US and issued a unanimous plea for the release "without delay" of the hostages. No concrete measures were taken. [NYT]

One male, and two female non-American hostages were released from the US Embassy. [FBIS]

The Āyat Allāh met with the Revolutionary Council. Abū al-Hasan Banī Šadr was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. [FBIS]

An Iranian was arrested and detained as a hostage at the US Embassy, where he was employed as a chauffeur. [FBIS]

Nov. 10: The Āyat Allāh refused to accept the 10 day old resignation of Madānī. [FBIS]

The Council for the Final Study of the Constitution ratified 4 more articles of the Constitution. [FBIS]

Four foreign diplomats visited the occupied US Embassy and reported the hostages to be "in good health." [FBIS]

It was reported that 33 of the 67 hostages had signed a petition requesting the Šāh's extradition. [FBIS]

The Āyat Allāh cancelled all domestic appointments for a period of one week. [FBIS]

Āyat Allāh Beheshtī announced that government ministries would not be merged, and that Bāzargān would remain a member of the Revolutionary Council. [FBIS]

UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim informed Iran's *chargé d'affaires* at the UN that he was ready to help "in any appropriate way" to end the detainment of the hostages. [NYT]

Carter instructed US Attorney General Benjamin

Civiletti to begin deportation proceedings against Iranian students illegally residing in the US. Concurrently, the US Justice Department's Immigration and Naturalization Service was asked "to identify any Iranian students in the US who were not in compliance with the terms of their entry visas." [NYT]

Banī Šadr assumed the post of Foreign Minister. In his first official act, he declared support for the US Embassy seizure and demanded the return of the Šāh whom he called "the greatest criminal history has seen." [NYT]

Banī Šadr met with US *chargé d'affaires* L. Bruce Laingen, under guard in Tehran since the US Embassy takeover. [NYT]

Banī Šadr met with PLO officials Abū Walid and Hānī al-Hasan upon the latter's return from a conference with PLO head Yāsir 'Arafāt in Beirut. [NYT]

Citizens of Ahvaz occupied an Iraqi school, then released it to the Corps of Revolutionary Guards. [FBIS]

The *Pars News Agency* reported several hours of shootings at the garrison in Ahvaz. [FBIS]

Nov. 11: Thirty Americans staged an hour-long peaceful protest outside Cornell Medical Center where the Šāh was recuperating. [NYT]

A US Justice Department official reported that deportation proceedings against Iranians residing in the US illegally would not begin until December. [NYT]

The Āyat Allāh delivered a speech in Tehran in which he upbraided Pope John Paul II, called Carter "an enemy of humanity," and pointed to the futility of US economic or military coercion. [NYT]

Iranian students chanting "Death to Americans," and "Long Live Khumaynī" broke into the US Embassy grounds in Beirut, lowered the American flag and burned it, before being dispersed by the Arab League peacekeeping force. [NYT]

It was reported that Iranian newspapers had published documents revealing joint US-British plots in Iran. [FBIS]

The Federal Republic of Germany asked all German citizens to leave Iran. [FBIS]

The Council for the Final Study of the Constitution ratified 9 more articles of the Constitution. [FBIS]

Members of a special government delegation concluded the first stage of talks on Kurdistan. [FBIS]

Nov. 12: An Iranian student was arrested and held for questioning in the shooting death of a 16 year old youth in Denver, Colo. [NYT]

The US House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct rebutted charges by an Iranian Embassy spokesman that members of Congress accepted payments from the Šāh's government. [NYT]

Palestinian sources indicated that the special PLO envoy left Tehran for Beirut, abandoning his efforts to obtain the release of the hostages. [NYT]

Banī Šadr "instructed" foreign diplomats in Iran to communicate to the US their governments' support for the Šāh's extradition. [NYT]

Carter announced an immediate suspension of oil imports from Iran at 2:00 pm (EST), declaring that

the US would not yield to "unacceptable demands" by Iranians. Iranian oil represents approximately 4% of US consumption. [NYT]

Iranian Oil Minister 'Alī Akbar Mu'īnfar announced on Iranian state television at 11:40 p.m. (3:10 p.m. EST) the cut off of oil exports to the US. [NYT]

*The Pars News Agency* reported offensives by Kurdish rebels in the Kurdistan region towns of Sanandaj, Javanrud, Nousud and Saqqiz. There were numerous casualties, including two Kurds. [NYT]

Unemployed workers and their families peacefully occupied the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and conducted talks with the Deputy Minister. [FBIS]

