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

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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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INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Republic of Iran came to being through the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The Islamic Republic has a poor relationship with the West, and particularly with America and her allies, whereas Iran under the last Shah's rule was a forward looking, modernising, Westernised ally of the West. In the thirty years since the revolution the Islamic Republic has experienced international isolation, sanctions, and pressure to conform to the wishes of the international community. Outside influence on Iran is not a new occurrence, and it is primarily the West that has applied pressure to get the Islamic Republic to conform to the standards of behaviour the West sees as appropriate. Somewhat ironically it was the same international pressure and influence that contributed to the Islamic Revolution. The subsequent rejection of international pressure has assisted in strengthening Islamic fundamentalism in Iran, and has also encouraged the contemporary Iranian leadership to resist international influence and maintain its hard line approach to politics.

This thesis follows the pattern of external and domestic pressures that have been applied to Iran, and have helped shape the rulers of Iran over a long period of time. Through different eras of Iranian leadership Shahs have had their own focus for Iran, and were challenged to achieve their vision while responding to external pressure as large powers worked to gain influence in Iran in working to achieve their own strategic goals. Where the Shah's

decisions impacted on the populous, influential domestic groups presented further challenges to the Shah's rule. The external and domestic influences shaped the rulers in Iran over a long period of time, and have led to the current relationship Iran has with the West.

Since its establishment as a united empire Iran has been independent but has had strong international influences impacting on its domestic rule. This pattern of influence from outside and from within remained constant from the Safavid Dynasty to the Pahlavi Dynasty and had a strong influence on the development of mass discontent that led to the Islamic Revolution. Iran became a Shi'a nation and threats from neighbouring states prompted modernisation and military development to maintain a united empire in the face of a strong Ottoman Empire and growing European powers. A Russian invasion saw territory lost under the Qajar dynasty, and domestic pressure from the religious class, the Ulema, that resulted in a second Perso-Russian war which firmly established Russia as a pressure threat. Iran became an important strategic area given the expansionist and competing goals of Russia and Britain, which both used Iran to prevent the expansion of the other in the region. As Britain and Russia reached their own agreement on how Iran should be divided between them, Iran became somewhat of a pawn to the powers' desires. Russia and Britain continued to compete with each other for influence in Iran until Reza Shah's desire for a strong, independent and unified state that could not be abused by foreign powers suited the

strategic goals of Britain and Russia, who saw a strong Iran as means to prevent the spread of either power in the region.

Dealing with the influences, pressures and expectations of the outside powers, the various Shahs were also managing the domestic influences that shaped policies and influenced the monarch's behaviour. The key power groups within Iran were the tribes, the landowners, the Ulema and Bazaaris who were each used by the Shahs to gain or retain power, or alternatively repressed to reduce their influence on domestic politics. Tribes were necessary to gain and maintain power until the rule of Reza Shah, who developed an effective national army that was able to suppress tribal power. The Ulema developed as a powerful and influential group whose role in the state was to ensure the government structure and laws complied with Islamic law. They were closely tied with the Bazaaris who were the key group for economic activity within Iran, controlling food supply, banking, trade and the urban workforce. The strength of these domestic groups and their ability to influence the Shah was demonstrated in some key events that saw uprisings apply pressure to the particular Shah to make changes to policy.

The protests and uprisings were manifestations in part of anti-foreign sentiment and established the foundation for organised domestic dissent that brought about political changes. The Shah's political decisions to appease the international powers had significant impact within Iran on the domestic

groups whose discontent was directed at the Shah, not the outside influences. As the attempts to accommodate the outside powers impacted on Iranian society, the Shah tried to make changes acceptable to different audiences; outside and inside the country.

As Reza Shah came to power in 1921, he worked to reduce the power of the domestic groups through a modernisation programme particularly focused on Westernising society in order to turn Iran into one of the forward, modern, developed powers of the world. The Shah looked to other countries in an attempt to break the dominance of Britain and Russia. This saw America become involved through oil, and other European countries as well through trade and military contracts. The Second World War saw Iran occupied by Britain and Russia, and Reza Shah abdicated in favour of his son, who would be the last Shah of Iran. The war was the first large scale involvement of America, which was seen by the Shah and the populace as a balance to the dominance of Britain and Russia. America became the self appointed protector of Iran's independence, and became heavily involved in the running of the country, which it saw as strategically important to prevent the spread of communism. The movement to nationalise the oil industry caused an international dispute that resulted in an imposed Anglo-American coup that reinstated a fleeing Mohammad Reza Shah, and sealed American involvement in Iranian politics.

The last Shah requested American assistance with government finances after the Second World War. Involvement of the West increased in the oil crisis of 1951-53 as Mohammad Mossadiq emerged as a spokesman for the people of Iran expressing discontent toward monarchs in Iran's history that had allowed foreign domination to occur. An international boycott of Iranian oil put pressure on the Shah, as Britain, the Soviet Union and America jostled over the control of Iran's oil resource, and to protect their strategic interests.

The first Pahlavi, Reza Shah had alienated almost every sector of society and in an age of nationalism and growing anti-imperialism he had been restored to power as the direct result of foreign forces overthrowing Iranian's advocate of nationalism. The coup became a turning point for domestic repression as the Shah sided with America to achieve Westernisation of Iran at the expense of domestic freedoms. As America had no traditional territorial claim on Iran, unlike Britain and Russia, it was seen by the Shah as the power that could be trusted the most. Increasing American involvement in Iran along with forced Westernisation and domestic repression developed resentment and led to the spread of discontent internally in Iran.

The pattern of occupation and foreign influence to achieve strategic goals was firmly established by the time the last Shah was crowned. Having been forced to modernise along Western lines, certain domestic groups within

Iran were unhappy about the changes that were being made and the lack of influence they had over it. Inheriting Iran's leadership during a period of foreign occupation saw initial instability before the Shah gained strength through establishing and consolidating the armed forces, and removing power from the traditional domestic power bases. This was done through the White Revolution which intensified existing antagonism, and created new animosities toward the monarchy. As Westernisation and repression were the key aspects of this period, domestic unrest grew and removing power from domestic groups fanned discontent. During the White Revolution, growing discontent saw the clerics organise and rally mass support claiming that changes to Iranian society were designed to enslave the people. This saw the collaboration of secular and religious forces against the monarchy.

Harsh domestic repression saw the development of underground resistance groups but the clergy had the firmest grip on the populace as religion was the area the Shah couldn't control. Opposition to the Shah portrayed him as a puppet of America, though the reality was that no-one could influence his behaviour internally as he had total authority. Through protest, and coordinated cycles of uprisings on a religious framework, the ability to control the masses through repression was lost by the Shah, who then fled Iran. This saw Ayatollah Khomeini emerge as a new leader in an unstable country.

The domestic and international influences of the revolution have seen Iran transformed from America's close ally to an Islamic Republic that threatens the regional and international interests of America and other powers. The domestic political changes saw the establishment of a political system controlled by the few religious leaders, using Shari'a law. Khomeini created an Islamic government of which he was the supreme leader, with powers to overrule any aspect of governance as he saw fit. The taking of American hostages and the Iran-Iraq war saw his rule sealing Iran's position as a troublesome nation within the international community. In the post-revolution idealism, he led Iran through principled religious concepts, rather than planned political decisions. He wanted to spread the revolution believing that an Islamic state should not behave like the Western model of a nation, bound by borders, as an Islamic nation needed no boundaries. This, of course, posed an obvious dangerous threat to neighbouring states. The historic Islamic ideal of unity in the global sense became the vision for the Islamic Republic.

A cultural revolution to reject Westernisation and embrace Islamic ideals was launched and Iranian society underwent repression through strict Islamism. Khomeini's rule saw the Islamic Republic's international relations change as the international situation altered and many countries sided against Iran. Initially post-revolution relations were maintained with

Western Europe, the Soviet Union, China and Japan, as the resistance to all Western culture was maintained. The death of Khomeini in 1989 and the end of the Iran-Iraq war saw changes to Iran's domestic policies, but did not have a significant impact on the antagonistic posture Iran had settled into. As the then President became Supreme Leader, the role of President became important in shaping Iran's relations with the West.

Successive Iranian Presidents Rafsanjani and Khatami had different approaches to Iranian politics with an increase in Westernisation and some relaxation of the fundamentalist approach of Khomeini's rule. This resulted in limited rapprochement with America, which fluctuated through the various American Presidents, and the further wars fought in the Gulf. Iranian opposition to the Arab-Israeli peace process, nuclear goals, anti-Israel sentiments and disruption to international stability through sponsorship of terrorist groups saw Iran a long way off from good international relations. Each of these key factors posed a challenge for each American President, which became more acute after 2001.

The status of the Islamic Republic in the international community deteriorated after the September 11 terrorist attacks on American in 2001, as Iran was designated as a member of the 'axis of evil' by the US President George W. Bush. This indicated a clear policy change from America, which was matched with the election of President Ahmadinejad in 2005. The

Islamic Republics' pro-nuclear, anti-Israel and anti-American rhetoric significantly increased, which presented challenges within the international community, and isolated Iran as a rogue state. The domestic repression also increased as Ahmadinejad based his domestic politics on fundamentalist Islam.

Anti-Western and specifically anti-American sentiments run strongly through Iranian leadership today, and this thesis looks in detail back to the origins of this sentiment, how it supported the Islamic Revolution, and has influenced the post revolution politics. From a long term pattern of outside influences on the Shah developed mass discontent, and resentment toward that external influence. Chapter One will look at the outside influences on the rule of the Shah from the establishment of a Iran as a united country in the 15th century to the last Shah. Chapter Two will address the Shahs' rule in relation to powerful domestic groups and international influences, and how changes in the international situation impacted on Iran's domestic politics and the decisions of the Shah. Chapter Three covers the last Shah and the impact of Westernisation within Iran and how this contributed to the Iranian Revolution in the period from the White Revolution to 1979. Chapter Four looks at the impact the revolution had on the domestic situation of Iran, the changes to government and the political stance of the new leadership. Chapter Five addresses the impact the Iranian revolution

has had on Iran's international position from the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to the current leadership.

CHAPTER ONE. OUTSIDE INFLUENCES ON THE RULE OF THE SHAH.

Iran's history is long and filled with periods of occupation, revolt, overthrow of power, and both outside and domestic political pressure. Iran's relative strength or weakness vis-à-vis the great powers has made it susceptible and on occasion, impervious to outside influence. Major international events have influenced Iran's politics, rulers, security, and internal affairs, and the ways in which various Shahs have ruled Iran have often been directly related to other countries' own strategic goals. This can be seen from the creation of Iran as a centralised state in 1501, with challenges from the Ottoman Empire, Russia and Afghanistan. Wars and treaties altered Iran's borders, and Britain's and Russia's expanding empires influenced the Shah's domestic politics. The 1907 Anglo-Russian Treaty saw America introduced into Iran. The two world wars, and the interwar years saw continuous international influence within Iran from Britain, Russia, America, France, Italy and Germany. Through Iran, great powers have tried to expand their own or contain each others' influence, which has significantly affected the character of each Shah's rule of Iran.

