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**OUTSIDE INFLUENCES AND RULING IRAN: THE EMERGENCE
OF THE RIFT WITH THE WEST**

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Alana Campbell

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ABSTRACT

Since the establishment of a united, Shi'a Persian empire in 1501 through to the overthrow of the last Shah in the Islamic Revolution, Iran and the Iranian leadership has been subject to significant international influences. These influences took the form of outside powers working to gain a position of strategic advantage within Iran to satisfy their own strategic interests. The impact these outside influences had on the last Shah, and on powerful domestic groups within Iran, led to discontent and contributed to the eventual overthrow of the Shah in the Islamic Revolution. The revolution itself had an impact on domestic groups, the domestic political structure, and on Iran's position within the international community. The pattern of outside influences on rulers and the ruled saw radical change in Iran's domestic political structure, and an international stance resulting in a rift with the west.

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