Nov. 13: Banī Šadr met with the Under-Secretaries of Economic Affairs and Finance. [FBIS]

A US Defense Department spokesman disclosed that American and British warships had begun previously scheduled maneuvers in the Arabian Sea. [NYT]

Jamāl Shamirāni, Iranian delegate to the UN, met with Kurt Waldheim and conveyed a letter from Banī Šadr, requesting the convening of the UN Security Council and an international enquiry into the Shāh's rule of Iran. Iran's previous demand for the Shāh's return before the release of the hostages was unconditional. [NYT]

Banī Šadr, in a letter to Waldheim, outlined Iran's new conditions for the release of the hostages:

1. The US must "announce publicly and clearly" that the Shāh "is a criminal."

2. The Shāh's property in the US must be returned to Iran.

3. An international investigating team, chosen by Iran, would go to the US, interrogate the Shāh, conduct an investigation and determine the charges against him.

4. The Shāh would be tried before an Iranian court, with international observers present.

The letter did not contain a direct demand for the return of the Shāh. [NYT]

Banī Šadr announced that Iran would establish diplomatic relations with Libya. [FBIS]

Physicians treating the Shāh at Cornell Medical Center reported that he could be discharged within one week without immediate risk to his life. [NYT]

Nov. 14: Iran announced its intention to withdraw all funds from American banks, citing the Chase Manhattan Bank and banking interests' responsibility for the Shāh's admission to the US. [NYT]

Carter ordered a freeze on official Iranian bank deposits and other assets in the US, estimated by banking experts at \$6 billion. [NYT]

An earthquake registering 6.7 on the Richter scale shook northeastern Iran near Meshed, killing at least 248 persons in 14 villages. [NYT]

Clark was recalled to Washington from Istanbul after an unsuccessful attempt to meet with Iranian authorities in Tehran. [NYT]

Carter asked major Western nations to support the

US in the Iranian crisis by not expanding oil imports from Iran. West Germany, France and Italy "responded favorably." [NYT]

The US moved to block Iran's attempt to convene a UN Security Council session until after the release of the hostages. [NYT]

Iran closed its airspace and territorial waters to US aircraft and shipping. [FBIS]

Nov. 15: The Soviet Embassy in Tehran announced that the Soviet Union supported Iran's request for a meeting of the UN Security Council. [FBIS]

Members of Iran's Revolutionary Council "hinted" to Western reporters that women and black hostages would be released. Students holding the US Embassy "strongly rejected" that possibility. [NYT]

The Japanese Finance Ministry announced that Iran's central banks had transferred \$100 million from Tokyo's American banks to London's Japanese banks before Carter's freeze order. [NYT]

Iran informed US oil companies that it would not sell them oil, regardless of the destination of the shipments. [NYT]

The US issued modifications to Carter's order freezing Iranian assets. They are: 1. Food shipments to Iran will not be halted by an unavailability of funds. 2. Foreign branches of US banks may use Iranian deposits to pay off matured or defaulted loans made to Iranian government groups. [NYT]

The Chase Manhattan Bank and Bankers Trust Company announced the seizure of Iranian deposits to "repay" loans extended earlier to Iran. This action followed Citibank's "offset" policy announced on the 14th. [NYT]

Representatives of the Council of Experts approved the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, consisting of 12 chapters, 175 articles and a preface. The Constitution was then presented to the Ayat Allāh. [FBIS]

Dr. Hasan Habībī, Minister of Culture and Higher Education and spokesman for the Revolutionary Council, announced the formation of a new Cabinet:

Mahmūd Ahmādzādah: *Industries & Mines*

Abū al-Hasan Banī Šadr: *Finance & Economic Affairs and Supervisor of the Foreign Ministry*

Muṣṭafā Shamrān: *National Defense*

Hasan Habībī: *Culture & Higher Education*

Mūsā Zargār: *Health*

'Izzat Allāh Sahābī: *Planning and Budget*

'Abbās Shaybāni: *Supervisor of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development*

Riżā Šadr: *Commerce*

Muḥammad Yūsaf Taherī-Qazvinī: *Roads and Transport*

Hasan 'Abbāsī: *Energy*

Daryūsh Faruhār: *State*

'Alī Akbar Mu'īnfar: *Oil*

Nāšir Minatchī: *National Guidance*

Hashamī Rafsanjāni: *Supervisor of Interior Ministry*

Muḥsin Yahyavi: *Acting Minister of Housing and Urban Developments* [FBIS]

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