Before being named Iran in 1925, the country was called Persia by the West, but the indigenous people of the area had used Iran since pre-Islamic times. When Reza Shah, the first Pahlavi Shah, asked foreigners to use the name "Iran" he was not requesting a change, but the use of the indigenous name. "Persia" was primarily a name for Iran's southwest, and "Persian" the name

of Iran's main language.¹ After a long period of occupation by the Arabs in the Middle Ages, the Persian Empire was restored by the Safavid Dynasty in 1501, which ruled until 1722. The 16th and early 17th centuries were the glory days of the Safavids during which time the dynasty was driven towards creating a powerful Persian² state following the Arab occupation. The Safavids turned Persia into a powerful and highly centralised state for the first time since the Arab occupation ended.³

The first Safavid Shah, Ismail I, declared Persia to be an Islamic empire with Shi'a Islam as its official and compulsory religion. This raised some issues for the surrounding states, and from this early point, Persia was faced with challenges from the regional and international powers with interest in the area. Shi'a was the minority Islamic following of the time, with some two thirds of the population in the capital Tabriz being Sunni Muslims. The risk of this announcement by the Shah was high, given that the Shah had only one sixth of the potential military power available to him, compared to that available to the political opposition.⁴ Shi'a Islam was enforced by dissolving Sunni organisations and executing those who refused to accept Shi'ism. To create a Shi'a state, Shah Ismail imported Shi'a Ulema (religious scholars) and legal experts from Arab lands.⁵ These men filled

¹ Keddie, Nikki. 'Iran: Understanding the Enigma: A Historians View', *MERIA: Middle East Review of International Affairs Journal*, Volume 2, No. 3, September 1998.

² Persia and Iran will be used interchangeably depending on the more appropriate term in historical context, name used in treaties, wars, or disputes.

³ Kamali, Masoud. *Multiple Modernities, Civil Society and Islam, The case of Turkey and Iran*, Liverpool University Press, United Kingdom, 2006.p.81.

⁴ Savory, Roger, *Iran under the Safavids*, Cambridge University Press, Great Britain, 1980.p.29; Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East, A History*, Oxford University Press Inc, Oxford, 2005.p.26.

⁵ Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East, Third Edition*, Westview Press, Colorado, America, 2004. p.52.

official positions at the top of the religious hierarchy and established the foundation for the Shi'a Ulema class. The Ulema was to become a very important and influential group within Iranian society having particular influence in both domestic and international affairs. The benefits of making Persia a Shi'a state were two fold; the new religious ideology was a driving power for the new state giving it a territorial and political identity, and it clearly differentiated the Safavid state of Persia from the Sunni Ottoman Empire, which was the major power across the Islamic world at the time.⁶ The success of promulgating Shi'ism as the state religion through fear, and force when necessary, created an awareness of national unity and created a strong, centralised government.

The success of the Safavids and the emergence of Persia as a powerful Shi'a state presented a threat to the Ottoman Empire and resulted in Safavid Persia's first wars against a foreign power. The Ottomans were motivated to expand their empire and the rise of the united, Shi'a state threatened the Ottomans claim to the caliphate⁷ and the leadership of the Muslims. From 1514 there began a series of Ottoman advances, occupations, withdrawals and treaties which shaped the political borders of Persia. Treaties were made and broken between the Ottomans and the Safavids, and the border changed frequently with various occupations and withdrawals through successive rulers on both sides. Persia had limited defence capabilities during this period and the Safavid wars prompted modernisation of military capability. Shah Abbas the Great (reigning from 1587 to 1629) recognised

⁶ Savory.p.30.

⁷ Successor of Mohammad, vested with power in all matters relating to religion and civil policy.

Persia's weaknesses and ceded some land to the Ottomans in a 1590 treaty to end the disputes. He then conducted a reform of bureaucracy including the military, and Persia's style of warfare, importing equipment from Europe, and engineers from Spain to build a modern military. He moved the capital to Isfahan in central Persia and in 1603 was powerful enough to break his 1590 treaty with the Ottomans with military success, and continue with successes against Russian and Portuguese occupations of Persian territory.⁸

The military and bureaucratic reforms implemented by the Safavids had a lasting impact within Persia, and allowed for continuing modernisation and reforms for the state. They unified Persia and created a powerful empire alongside the Ottoman Empire and expanding European powers. After gaining control over the domestic forces through raising his own army, Shah Abbas focused on developing Isfahan and it became a cultural and commercial centre. He changed land ownership from tribal to crown land in many areas to increase crown revenues for funding developments. However the Army was allowed to decline in the peace of the 17th century, which presented an opportunity for an Afghan occupation of Isfahan in 1722. This prompted Russia and the Ottomans to once again invade Persia, which effectively ended the Safavid reign.

There followed a fourteen year period during which the Safavid dynasty existed only nominally. Afghans had a hold on most of Persia and were the

⁸ Kamali.p.83.

rulers for seven years although Safavid representatives maintained an existence with little real power. Russia invaded the Caspian Coast in 1772 and the Ottomans invaded north western Iran in 1726.⁹ The defeats by the Afghans, Russians and the Ottomans prompted tribal leaders to raise new military forces to fight for the return of Persian territories. Of note during this period, Nader Khan raised an army, forced the Russian withdrawal, and pushed the Ottomans behind Persian borders. He restored the Safavid monarchy briefly between 1729 and 1736 before crowning himself Nader Shah. An Indian Mughal army was successfully defeated in 1738-39, and Persia was once again a powerful state until Nader Shah's death in 1747, at which point Persia disintegrated into internal wars and conflicts for almost fifty years.¹⁰ The two rival factions were the Zands in the South of Persia, and the Qajars in the North.

By 1794, Aqa Mohammad Khan (leader of the Qajar tribe) had established a new military and defeated Russian occupation in an effort to restore Safavid territories. Russia declared war on Persia and the war that followed coincided with the deaths of Catherine the Great of Russia and Aqa Muhammad Kahn. The Persian empire began to fall apart once again and two further wars with Russia halted any development and modernisation of Persia.¹¹ Fath Ali Shah succeeded Aqua Kahn in 1797, faced with the challenge of domestic and international issues. Domestically the Shi'a Ulema were working to gain political recognition in Persian society while internationally Russia was conducting an expansionist campaign to increase

⁹ Savory.p.250.

¹⁰ Kamali.p.83.

¹¹ Kamali.p.84.

its territory. The first Perso-Russian war ended with the defeat of Persia and the Treaty of Gulistan (1813) negotiated with British mediation. This treaty ceded eight of Persia's Caucasian provinces to Russia, and had diplomatic and political guidelines that allowed only Russian warships to access the Caspian Sea.¹² Article five was the most damaging provision, as Russia recognised Abbas Mirza as heir to the throne, promising assistance if accession was disputed. This allowed Russia direct access to Persia's internal affairs.¹³

Persia's resources were low after the war, which was seen as an opportunity by the Afghans and Turks to gain some territory resulting in war on the Turkish frontier from 1821-23. The second Perso-Russian War began in 1826 as a result of pressure on the Shah by the Ulema.¹⁴ This war resulted in Persia's defeat and the Treaty of Turkamanchay, 1828 which increased the territory lost to Russia in the Treaty of Gulistan, and established conditions for the treatment of Russian citizens within Persia. This treaty served Persia as a reminder of the consequences of military weakness and established a strong position for Russia not too far from British India.¹⁵

Crown Prince Abbas Mirza introduced a modernisation programme reforming the army to combat the Russian threat. As the governor of Azerbaijan he introduced a Western-styled military trained by British and

¹² Kazemzadeh, F. 'Iranian Relations with Russia and the Soviet Union, to 1921', in Avery, P. Hambly, G. and Melville, C (Eds) *Cambridge History of Iran, Vol 7, From Nader Shah to the Islamic Republic*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991.p.334.

¹³ Kazemzadeh, Firuz. *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864 – 1914, A Study in Imperialism*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1968.p.5.

¹⁴ Kamali.p.85.

¹⁵ Kazemzadeh. F, In Avery, Hambly and Melville.p.338.

French instructors. The Ulema protested it was un-Islamic. The British presence in India was being felt in Persia and Afghanistan and Persia was seen as a buffer state by Britain against Russian encroachment.¹⁶ Abbas Mirza died in 1833 before he took the throne, and as mutual British and Russian ambitions in the region protected Persia from either country dominating, the development of Western trained armed forces was sporadic. Persians realised their security was better protected playing the powers off against each other, rather than pursuing expensive military reforms.¹⁷ In 1834 Muhammad Mirza (Fath Ali Shah's son) became Shah, backed by both Britain and Russia, but opposed by the Ulema due to his Sufi¹⁸ leanings. Economic concessions benefitted Britain and Russia but hurt the Bazaaris who had close ties with the Ulema.¹⁹ Maintaining Persia's independence from the great powers was the Shah's priority over appeasing the domestic groups.

In 1848 Nasir al-Din²⁰ seized political power with the help of Amir Kabir who became the Chief Minister of Persia. Nasir al-Din inherited a weak Persia with considerable problems. There were rebellions in major cities, revolts, the Babiyeh²¹ movement in the north, rival groups claiming kingship and ministerial posts, dissolution of state bureaucracy and the army, and bankruptcy.²² Amir Kabir concentrated on creating a strong state

¹⁶ Martin Vanessa. *Creating an Islamic State, Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran*, I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, London, 2003.p.1.

¹⁷ Martin.p.2, Kamali.p.144.

¹⁸ Islamic mystic. (Martin, glossary.p.252.)

¹⁹ Hiro.p.16.

²⁰ Also spelled Nasser ad-Din, or Nasser al-Din.

²¹ Religious movement within a branch of Shi'a

²² Kamali.p.88.

to bring order to Persia and create a stable base for social and economic reforms. New economic reforms introduced favoured Persian traders over British and Russian traders and were reinforced with the removal of state officials who supported British and Russian interests. There was opposition to Amir and his policies by Britain and Russia and their traditional allies which hindered attempts by other Persian government officials to reform Persia. The foreign policy of this period was based on continued concessions to foreign companies. The government got into financial and political troubles which resulted in the need to borrow money which caused massive popular discontent.²³ The net result was that the difficulties could not be overcome.

In 1879, impressed by the Cossacks in Russia, Shah Nasir al-Din founded the Cossack Brigade, headed by Russian Officers. Working directly to the Shah, the Cossacks provided the only organised military force for a long time in Persia upon which the Shah could depend for maintaining power. Importantly, it presented an avenue for Russia to extend its influence in Persia against Persian movements that threatened the Russian Government.²⁴

The Shah was getting Persia into debt, taking two large loans from Russia. These loans came with caveats, the first was the requirement to pay off debts with Britain, and stated that Persia was not to incur any other debts without Russian consent. The second caveat specified major economic

²³ Martin.p.6.

²⁴ Kamali.p.144. Martin.p.2.

concessions, including a customs treaty signed in 1902, giving Russian goods lower rates. The British were alarmed at the growth of the Russian influence, and gave money and support to leading Ulema in both Tehran and the shrine cities of Iraq to raise activity against the Russians.²⁵ Domestic dissent grew into revolutionary action which was strengthened by the financial and political trouble. The international situation was exacerbated by the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 which caused the Russian economy to collapse, and 1904 was seen as the opportunity to overthrow government in Persia due to Russia's pre-occupation.²⁶ The period 1905-1911 saw the Constitutional Revolution occur. This was brought about by a combination of state weakness, economic problems, popular discontent and elite disgruntlement.²⁷ During the Constitutional Revolution, Mozaffar Al-Din Shah was succeeded by his son Shah Mohammad Ali. The new Shah managed to remain in power, by granting a limited constitution in 1906, making the country a constitutional monarchy.

This period coincided with friction between the British and Russian empires who were each trying to extend their influence in Persia and prevent the other from doing the same. Both had economic, political and strategic interests in Persia. Britain wanted to retain control of the Persian Gulf and keep other powers out. It saw Russia's influence as being a threat to India's security and safeguarding southern and eastern Persia for India's defence was important. Russia wanted to influence the north of Persia, and was

²⁵ Keddie, Nikki R. *Modern Iran, Roots and Results of Revolution*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, America, 2003.p.65.

²⁶ Keddie, *Modern Iran*.pp66-67.

²⁷ Martin, p.7

hoping for the advantage of having Persia as access to a warm water port. Persia once again became a buffer state between Britain and Russia as each power regarded Persia to be of high strategic importance but neither was prepared to go to war over it, nor prepared to allow the other to have extensive territorial gains or protectorate status. The great powers' mutual desire of preventing the other from having influence is believed to be a major contributing factor in Persia's push for independence from British or Russian influence.²⁸

In 1907, Britain and Russia tried to resolve their differences in Persia, Tibet and Afghanistan through the Anglo-Russian treaty. This resulted in Persia being divided into three parts. Russia had priority of interest in the North, Britain had priority of interest in the South and a central buffer zone was allocated between the two spheres of influence. This division was done without Persia knowing before the treaty was signed, nor being informed of the conditions after the signing.²⁹ Both Russia and Britain tried to have the major influence over the Persian government, with Russian policy aiming to keep Persia weak and undeveloped and therefore dependent on Russia's assistance, and British policy focusing on economic improvements to strengthen Persia against Russian encroachment.³⁰ The British founded the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) in 1908, just after the division of Persia, exploiting Persia's oil resources for British oil requirements.

²⁸ Keddie, Nikki. *Iran Under the later Qajars, 1848-1922*, in Avery, Hambly and Melville.p.180.

²⁹ Keddie. in Avery, Hambly and Melville.p.205.

³⁰ Cleveland.p.114.

When the financial crisis of 1911 weakened central government, there was a flow on effect to Britain and Russia's commercial and strategic interests. Pressure from Britain and Russia to get the finances in order saw the Shah appoint United States financial expert Morgan Schuster to fix the economic problems and reform the finance department. Britain and Russia claimed that any action that affected the northern or southern provinces of Persia needed their approval.³¹ Russia issued an ultimatum to Persia for Schusters' dismissal and Persia's agreement it would not appoint foreigners without consent from Britain and Russia. This was rejected until advancing Russian troops got uncomfortably close to Tehran.³² Russia's advance was backed by Britain, and the Prime Minister and Cabinet dismissed Schuster, to avoid international conflict.³³

The Shah declared neutrality in the First World War, but the war saw Persia under occupation by Russia in the north, and Britain in the south, with the central government propped up by British subsidies. British troops occupied most of the country and Britain had great influence over Persia's rulers after the war. Britain and Russia wanted to prevent the development of any central government, but in 1918, the Russian Revolution caused the Soviet government to renounce all unequal treaties with Persia, including protectorship of the northern provinces. Russia withdrew from Persia, and Britain moved in on some of the previously Russian areas.

³¹Amjad, Mohammed. *'Iran, From Royal Dictatorship to Theocracy'*, Greenwood Press, Inc. Conneticut, America, 1989.p.28.

³²Keddie. in Avery, Hambly and Melville.p.206.

³³Atabachi, Touraj and Zurcher, Erik J.(Eds) *'Men of Order, Authoritarian Modernisation under Ataturk and Reza Shah'*, I B Tauris & Co Ltd, London, 2004.p.131.

The British central authority was weakened by fighting between tribes for control and local land owners regained authority and independence. Tribal chiefs asserted their independence and rebuilt their power base which gave many Persians the desire for a strong and independent central government.³⁴ Britain saw the opportunity to encourage a central government, re-organise the economy to integrate it with British capital, protect Britain's oil interests and contain the new threat of Bolshevism. It tried to consolidate control over Persia in 1918-1921 by providing subsidies to the government ensuring compliance, and forming a Persian government subservient to the British.³⁵ Britain organised the Anglo-Persian Treaty in 1919 under bribes and secrecy, to allow British advisors in government, and made Britain the sole supplier of transport, communications, arms and Officers in the Army. This was paid for by a loan of two million pounds sterling to Persia. The British organised transportation and communication developments to be revised against the loan tariff, and the treaty was interpreted by Britain as Persia being under British protectorate.³⁶

America and France were concerned that the Anglo-Persian Treaty would give Britain the monopoly over advisors and interests in Persia, and although the treaty was not ratified by the Majiles (Persian Parliament), Britain tried to prevent French law professors from coming to Persia, and would allow American advisors only if they met with British approval. Through 1919, a Persian nationalist movement grew with goals to counter

³⁴ Martin.p.9.

³⁵ Amjad.p.28

³⁶ Keddie, in Avery, Hambly and Melville.p.209

the Anglo-Persian treaty. Demonstrations were organised and protests were published in newspapers and these actions were punished through jailing and banishment by the British who were conducting business as though the treaty were in force. Tariff law was passed in favour of British and unfavourable to Russian imports which led to discontent amongst the Persian nationalists. For two years Persia was essentially a British military and financial protectorate through the Anglo-Persian Treaty 1919 sending financial, military and administrative missions, despite the fact the treaty was never ratified by Persia.

The domestic and foreign opposition to the British influence saw Persian Prime Minister Vusuq al-Daula resign, and a moderate nationalist government suspend the 1919 treaty until foreign troops were out of Persia and the Majiles could debate freely. Britain supported Russian anti-revolutionary forces that challenged the new Soviet regime and reorganised the Cossack Brigade that had almost disintegrated, replacing the Russian Officers with Persians.³⁷ The Soviet regime was unhappy with the British influence in Persia and issued an ultimatum for the abolition of the treaty. This ultimatum was supported by Persian nationalists who saw the Anglo-Persian treaty as a threat to Persian sovereignty. Russia aimed to exert pressure on London and Tehran to revoke the treaty in the short term, and counter balance the British build up in Persia in the long term.

³⁷ Martin,p.9.

In 1920 the Soviet Union sponsored the establishment of the pro-Russian Persian communist group, which led to the development of the Persian Communist party called Tudeh. Moscow was careful not to take any action that would increase Persia's dependence on Britain.³⁸ In 1921 a friendship treaty was drawn up with the Soviet Union which was the most favourable treaty that Persia had had with any foreign power.³⁹ Russia recognised the Gilan province which they had previously supported in its republican movement as being under Persian sovereignty, and expressed its support for Persian independence and territorial integrity. Of note however it included article six, which allowed the Soviet Union the right to send troops into Persia if she considered her security threatened, due to the presence of a foreign force on Persian soil.⁴⁰ This was seen as a means to counter-balance the British presence and influence in Persia. Internal opposition to British involvement in Persia through nationalist and reformist movements, with backing of American and Russian official opinions essentially prevented Persia from becoming a colony of Britain.⁴¹

With Britain and Russia continuing to compete for influence in Persia, Reza Khan, the Commander of the Cossack Brigade planned a coup and in March 1921 he imposed martial law and became Minister of War for Persia under the new Premier Sayyid Ziya al-Din Tabatabai. This was done through manoeuvre between Persian politicians, and the British military. Although not officially supported by the British, the commander of the British

³⁸ Saikal, Amin. *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1980.p.19.

³⁹ Kamali.p.163.

⁴⁰ Saikal.p.19.

⁴¹ Kamali.p.79.

military forces in Persia, General Ironside, backed Reza Khan's rise to power and encouraged him to undertake the coup with his Cossack Brigade.⁴² As Minister of War, Reza Khan worked to suppress the tribes and rebellious independence movements of Kurdistan and Azerbaijan, Fars, Khorasan, Gorgan, and Khuzistan (then called Arabistan).⁴³ In 1925, Reza Khan became Shah and the Pahlavi dynasty was officially established.

Reza Khan wanted Iran to be strong, and although he had no particular political ideology, he wanted a unified state free from internal and ethnic tribal divisions, foreign intervention and manipulation, and saw national strength through modernisation and industrialisation as the way to achieve an independent Iran.⁴⁴ He wanted to achieve a strong Iran through strengthening the Army, bureaucracy, commerce and trade which he did through a modernisation programme for Iran. The new government annulled the Anglo-Persian treaty and this was a catalyst for a change in Russian and British views towards Iran. Britain saw Reza Khan as a leader who could combat the spread of communism and Russia saw him as a nationalist who could limit the influence of Britain in Iran. Reza Khan's objectives for Iran ran in tandem with that of the great powers. He wanted to create a centralised and Westernised state that for the first time in its history would not be abused by foreign powers.⁴⁵

⁴² Keddie. *Modern Iran*. p.80.

⁴³ Daniel.p.133.

⁴⁴ Martin.p.9.

⁴⁵ Kamali.p.166.

Communications opened up with America regarding oil concessions, a program for technical advisors, financial loans, and investments for modernization to prevent the threat of communism. America was concerned about the British interests in Iran, but proceeded with discussions and negotiated a concession for oil in the north of Iran, excluded from the Anglo-Persian Oil Company concession. Britain objected to the breaking of its oil monopoly, and Russia objected to it as a violation of the 1921 Russo-Iranian treaty. Britain saw the Shah's goal for a strong centralised government as assisting in their own objective of containing the Soviets, Russia allowed the Shah control of Iran after receiving assurance that he would remain independent, and America provided financial advisers to Iran, effectively controlling the Iranian budget and financial administration.⁴⁶

During Reza Shah's rule, Iran was still significantly affected by Western powers, mainly Great Britain in the oil industry, but also Germany during the Nazi era pre-World War Two. Reza Shah felt frustration at Britain's dominance of the oil industry and southern Iran. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company became the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) in 1935, and Reza Shah negotiated for higher oil shares in the company with limited success. The imperialist approach and destructive interventions of Britain and the Soviet Union in Iran's past resulted in the Shah's move towards Germany and the Shah's relations with Germany were of concern to Britain

⁴⁶ Keddie. *Modern Iran*.p.83

and Russia. In the late 1930's Germany became Iran's largest trading partner, with economic and military contracts being established.⁴⁷

Italy became involved in Iran's changing foreign policy as Reza Shah wanted to change Iran's traditional and economic dependence away from the British and to the new European powers.⁴⁸ The Shah was resentful of Iran's fate being decided in Moscow and London. Germany was technologically and scientifically developed, had capital, technical advisors, industrial plant and machinery ready for export, and importantly it was not a country that had a long history of imperial intervention in the Middle East.⁴⁹ The Shah looked to Germany as a balancing force to Russia and Britain, and as the relationship developed Iran was declared a pure Aryan country and German influence increased. Developments in Germany's influence in Iran during the inter-war period include flight paths directly from Germany to Iran, German supplied domestic flights, a sea link between Germany and the Persian Gulf breaking the Soviet Union and British monopoly on communications.⁵⁰

After Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, Britain and Russia became wartime allies. As the German army advanced east, Great Britain became concerned about its oil fields in Khuzistan. The Soviet Union was desperate for war-materials and saw the new Trans-Iranian railway recently completed under Reza Shah's modernisation programme as a means of

⁴⁷ Keddie.p.105.

⁴⁸ Kamali.p.175.

⁴⁹ Hambly, Gavin. R. G. in Avery, Hambly and Melville.p.241.

⁵⁰ Martin.p.17.

supply from the Western allies. Although Iran declared neutrality, as in the First World War, this was ignored. Germany wanted to use Iran as a base against the Soviet Union, and the allies wanted to use Iran as a supply route. When Britain and Russia demanded the Shah remove all Germans from Iran, and place all Iranian ports and the Trans-Iranian railway entirely at the allied disposal, Reza Shah refused on the grounds of his declared neutrality. This resulted in Iran's occupation by Britain and the Soviet Union.⁵¹ In four days, the Iranian Army surrendered to the allied forces who continued to advance towards Tehran.

The Second World War saw Iran in a period of occupation and deprivation. It was divided along similar lines as the 1907 Anglo-Russian treaty. It was the source of vital oil supplies, and a link in the allied supply line, with the Trans-Iranian Railroad being used to send supplies to USSR. This disrupted internal trade.⁵² As a result of the occupation by foreign powers, allied pressures, the surrender of his Army and his vehement nationalism, refusing to be a figurehead within his own country, Reza Shah abdicated in favour of his pro-British son Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1941.

The Second World War was also the first large scale contact between America and Iran. During the war, 30,000 US troops manned the supply lines from the Persian Gulf to the Soviet Union and Iran's concerns grew that Britain and the Soviet Union might permanently divide Iran and stay on after the war. Iran approached the American administrators and diplomats

⁵¹ Hambly, in Avery, Hambly, Melville.p.242.

⁵² Keddie *Modern Iran*.p.106.

to remove British and Russian forces. America was not prepared to make a move against her allies, but tried to reassure Iran of her sovereignty by signing a 1943 inter-allied declaration between America, Russia and Britain assuring Iran of its sovereignty, territorial integrity and promising to assist in post-war reconstruction and development.⁵³ As the great powers continued to shape Iran's policies in response to their own interests, both Turkey and Iran were threatened by Soviet expansion and political subversion.

In 1943-44 the Soviet Union attempted to impose the Soviet system in the northern provinces of Iran and closed it off to free entry, aligning themselves with the Azerbaijanis and Kurds (pro-independence groups) who had counterparts across the Soviet border. Food supplies were manipulated to Soviet advantage, Iranian officials were removed, Iran's internal elections were influenced and Russia sponsored the revival of the Iranian Communist movement Tudeh, on a national level.⁵⁴ The British and the Soviets competed to strengthen their own and undermine each others position within Iran, whilst they both tried to limit the American influence so as not to jeopardise their own interests. This caused concern for America as a signatory of the 1943 declaration.⁵⁵ Sharing a border with Russia meant if Iran fell to communism, all Western political and economic interests in the Middle East would be at risk.

⁵³ Lenczowski, George. *American Presidents and the Middle East*, Duke University Press, America, 1990.p.8.

⁵⁴ Lenczowski.p.9.

⁵⁵ Saikal, Amin. *Iranian Foreign Policy, 1921 – 1979*, in Avery, Hambly and Melville.p.437.

Following the 1945 surrender of Japan, both America and Britain withdrew forces from Iran within the time period stipulated in the 1943 declaration, but the Soviets stayed on after the deadline and expanded their presence southwards. The Soviet Union occupation was a violation of wartime pledges and this prompted changes in American foreign policy to actively assist Iran.⁵⁶ President Truman warned Moscow that Washington ‘cannot remain indifferent’ and that ‘Russian activities in Iran threatened the peace of the world’.⁵⁷ The United States became involved in Iran as a self appointed protector of its independence, economic growth and territorial integrity. American policy aimed to strengthen the Shah, stabilise the economy and work towards getting an upper hand in Iran’s economic activities, which was also the intention of British. Britain saw the Shah’s goal of a strong centralised state as achieving their goal of containing the Soviet Union. The Soviets allowed the Shah control of Iran, after assurance of his independence.⁵⁸ Internal support for Reza Shah was achieved as the goal for a strong, independent nation was pleasing to the Iranian populace, particularly after the long period of weakness, deprivation and humiliation experienced during the war years.

In 1942 the Shah had asked for American assistance to bring the finances into order. Between 1942-1943 there were several American advisors appointed to the key economic departments, and the role of America in Iran became greater than it ever had been. In January 1943, a State Department

⁵⁶ Martin.p.16.

⁵⁷ Truman, H. S. *Memoirs, Years of Trial and Hope, 1946-1952* Garden City, 1955. pp 94-95.

⁵⁸ Martin.p.10.

memorandum stated that it should be United States policy to build an independent Iran that was strong enough to stand up to imperialistic Britain and Soviet Union.⁵⁹ America was aware of the economic and strategic importance of Iran regarding the spread of communism from the Soviet Union, and in 1946 when Soviet troops remained in Iran violating the 1943 declaration, Britain and America supported Iran's demand for their removal. The Soviet Union was formally charged before the United Nations with interference in Iran's internal affairs, and Iran began to make anti-Soviet movements. Forces from Tehran crushed the secessionist Tudeh regime in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, and the Majiles denounced the 1946 Irano-Soviet treaty.⁶⁰

As the Shah degraded the Iran – Soviet relationship, he relied more heavily on America's support to assist in a possible Soviet reaction. Moscow increased its underground support for the Iranian Tudeh, the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, and the Democratic Party of Kurdistan within the ethnic minority, non-Persian areas of Iran under Soviet control.⁶¹ This in turn, provided London and Washington justification for the future overthrow of the Mosaddiq government that was bolstered by these Russian supported groups.⁶²

During 1951-1953 there was a period of heavy Western involvement following a domestic and international oil crisis. Mohammad Mosaddiq

⁵⁹ Pollack, Kenneth. M. *The Persian Puzzle. The Conflict Between Iran and America*, Random House Trade Paperbacks, New York, 2004.p.42.

⁶⁰ Pollack.p.43.

⁶¹ Daniel.p.193.

⁶² Saikal.p.35.

became a spokesman for many Iranian's discontent towards monarchs both past and present who had allowed foreign domination of Iran to occur. During the late 1940s Mosaddiq launched a campaign against foreign interference and in 1949, several political parties and interest groups formed the National Front under Mosaddiq's leadership. Iran's oil presented the issue that caused the crisis. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was a British dominated private enterprise which controlled the Iranian oil industry. The British Government owned the majority of the company stock, and the company employed foreigners as managers and Iranians only as labourers. The Iranian Government was unhappy with the company's concession signed in 1933 by Reza Shah in which Iran received only 20 % of the company's profits.⁶³

The Iranian parliament, the Majiles demanded a renegotiation of the concession for 50% of all profits, and transparent book keeping. America had recently agreed to a 50% split in oil revenues with Venezuela and Saudi Arabia, and Iran wanted the same deal with Britain. Britain needed the profits from the AIOC for its national economy, and felt that Iran should be grateful to the AIOC for pumping, refining and selling their oil for them.⁶⁴ Britain feared that a 50% split would set precedence for its oil interests elsewhere, so offered a small increase in the minimum annual royalty, and training for Iranians in administrative positions. The Shah feared Britain

⁶³ Cleveland.p.190.

⁶⁴ Ansari.p110.

would overthrow the government if Iran did not accept the offer, so he pressured the Majiles to ratify it.⁶⁵

Under Mosaddiq's influence the Majiles called for cancellation of the concession and nationalisation of the oil industry on the grounds that the AIOC was the British Government imposing control on Iran. The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) was established on the basis of full ownership and control, and public opinion was swayed in support through speeches and demonstrations. In 1951 the Majiles passed legislation nationalising the oil industry under the NIOC and invited Mosaddiq to become Prime Minister. The Shah signed the nationalisation bill, and Britain took Iran to the United Nations Security Council regarding the 'illegal' nationalisation whilst conducting a military build up. Mosaddiq addressed the Security Council presenting documents demonstrating illegal intervention by the AIOC in Iran's domestic affairs. The United Nations ruled that nationalisation was a domestic matter and did not fall under its jurisdiction.⁶⁶

Unsuccessful through the official channel, British authorities in the AIOC called for international boycott of Iranian oil which the British government endorsed, reinforcing its naval forces in the Persian Gulf and imposing economic sanctions on Iran. The Truman Administration in America was extremely unhappy at these events, and was concerned that Britain's greed would push Iran towards the Communists. If the Russians were to control

⁶⁵ Pollack.p.54.

⁶⁶ Pollack.p.60

Iran's oil either directly or indirectly, the raw material balance of the world would be a serious loss to the Western world.⁶⁷ America put pressure on Britain to accept a 50% split in revenues as a fair and appropriate concession and chastised Britain for risking the 'loss' of Iran to communism by refusing the concession.⁶⁸ America also worried a British invasion would result in a Soviet counter-invasion and issued a warning to the British ambassador to Washington that America would not support Britain in a military intervention in Iran. America was concerned that the Anglo-Iranian dispute would result in either a rift in the Western alliance, or the fall of Iran to the Soviet Union. When Winston Churchill became Prime Minister of Britain in 1951, he informed President Truman that Britain would only provide support in the Korean War, if America provided support in Iran.⁶⁹

America joined the AIOC boycott in 1952 and Iran couldn't sell any oil on the international market. Iran reached financial crisis and lost almost all its oil revenues. Mosaddiq refused to compromise on nationalisation and in October 1952 severed diplomatic relations with Britain.⁷⁰ The Soviet Union media strongly supported Iran's stance during this period, and indicated they were prepared to provide Iran with markets and technicians to overcome the Western boycott. Although the Soviet Union was reluctant to confront Western powers whilst it was fighting the Korean War, it was prepared to

⁶⁷ Truman.p.95.

⁶⁸ Pollack.p.55.

⁶⁹ Pollack.p.60.

⁷⁰ Cleveland.p.291.

provide support for Mosaddiq indirectly through the Tudeh Party and domestic communist organisations.⁷¹

While there were problems on the international scene, within Iran itself a group of disaffected Iranian military officers formed a secret committee to overthrow Mosaddiq and re-establish royal authority. Mosaddiq's heavy communist support at the height of the Cold War caused concern for the West who feared that if he lost control the Tudeh party would lead Iran back to the USSR.⁷² Reza Shah was persuaded by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and American President Dwight Eisenhower to dismiss Mosaddiq as Prime Minister and appoint General Fazlollah Zahedi. This could only be done through force, and the CIA assisted Iranian military officers to organise the coup. Mosaddiq was removed from power in 1952, but quickly re-appointed himself after refusing to accept the Shah's order of dismissal on the grounds it was illegal and forged. He publically announced there had been an attempted coup and those responsible were being rounded up.

The Shah fled to Rome following the failed coup, but the CIA with active support from the US government, and the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) not discouraged by the initial failure, worked quickly with the Shah and newspapers, and used paid agitators to start mass pro-Shah demonstrations. These demonstrations encouraged large numbers of Mosaddiq loyalists to protest, which resulted in military units loyal to the

⁷¹ Yodfat.p.20

⁷² Martin.p.20.

Shah to turn against Mosaddiq's supporters.⁷³ The coup saw the Shah returned to power followed by heavy leaflet dropping anti-communism propaganda to turn the population against Mosaddeq. The leading Ulema, old guard politicians, propertied classes and several Army Generals supported the Shah, and the coup.⁷⁴

The coup could not have happened had it not been for participation of the Shah and Iranian military leaders, but was orchestrated by outside powers to protect their interests, rather than being invited. Following the coup there was an increase in American involvement in Iran's domestic affairs and the oil dispute was quickly settled. American companies were to receive 40% of the production, Iran was to receive 50% of all profits from its oil and the market recovered quickly.⁷⁵ The Shah restored diplomatic relations with Britain in 1954, and committed to an economic development program based on the Western model. In the Cold War pretext America's primary concern was that order be maintained in Iran, and the Tudeh be kept from power so the Soviet Union had no context for further involvement in Iran. The Soviet Union was concerned about Iran moving closer to the West, but could do little to prevent it.⁷⁶

⁷³ Pollack.p.67.

⁷⁴ Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, *Encyclopaedia of the Modern Middle East*. 4 Vols. Macmillan Reference, USA, 1996. Reproduced in History Resource Centre, Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Group.

⁷⁵ LaFeber, Walter, 'The Tension between Democracy and Capitalism during the American Century', in Hogan, Michael J. (Ed). *The Ambiguous Legacy, US Foreign Relations in the "American Century"*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1999.p.170.

⁷⁶ Yodfat, Aryeh. Y. *The Soviet Union and Revolutionary Iran*, Croom Helm Ltd, Kent, UK, 1984.p.22.

When Iran signed the Western-sponsored Baghdad Pact (later the Central Treaty Organisation or CENTO) in 1955, the Soviet Union became concerned the treaty endangered parts of the USSR and tried to work around the pact by increasing Soviet influence and presence in the region. The 1958 Iraqi revolution caused concern for the Shah as the monarchy, was overthrown and General Qasim's new revolutionary regime improved its relations with the Soviet Union, and took an assertive policy on Arab interests in the Persian Gulf. The turmoil on Iran's borders and the spread of republican sentiment unsettled the Shah. In 1959 the Shah suggested that Iraq was pursuing an 'imperialistic policy' and violating previous agreements over the main water way the Shatt al-Arab. Qasim claimed the entire Shatt al-Arab was Iraqi and expelled thousands of Iranians from Iraq.

An uneasy relationship between Iran and Iraq was exacerbated by the seizure of power in Iraq by the Baath Party which promoted Pan-Arab sentiments and close military and economic ties with the Soviet Union.⁷⁷ The Iraqi Revolution stimulated increased American interest in Iran and accelerated a clear American-Iran relationship. In 1959 a USA-Iran security pact was signed, which the Soviets unsuccessfully attempted to prevent by negotiating for a long term non-aggression arrangement and more economic aid. America, Britain, West Germany, Pakistan and Turkey appealed to Iran to resist Soviet proposals, and once the pact was signed, the Soviet Union protested that it was inconsistent with the 1921 and 1927 Soviet-Iranian

⁷⁷ Shaul Bakhash 'Iran and Iraq, 1930-80' in Potter, Lawrence G and Sick, Gary G. (Eds). *Iran, Iraq, and the Legacies of War*, Palgrave McMillan, New York, 2004. p.17.

treaties.⁷⁸ The Shah requested American economic and military assistance to support Iran in its attempts to contain Soviet advances in the region. A 1975 crisis over the Iran-Iraq border led to the Algiers Accord between the two countries agreeing on a common border along the Shatt al-Arab river and Iran stopped supporting the Iraqi Kurdish rebellion in northern Iraq.⁷⁹

It was not only the Soviet Union that was affected by Iran's increasing contact with America. Iran's relations with the Arab world, and Egypt were affected as Egypt's President Nasser and Iraq's revolutionary Baathist regime condemned the Shah for his alliances with the West, and associations with colonialism, imperialism and pro-Western conservatism. The de facto recognition of Israel as a nation state through relations with America, meant pro-Western Arab states like Saudi Arabia were reluctant to strengthen ties with Iran fearing possible reprisals. Afghanistan and India were suspicious of the Shah, as Afghanistan was involved in a border dispute, and India was involved in the struggle over Kashmir against Iran's regional ally Pakistan. Iran became increasingly isolated regionally and the Shah became limited in his choices for foreign policy.⁸⁰

The Shah had to remain mindful of American wishes and changes in policies in the West, when deciding his own foreign policy, to the point where he could not choose his own Prime Minister. Under American instruction Dr Ali Amini was appointed Prime Minister, and Hasan

⁷⁸ Yodfat.p.26.

⁷⁹ Fawcett, Louise. *International Relations of the Middle East*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2005.p.266.

⁸⁰ Saikal, Amin. 'Iranian Foreign Policy ,1921 – 1979', in Avery, Hambly and Melville.p.447

Arsanjani as Minister of Agriculture in 1961. Amini was dismissed after fourteen months proving to be too 'independent-minded' and Amir Asadollah Alam was appointed with a new cabinet.⁸¹ The Shah's dependence on American foreign aid influenced many of his decisions and following the dismissal of Prime Minister Dr Ali Amini the Shah was under pressure from America to implement socio-economic reforms. The Majiles had been re-established in 1954 but in the same role it had taken for Reza Shah; to simply legitimise whatever it was the Shah wanted to do. In 1957 a two-party system was established with the message that the Shah believed a one-party system was communistic and dictatorial. The Nationalist Party and the People's Party were established and political activity outside of these was forbidden, the press was heavily censored, and materials in support of the Shah and the United States were widely published and distributed.⁸² These parties were so restricted that they became known as the 'Yes' and 'Yes Sir' parties. Political freedom did not exist between 1952 and 1979, and between 1960-63 internal opposition groups had a growing influence, but no place within politics. American President John F. Kennedy put pressure on the Shah for reforms to which the Shah responded by making further domestic reforms to liberalise Iran.

Iran's enduring independence can be largely attributed to the great powers' mutual desire for influence in Iran, and the Shah's decisions to cede to great powers demands. Although Iran has always been independent, it has had the imperial competition among the great powers significantly affecting not

⁸¹ Martin.p.20.

⁸² Saikal.p.63.

only the international politics, but also to a large extent domestic policy. From the establishment of a united Iran in 1501 through to the last Shah, international influence on Iran has been significant. Pressures from the powerful states of the time have shaped and influenced Iran's international and domestic policy. Britain and Russia have had a particularly large impact and later, American involvement shaped the last Shah's decisions and even domestic appointments quite directly.

The international influence on Iran impacted inter-state relations, and international and domestic policy positions as each Shah navigated international events and pressures to contain threats to the independence or security of Iran as a nation state. At times, the impact of the international influence was felt within Iran causing domestic unrest which the Shah had to respond to, to keep the populace happy. Each Shah has had to respond to those outside pressures. As the international balance of power shifted, in order to maintain his own position, and Iran's independence, the Shahs navigated to attempt to find the best arrangement for Iran in their view. At times when the Shah was not in a position to have influence, the outside powers were self-regulating in that their mutual desire to not want another state to control Iran maintained the country's independence. Whilst the Shahs rule has been directly affected by outside influence, it has also been affected by domestic responses to decisions.

CHAPTER TWO. THE SHAH'S RULE, POWERFUL DOMESTIC GROUPS AND OUTSIDE INFLUENCES.

As each Shah was influenced and pressured by international influences his response to this pressure did not always please the populace, or domestic power groups. As the Shah responded to the international influences, so domestic groups responded to the Shah's decisions when they affected Iranian society. As various Shahs tried to balance the strategic intentions of large outside powers and navigate major international events to maintain Iran's independence, where these decisions upset the domestic balance of power, the Shah's rule was challenged from within. The Shahs had to strike a balance between maintaining Iran's independence and integrity as a nation state with retaining the Peacock throne and appeasing the populace.

There were several influential groups or power centres within Iranian society; the tribal groups, the Ulema, the landowners, the noble and royal families, and the merchants and bazaaris. Each of these domestic power groups have had an important role to play within Iranian society, and to varying degrees have affected or modified policies through pressure on the leadership of Iran, that is, the Shah. The tribes have been an important group for establishing the Shahs rule; the Ulema have held a lot of power due to their role in the state religion; the bazaaris influenced the economic situation, and land ownership gave political, social and economic power and status as society derived its material wealth from the land. This chapter will look at how each of these groups affected the domestic situation in Iran in relation to the pressure of international influence.

Firstly the tribes were a significant layer within Iranian society that had a large influence over the Shah. Every Iranian dynasty from pre-Safavid era to the Qajars had origins in, or relied upon, tribal armies to take power.

¹ Iran's first Shah Ismail I's establishment of the Safavid state was achieved through the Quizilbash tribesman. Quizilbash meant 'red-heads', named so because of red headgear that had 12 pleats to honour the 12 Shi'ite Imams. This became the distinctive headgear of Safavid tribal followers, fanatically loyal to the Safavid cause and the backbone of Safavid military support.² The Persian army was established out of tribal roots and organised as a national army during the Safavid reign. The state depended on tribal and Ulema support for success in its campaigns against foreign powers. The tribal roots meant that the Shah depended on his own tribe and on successful coalitions with other powerful tribes in the country. Large areas of land or appointments as Provincial Governors were granted to tribal leaders to ensure their loyalty. Concurrently, a central government was being established with urban Iranians in influential positions which created tension with the Quizilbash tribal leaders who were excluded from the civil administration.³

Following the Safavid wars, Shah Abbas recognised the need for military reform as he desired control over the Quizilbash and raised his royal army financed by and responsible to the Shah to counter their power. With this army, he was attempting to mitigate the influence the tribes had over

¹ Keddie. Modern Iran.p.23.

² Cleveland.p.54.

³ Cleveland.p.53

central government, and wanted to place power firmly in the hands of the monarch and central government, not tribal leaders and provincial politics. Following the fall of the Safavids and subsequent Afghan occupation, Aqa Mohammad Khan rose to become Shah from leader of the Qajar tribe, and his successor Fath Ali Shah was also a tribal chieftain. In 1848 when Nasir al-Din Shah assumed the throne, Persia was weak and with less than 3,000 troops in the standing Army, the real military power lay with the tribal chiefs who had significant financial and political autonomy. Amounting to about one third of the population, the tribes presented a challenge to the government which could not control them.⁴

Nasir al-Din Shah was unable to pay tribal levies and manipulated tribal rivalries to ensure his survival, allowing them to loot and plunder in return for their service.⁵ Through the Qajar period, although the Shahs had risen to power from their tribal roots they had little success in creating a modern military force to protect themselves from both external attack and internal revolt. Despite military modernisation programmes in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire at the time, there was little attempt to develop a Western-style military in Iran and the Russian-officered Cossack Brigade established in 1879 was the only effective military force, although small with only 2,000 men by 1890s.⁶ The Cossack Brigade were used as the Palace guard for protecting the Shah and his court, and became increasingly important as it was relied upon to maintain order in a

⁴ Keddie.p.2.

⁵ Cleveland.p111. Keddie. *Modern Iran*, p.28

⁶ Avery.p.192.

disrupted and disintegrating Tehran through the last years of the 19th century and the first years of the new century.

Following the 1906 Constitutional Revolution, the tribal armed forces were better equipped and trained than the government armed forces and in the absence of a regular army, the state was dependent on tribal support for success in its war campaigns.⁷ The strongest forces both for and against the Shah during the Constitutional Revolution were tribal, the Shahsavaan tribe in support of the Shah, and the Bakhtiyaris in support of the Constitution. In this case the Bakhtiyaris tribe had a crucial role in restoring constitutionalism and defeating the government forces due to their strength and the support they had from the populace. In rural Iran, the tribes asserted their independence, refused to pay taxes, and looted at will, which resulted in the breakdown of law and order. Following the Constitutional-Revolution and Anglo-Russian agreement for the division of Iran into spheres of influence, the British were concerned about the lawlessness in their sphere and sent troops into Iran in 1911 to stabilise their area.⁸ Britain and Russia, within their respective spheres of influence dealt with the tribal leaders and local merchants, rather than the central government, as it was the leaders in the provinces that held the real power.

The Iranian government continued to rely on the tribal forces for their internal protection but the influence of the tribes over the government ended as Reza Khan rose to power through command of the Cossack

⁷ Kamali.p.143.

⁸ Cleveland.p.147

Brigade.⁹ Becoming Shah in 1925, Reza Shah built a large army through conscription and deployed it to establish state control over the tribes. Reza Shah knew control over Iran could only be achieved if tribal power was broken. Military garrisons were established in tribal areas, tribes had lands and arms confiscated, and there were restrictions on tribal movement.¹⁰ Although he took the authoritarian approach to his entire rule, including reducing power and influence of the Majiles and Ulema, it was the defeat and destruction of tribal power that was the essential factor in establishing and maintaining dominance over Iran and limited the potential for any forces to be raised against him.¹¹

Reza Shah's policies to change the tribal lands affected not only the tribes, but also the landowners. This group was an important one as the landowners had a strong position in society, because of the power land ownership gave them. Owning land had economic benefits, and also allowed a body of armed retainers to be kept. This meant the central government had to defer to the larger landowners in many situations, which gave the landowners not only economic, but also political power and social prestige. During the Safavid dynasty one of the major changes to land ownership was an increase in land held by the Ulema which in turn increased their influence. During the Qajar period, the landowning classes included all the tribal Khans and many Ulema and were the most powerful group in the country.¹²

⁹ Avery.p.177.

¹⁰ Cleveland.p.187.

¹¹ Kamali.p.174.

¹² Lambton, Ann. K. S. *Landlord and Peasant in Persia, A Study of Land Tenure and Land Revenue Administration*, Fletcher & Son Ltd, Norwich, 1969.p.145.

Large landowners were able to exercise considerable autonomy as they were very wealthy, usually the lord of their district, independent of the governor, and able to abuse their power. Generally as each Shah took power there was some redistribution of land; favourites were awarded land, and opponents or defeated tribes were punished through the confiscation of land.¹³ As a result of Shari'a rules on inheritance, there had not been a consistent landed aristocracy within Iran that transferred its land holdings through the generations, as generally there was a subdivision of land within a few generations. Although the power and privilege of landowning classes remained constant, the composition of those classes has changed. Exceptions to this existed where land ownership was derived from tribal leadership, which allowed the tribe itself to control their own land through their tribal strength.

Although the Ulema had some influence through land ownership, they were a powerful group in their own right based on their status in society, and this group has had a significant impact on several key episodes in Iran's history. In Islam there is no formal hierarchical priesthood in that there is no intermediary between the individual Muslim and God. There are people trained in Islamic doctrine as the means to transmit the correct practices, and these are known as the Ulema within Islamic society. Literally translated as 'those who know' or 'learned', the Ulema performs many duties within Islamic society. Shari'a is Islamic law, and as the governing law, the Ulema are the judges of the law. Legal experts who

¹³ Avery.p.477.

advise the judges, teachers of the religion, preachers and prayer leaders are all considered members of the Ulema.¹⁴ A Mujtahid is a learned individual qualified to exercise itjihad. Itjihad is the right to apply human reasoning to points not covered in the Quran. Mujtahids are the highest dignitaries of the Shi'a and provide continuity of authoritative religious legislation, based on their comprehensive knowledge of the Quran.¹⁵ One becomes a Mujtahid by receiving a fatwa (religious decree) from another Mujtahid, and there are several ranks that Mujtahids may hold.¹⁶

When the first Safavid Shah, Ismail I declared Persia to be Shi'a, he did so by claiming he was descended from the seventh Imam, that he was divinely inspired, and that he was the earthly representative of the Hidden Twelfth Imam. According to Twelver Shi'ia doctrine, the prophet Muhammad granted divine inspiration which he transmitted to Ali whom he selected as his successor. Ali is regarded as the first Imam, and the divine inspiration was then passed on to designated Imams. The Imams are regarded as the vessels through which God provided guidance to human society. They are considered divinely inspired possessing knowledge not granted to other humans, including hidden meanings of the Quran so could therefore offer infallible judgments on religious law, and provide interpretations appropriate to changing circumstances. The twelfth Imam entered occultation and disappeared remaining hidden by God for eleven centuries.

¹⁴ Cleveland.p.28.

¹⁵ Sometimes Koran; word of God.

¹⁶ Banani, Amin. *The Modernization of Iran, 1921 – 1941*, Stanford University Press, California, 1961.p.18.

Shah Ismail I claimed decadency through the hidden Imam to prove his legitimacy.¹⁷

Although the twelfth Imam is hidden from sight, he is considered the true legitimate leader of Shi'a, and until such time as the Imam sees fit to reappear, the Mujtahids interpret the faith. The Hidden Imam continues to exercise control over human affairs, but politically and religiously, the community had difficulty being guided in the absence of the Imam.¹⁸ Shah Ismail I claimed he was guided by the Imam, and as such had infallible judgments on religious practices and legal issues. This was accepted by the people, and the religious authority he claimed himself was accepted as being present in his successors.¹⁹

When Shah Ismail I declared Persia to be a Shi'a state, one of the first things he did was to import Shi'a Ulema into Persia. This established the Shi'a Ulema class, which as religious scholars of Islam became an influential power centre for Persia. To supervise the establishment and propagation of the Shi'a faith, Shah Ismail appointed a Sadr, an officer to act as head of the religious classes. This was a political appointment, and the office of Sadr was used by the Shah as a means of controlling the religious classes, as the link between the Ulema and the political branch of the administration.²⁰ The role of the Sadr was to supervise the spread of Shi'a Islam and was head of all members of religious classes. As the

¹⁷ Cleveland.p.32.

¹⁸ Banani.p.18.

¹⁹ Cleveland.p.53.

²⁰ Savory.p.30.

Safavids equated the right religious following with state loyalty, the Sadr also had the role of exposing and removing heresy from Persian society. Once Shi'a uniformity had been successfully implemented, the Sadr role became more administrative and less political.²¹ The juridical duties the Ulema performed required an advanced education and knowledge of Arabic that distinguished them from the general public who were mostly illiterate, and their authority came from their knowledge of Shi'ite law.

Early in the Safavid period, the Ulema depended on the Shah for financial and political support. During Shah Abbas I's rule (1587 – 1629), separation of power was effected between the state and the Ulema. The secularisation policy was designed to create a strong central power and forced the Ulema to re-organise their economic situation. Independence from the state was achieved through religious endowments and religious taxes. This had the effect of creating a powerful civil society which counter-balanced state power, and forced the state to recognise the Ulema influence. The Ulema were national, and had strong support amongst the bazaaris, urban population, peasants and tribes. They would only support the state for compensation of some sort, for example religious taxes, endowments or monopoly over jurisdiction.

The rule of Shah Abbas I was strict, and designed to prevent any attempt by the Ulema to challenge the authority of the Shah. The political control of the Mujtahids and the Ulema was necessary if the position of the Shah

²¹ Savory.p.30

as the representative of the Shi'a messiah were not to be threatened. Successive Shahs were unsuccessful in this regard and the Ulema were at the height of their power during the two weakest Safavid Shahs. During this period of rule, (1666-1722) the Mujtahids asserted their independence of the Shah claiming their prerogative to be the representatives of the Twelfth Imam, and therefore the only legitimate authority in a Shi'a state. Through this the Ulema succeeded in gaining a dominant legal and politically authoritative position in the state.²²

The change in Iranian Shi'ia from the Hidden Imam, to the 'Shadow of God' doctrine released the second Iranian dynasty the Qajars from the infallibility of the Safavids and allowed the Shah to secure political authority separate from religious authority. When the Qajars made no claims to divinity, the Ulema established that the Qajars were temporal rulers and maintained it was the Ulema that had the right to exercise religious authority and provide interpretations on issues of law and religious practise. This meant the Ulema's influence was legitimised by political power and they could introduce non-religious policy to reinforce their authority.²³ They established their right to exercise ijtihad and interpret the intent of God's revelations to provide Islamic jurisprudence and were therefore entitled to recognition as Mujtahids.

During the Qajar dynasty, the dependence of the state on the Ulema increased and was institutionalised in many instances. The Qajars had little

²² Savory.p.239.

²³ Kamali.p.88.

money to fund a military reform, and with a limited military they couldn't move financial and military power away from provincial governors. Attempts to regulate law and develop education brought confrontation from the Ulema who saw policy as their area of authority. The leading clergy were essentially the elite, and were so strong due to the Shi'a doctrine of legitimacy of the state. With the Twelfth Imam still in hiding, and all other rulers being illegitimate in his absence, the only legitimate source of authority was the Ulema in capacity as executors of Shar'ia. Fath Ali Shah worked to gain sympathy and influence over the Ulema by regularly allotting money to them, and giving goodwill material items. After the states generosity, prominent Ulema set forth the legitimacy of the temporal rule of the Qajar Shah's for preservation of order, and the Ulema for the protection of religion.

The Ulema became a link between the state and the bazaaris and their influence became so strong that their fatwas held more authority than the Shah's decrees. They from time to time organised the urban population and revolted against the governors. In conflicts between the Ulema and the governors, the Shah had to take the side of the Ulema and remove or punish the governors and the Shah was forced to show public respect of the Ulema as their social power and influence was so strong.²⁴ They asserted the right to interpret political acts with religious interpretations, and were able to maintain their influence through their financial independence. The Ulema then, were a crucial domestic factor in determining the extent of the Shahs' authority.

²⁴ Kamali.p.87.

The bazaaris are the urban class of Iranian society encompassing merchants, guild masters and moneylenders which controlled the majority Iranian economic activity. The bazaaris were an important and influential group within Islamic society as they controlled food supply, banking, the urban workforce, had close contact with the rural farmers and producers, and a close relationship to the Ulema. When the Shah had a lack of nation wide support, particularly in urban areas, he was forced to seek help of the Ulema to gain urban recognition and acceptance. The Ulema were the means for uniting national support, and particularly useful in the urban areas as they had strong support amongst the bazaaris and urban populations. The bazaars were the centre of Persian socioeconomic and cultural life and a settlement without a bazaar was not considered a city. The government was not providing support to Persian companies or the bazaari producers despite the fact the merchants bazaars were the key places of commerce and industry for the state.²⁵

Due to international pressures the Shah was giving concessions to foreign companies and the bazaaris were unable to compete with the increase in foreign business which caused a growing dissatisfaction throughout the state. The competition destroyed local craft industries, threatened the economic survival of the bazaaris and the fact that the foreigners were Christians, was offensive to the religious sensibilities of the bazaaris and the Ulema. The Western companies had a very favourable environment within Iran and the Shah was unable to provide adequate support to the

²⁵ Kamali.p.99.

bazaaris because of the international pressures. There was a growing impetus for change within the bazaaris, and an increasing dissatisfaction with the state.²⁶

It was the 1890 concession the Shah granted to a British tobacco company for the exclusive rights to produce, sell and export Iran's entire tobacco crop that triggered the Tobacco protest. This protest was organised and led by members of the Ulema and demonstrated the political power they could exercise over the Shah's rule as the result of undesirable international influence. The tobacco concession caused so much protest because it affected the key power groups; land holders, merchants, shop keepers and exporters, and would have had a significant detrimental impact on a large percentage of Iranian society. In 1891 when the tobacco company's agents began posting deadlines for the sale of all tobacco, the protest began.

The first major protest was led by a religious leader who was subsequently exiled to Iraq. The most important Shi'a Mujtahid was asked to denounce the Shah and his sale of Iran to the Europeans.²⁷ The Bazaaris protested in Shiraz, a major tobacco growing region and throughout Iran other bazaaris followed suit. These protests were backed by the Ulema as a Mujtahid from Shiraz issued a fatwa that the use of tobacco of any form was an offence against the Hidden Imam.²⁸ This radicalised the Tobacco Movement and began a state wide boycott of tobacco products. Massive

²⁶ Kamali,p,122.

²⁷ Avery,p.195.

²⁸ Cleveland,p.115.

protests ensued throughout 1891 and unable to force his will on the people, the Shah cancelled the concession in 1892.

There were several factors that gave rise to the Tobacco Movement, including anti-foreign sentiments and concerns for the financial losses from landowners, and bazaaris and the Tobacco Movement demonstrated the strength of the Ulema. The Ulema were able to influence political activity on Islamic terms of reference and through the Mujtahids itjihad, they were able to counteract a central government policy.²⁹ The Tobacco Movement lay the foundations for the Constitutional Revolution, but it is noted that the Ulema were not fully united. Several prominent Ulema did not support the boycott as they had other interests. The protest focussed on the concession itself, as opposed to the wider issues of government and international influences in Iran, and the populace were aroused through exploiting xenophobia and Islamic duty, rather than nationalism.³⁰

The foundation for the increase in influence of the Ulema and bazaaris was well established through the Tobacco Movement, but it was through the Constitutional Revolution that they were able to increase their power within the state. The Constitutional Revolution was brought about by a combination of state weakness, economic problems, popular discontent and elite disgruntlement. The Japanese defeat of Russia in 1904, and the 1905 Bolshevich Revolution both removed the threat of Russian intervention in Iran, and inspired confidence in opponents of government policies. The

²⁹ Cleveland.p.115.

³⁰ Daniel.p.117.

advent of a constitutional government in both Japan and Russia preceding their respective successes was viewed by Iranians as the solution to a country's political troubles.³¹ Seeing the only Asian constitutional power defeat the major European non-constitutional power caused many Iranians to see the constitution itself as the secret to success. The Constitutional Revolution came about through dissatisfaction with the state from Ulema and bazaaris.

As was the case with the Tobacco Movement, the Ulema were not united in their support for the constitutional movement and it is likely the Ulema who did participate were those financially affected by the foreign concessions through their close relationship with the bazaaris. Many Ulema involved wished to maintain their separation from the government and saw this as an opportunity to increase their power.³² Their main aims were to reinforce their traditional prominent position in civil society, limit the absolute power of the state, and to cut the state's bonds with the West.³³ As the government sought closer relations with the West, the Ulema strengthened their ties with the bazaaris.

The growing protest movement through 1904 and 1905 took the form of underground political societies or clubs called anjomans. The anjomans had a variety of aims among which were to improve the economic and social conditions in Iran including workers rights to strike, eight hour days, pensions, free schools, freedom of speech and press, freedom for

³¹ Daniel.p.17.

³² Cleveland.p.145.

³³ Kamali.p.125.

individuals, legal equality for all, religious tolerance acceptable to Shari'a, and the establishment of a rule of law and justice. Membership of the anjomans was varied encompassing intelligencia, middle class, clergy and migrant workers. The anjomans were obliged to seek assistance from religious authority as the 'lower class' was still dominated by the ruling classes of princes, tribal chiefs, magnates and land owners. By 1905, the traditional middle class state wide had become economically, ideologically and politically separated from the ruling dynasty. The growth of anjomans brought with it an increase in political publications critical of the Shah and the government. Many of the anjoman members came from the bazaaris, and the fact that many of them could read in order to do business, meant the spread of modern ideas had a large influence on the bazaaris themselves. The bazaaris, Ulema and radical reformers were convinced they could limit the Shah's power, and take a more direct role in leading Iran to where they believed it should be.

There was a mood for change and several circumstances that combined to present the opportunity for the Constitutional Revolution. A bad harvest in 1905, disrupted trade in the north caused by a cholera epidemic, the Russo-Japanese War and the Russian Revolution resulted in an economic crisis and rapid inflation of food prices in Iran. When the Governor of Tehran bastinadoed some sugar merchants for not lowering sugar prices, the bazaars immediately closed in protest, and merchants were joined by tradesmen and Mullahs who took bast³⁴ in the Royal Mosque of Tehran.³⁵

³⁴ Bast is the Iranian custom of granting sanctuary and protection from arrest to anyone taking refuge in a religious building.

Agents of the Premier Ain al-Daula dispersed this crowd, and many Ulema, moved the bast to the South of Tehran, where they were joined by over 2,000 Mullahs, merchants and common citizens. The bast took 25 days, and a list of demands was sent to the government: the replacement of the governor of Tehran; the dismissal of the director of customs, Monsiur Naus (a Belgian appointed to guarantee security for the European loans and contracts); enforcement of Shar'ia; and the establishment of an Adalatkhana 'house of justice'. There was pressure on the Shah to do something, and anxious to break the bast, he agreed to an Adalatkhana in 1906 and dismissed the unpopular Tehran governor.

By mid 1906, the Shah had failed to keep his promises and further protests occurred. The anjomans became active, and the arrests of an outspoken preacher caused a crowd of theology students to converge at the Police Station. One student was killed at this demonstration and the following day as the body was carried to a public funeral at the central Mosque, twenty-two people were killed by Cossacks. Of those attending the procession and funeral, many were wearing white sheets as a symbol of a religious crusade, and showing their willingness to die for their cause.³⁶ The reaction to the killings by the Cossacks was further protest. Thousands of theology students, Ulema and bazaari protestors left Tehran and took bast in the city Qum where the anti-government protests consisted of between 13,000 - 20,000 people.³⁷ The bast took place on the British Legation grounds, and was initially dismissed by the government as being

³⁵ Avery.p.202.

³⁶ Abrahamian.p.83.

³⁷ Daniel.p.121.

a crowd hired by the British. The bazaaris and Ulema were committed to reform, and members of the anjomans addressed the crowds speaking on political issues. Hundreds of telegrams were received in Tehran from provinces throughout Iran in support of the protestors.

The protestors refused to negotiate with the Shah or his deputies, and despite their anti international sentiments would only conduct negotiations through the British Ambassador. The main demand was for an Adalatkhana, and with the Ulema in protest in Qum, Tehran was without spiritual guidance, judicial actions, or legal transactions until such a time as the Shah fulfilled his promises.³⁸ The Shah was under a huge amount of pressure to respond, and three weeks after the bast had begun, Muzaffar al-Din Shah signed a proclamation convening a Constituent Parliamentary Assembly, the Majiles.

The first Majiles met in October 1906 and two documents were produced which established the core of the constitution which would last until 1979. The first document was the Fundamental Law, in which the political authority was restructured reducing the Shah's power and giving the Majiles authority of final approval over all laws, decrees, budgets, treaties, loans and concessions. This was signed by Muzzafir al-Din Shah days before his death, which saw Muhammad Ali Shah ascend the throne. The second document, the Supplementary Fundamental Laws contained a bill of rights, that guaranteed each citizen equality before the law, protection of life, property and honour, safeguards from arbitrary arrest and freedom to

³⁸ Abrahaniam.p.83.

publish newspapers and organise associations.³⁹ It granted the Majiles authority to appoint, investigate and dismiss Premiers, Ministers and cabinets, and to approve military expenditures. The Shah had to take his oath of office before the deputies, he had only nominal command of the Armed Forces, his sovereignty was deemed to be derived from the people, not from God, and in reality he had little power. The importance of religion was acknowledged, and that of the religious leaders in particular. Twelver Shi'ism was declared the official religion of Iran and only Muslims could be appointed as cabinet Ministers. A supreme committee of Mujtahids called the Council of Clerics was established to vet bills introduced to Parliament to ensure none of the laws contradicted Shari'a. The Constitutional Revolution gave the Ulema unprecedented power.⁴⁰

In addition to the constitution, this period saw an increase in personal rights and freedoms, equality before the law, free education for all (including women), land reform, and freedom of press and assembly. The constitution met with protests from some Ulema who claimed members of the minority religions should not be equal to those of Shi'a Islam. The Ulema were not united and represented divisions of society as they sought to protect and strengthen Islam and resisted the encroachment of secularism, codification of Shar'ia and equality before the law.⁴¹

³⁹ Abrahamian,p,89.

⁴⁰ Richards, Michael D. *'Revolutions in World History'*, Routeledge, New York, 2005.p.75.

⁴¹ Martin, Vanessa, *Creating an Islamic State, Khomeini and the making of a new Iran*, I.B.Taruis & Co. Ltd. London, 2003.p.8.

The Shah refused to ratify the Supplementary Fundamental Laws as they effectively stripped him of his power. He denounced four members of the opposition and proposed that the Head of State should appoint all Ministers, have command of the armed forces and retain control of over 10,000 body guards. This provoked public protest in the main cities, the bazaaris took bast, mass meetings were held including armed volunteers mobilised to defend the Majiles. The Premier was assassinated, and over 100,000 mourners assembled to pay homage to the assassin (who had committed public suicide) and demonstrate support for the revolution. The assassination shook the Shah, and he appeared before the Majiles vowing to respect the constitution and placed the Royal Seal on the document.⁴²

The tobacco protests and Constitutional Revolution demonstrated the power and influence of the Ulema and bazaaris over the Shah's political decisions. As the Shah responded to international influences to maintain Iran's independence and security, where the Ulema and bazaaris were affected, he had to respond to the domestic groups to maintain domestic control. Their ability to shut down Iran through economic means, through the loss of religious guidance in Tehran and through the ability to influence mass crowds for a cause was clear. By 1906 they had firmly established their power base within society, and their power over the Shah.

As the Majiles asserted control over the finances and proposed a National Army that would be independent of the Shah, the Shah felt the Majiles

⁴² Abrahamian.p.92.

were conspiring to depose him.⁴³ Determined to restore Qajar power, the Shah launched a counter-revolution with the support of royalist Ulema who saw this as an opportunity to increase their own influence and prevent Westernisation. They denounced the constitutionalists as atheists, the Prime Minister was arrested, and a gang from Tehran was employed to attack the Majiles building. The anjomans defended the Majiles and the counter-revolution failed. Constitutional Ulema declared a fatwa that forbade the army to co-operate with the Shah and once again, the Ulema were influencing the Shah's power although they weren't united in their cause.⁴⁴ As the prices for food rose, lower class discontent at the Majiles prompted mass support for the Qajar restoration. The Anglo-Russian treaty of 1907 gave the royalists the opportunity to show that the constitutionalists were less effective in preserving Iran's sovereignty than the Shah.

In 1908 the Shah sent a Cossack Brigade to close the Majiles, arrest and execute the leading constitutionalists, and re-establish royal authority in Tehran. This caused civil war and economic chaos, during which time the Shah was able to maintain control only of Tehran. For eleven months the constitutionalists and the royalists both tried to assert their authority throughout the rest of the country. With Tehran under the Shah's control, rebellions were underway in the major centres and in April 1909 two rebel armies advanced on Tehran. The Shah fled to the Russian legation, and the Russians demanded the Shah accept a ceasefire and restore the

⁴³ Daniels.p.124.

⁴⁴ Kamali.p.133.

constitution.⁴⁵ On 16 July 1909, a special Majiles deposed Mohammad-Ali Shah who took exile in Russia, and nominated his son Ahmad (aged 12) to be the new Shah under regency and in December 1909 the second Majiles was convened under the new Shah.⁴⁶

Throughout the First World War as Iran was occupied by foreign military, it is somewhat ironic that the total authority of the Qajar Shahs had been removed and Iran had gained a constitution but in the process, the domestic coalition of the bazaaris, Ulema and reformers had broken down. Their original aim of reducing foreign presence in Iran had failed and saw Iran under worse foreign occupation than that following the 1907 Anglo-Russian agreement. The central state and the military were both so weak, that neither a royal or constitutional authority could exert authority in Iran. The Constitutional Revolution had achieved its aim and destroyed the traditional centre of despotic power, but failed to create a effective alternative.⁴⁷ The foreign occupation of Iran was the source of growing resentment to foreign intervention, yet no group was able to do anything to prevent it. The result was an impasse.

In 1921 as Reza Khan rose to power, Iran was in social and political chaos. As Minister of War in 1921, he wanted to pass a bill to establish two years compulsory national service. This was strongly opposed by the landlords and the Ulema. The landlords feared their workforce would reduce, and

⁴⁵ Cleveland.p.146.

⁴⁶ Abrahamian.p.100.

⁴⁷ Atabachi, Touraj and Zurcher, Erik J.(Eds) *Men of Order, Authoritarian Modernisation under Ataturk and Reza Shah*, I B Tauris & Co Ltd, London, 2004.p.131

that the dependency of the workers on the landlords would be weakened. The Ulema feared it would expose the entire male population to a secular, Western way of life and ethos.⁴⁸ It was during Reza Khan's reign as Shah from 1925 that the Ulema, landowners and tribesmen lost their previous influence in central government, and traditional power they had held for centuries.

As he had no tribe, and no leader had gained power in Iran without tribal support, Reza Khan worked to create one. He increased the army by merging the Cossacks and Gendarmes (armed police), which he paid by gaining control of the government revenues. He campaigned successfully against nine rebellious tribes from 1922 to 1925 and gained the title of Commander in Chief of the armed forces, before crowning himself Reza Shah in 1925.⁴⁹ Military reform was one of the first areas he turned to to consolidate his power. Annual military expenditure increased by 500% from 1926 to 1941 and the armed forces increased from a strength of 40,000 to 127,000.⁵⁰ He introduced a conscription law for every male citizen to serve twenty five years military service divided into active duty, active and secondary reserve and guard status. In the two years of active duty, literacy classes and trade instruction was included, which had the effect of improving the literacy of society, and as villagers returned to their village after their duty, they brought with them their Western style uniforms, and had had exposure to secular, Western-influenced morals. If villagers did not return to their village, they contributed to the growing

⁴⁸ Avery.p.223.

⁴⁹ Abrahamian.p.120.

⁵⁰ Abrahamian.p.136.

urban areas and modernisation of cities. From 1938, all clergy were subject to the two years of active duty from which they had previously been exempt. This had the effect of reducing the standing of the clergy within society to a degree.⁵¹ Reza Shah's army was capable of enforcing absolute authority within Iran which had not been possible for centuries.

Although it was through military strength that Reza Shah rose to power, it was due to populous support that he was able to do so peacefully. Particularly the middle classes of Iranian society wanted to see a strong centralised government established, and Reza Shah was seen as the means for the realisation of that goal.⁵² With a strong stable centralised constitutional government Iran would be free from the control of any one of the domestic power groups and be independent enough to prevent international influences.

Reza Shah wanted to secularise politics and release Iran from the influence of religious authority in particular, and raise Iran's status to be a nation on equal standing to the powerful Western states. Although he had used his first years to demonstrate his Shi'a faith to gain the respect and confidence of the Ulema, once he had expanded the army, suppressed the tribes and established himself as Shah, he destroyed much of the Ulema's power through authoritarian secularisation. This was done initially by reforming the judicial and education systems, and continued through a process of modernisation and Westernisation.

⁵¹ Banani.p.56.

⁵² Ansari.p.20.

Seeing how domestic power groups had influenced the Shahs rule in the past, Reza Shah wanted to reduce the influence of domestic power groups and look to the West to develop a strong and independent Iran. Through judicial reform, new courts were established and several changes were made to give more prestige to Iranians within Iran. Assuming the population would feel the same about the benefits of Westernisation as he did, Reza Shah stated 'It is not necessary for me to mention the effect of judicial reforms on the progress of the national welfare and how these reforms contribute to the national prestige'.⁵³ In 1924 and 1926 trial penal codes were introduced. Reza Shah believed that a justice system along Western lines might enhance the view of Iran in European eyes. A new civil code was introduced in 1928, with general codes based upon the French system, and personal status based upon Shar'ia law.

From 1936, judicial authority was removed from the Ulema through legislation that enacted a law requiring the registration of property and documents (including marriages and divorce), to be done through secular courts only. Previously this function had been one of the most important done by Shar'ia courts, and had been the largest income source for the lower clergy. As a result of the law change many clergy had to seek secular employment, lowering their status and reducing their influence.⁵⁴ Further to this, when the permanent secularisation and Westernisation of

⁵³ Reza Shah, Royal Speech dated 26 April 1927, Enclosure document 7 to Foreign Office Archives 371 (General Correspondence), E2316/560/34 dated 5 May 1927. Cited in Ansari.p.46.

⁵⁴ Banani.pp72-73.

the judiciary system was completed in December 1936, judges were required to hold a degree in law, which excluded many Ulema from the judiciary breaking down their domestic power.

Although this new law caused initial problems with a lack of qualified people, this was overcome by importing Western experts to fill gaps. Between 1922 and 1939 Tehran University employed eight French and two Italian professors to teach law.⁵⁵ Reza Shah was able to remove the authority of the Ulema despite the fact they got their power from the people, not the Shah, and the Ulema position was safeguarded by the constitution. Through employing an authoritarian government, it was not that the Fundamental and Supplementary laws had changed, but that they were ignored by the Shah and over-ruled by force.

The faculty of law at Tehran University said of this constitutional violation that ‘...we interpret the second article of the Supplement to the Fundamental Law to mean that new laws should not conflict with the Shari’ah in principle. Otherwise that article would be impractical.’⁵⁶ Article Two of the Supplementary Laws stated that it was Mujtahids as opposed to Majiles that were to determine laws, and whether or not they were in conflict with Islam. But by 1936, all authority in Shar’ia was removed from the Ulema. Influences of Western style law was prominent through Reza Shah’s reign, and changed cultural patterns in urban areas, but had little effect in villages which were mainly bound to traditional

⁵⁵ Banani.p.75.

⁵⁶ Banani.p.77.

lifestyle. Reza Shah had managed to remove the power from two of the most powerful domestic groups, the Ulema and the tribes whilst Westernising Iran, suppressing opposition, and maintaining control.

Continuing his modernisation programme Reza Shah reformed the taxation system and in doing so created thousands of new state employees which made up a major part of a new middle class. He introduced economic reforms to modernise the economy that was to be the foundation for a government able to maintain the independence of Iran, and compete with foreign powers. Infrastructure of thousands of kilometres of new roads, bridges and railways were built (including the trans-Iranian railway) which tripled the workforce between 1931 and 1941. Security for the infrastructure was provided by the army and increased commerce domestically and internationally.⁵⁷ Industrial developments began in the 1930s and increased seventeen-fold during Reza Shah's reign. Wage earners employed in modern factories were less than a thousand in 1925 but had increased to over fifty-thousand by 1941.⁵⁸

One of the most controversial of the Shah's modernisation and Westernisation plans was the dress reforms. These were implemented between 1925 and 1935 and aimed at changing people's appearance from ethnic, class, tribe or religious identity to a uniformity that was aligned with Western practices. Firstly the controversial 'Pahlavi hat' was introduced as the official hat for Iranian men in 1927. This replaced the

⁵⁷ Kamali.p.169.

⁵⁸ Abrahamani.p.147.

turban which was the prophet Mohammad's habitual head covering, and was viewed as the marker between faith, or non-belief of Islam. The change in headdress was introduced at the same time as the judicial review and met opposition as the hat's visor impeded touching the head to the ground during prayer. The Ulema took bast, and bazaaris closed in protest at the law, but through repression, and some concession the hat stayed, and the Shah maintained control.⁵⁹

This was not the first time protest had occurred regarding Westernisation of dress regulations. For example in the 1820s Abbas Mirza introduced boots to military uniform, and the Ulema protested it made washing feet before prayer cumbersome, and in Qajar Iran the kolah rimless cap was introduced and replaced the turban for Iranian men. The past dress codes however were not imposed by official decree as Reza Shah's laws were, and the government did not have the means to enforce the laws as Reza Shah did. Following the Pahlavi hat, a 1928 law imposed Western dress for all males, as a uniform clothing for Iran. Once again this met opposition from the Ulema, so exception was granted to religious authorities who applied individually and were approved by the government. A fine or imprisonment was imposed on non-conformists and the profits from the fines would be used to purchase the uniform clothing for the poor.⁶⁰

To Reza Shah, the Ulema symbolised backwardness, and in giving the state the power to determine who was learned enough to wear the traditional

⁵⁹ Atabaki and Zurcher.p.210.

⁶⁰ Atabaki and Zurcher.p.219.

clothing and turban, he hoped to reduce the total number, and therefore their overall influence. Unwittingly, by exempting the religious authorities from the dress laws, instead of removing the religious authority from society, he provided an important distinguishing mark to forge a special identity for them inadvertently giving his strongest opposition an identifiable and unifying marker.⁶¹ In 1930, a law was passed ordering all school children to wear clothing made from Iranian cloth, which shortly after, was extended to all government employees.

In 1934 Reza Shah turned to raise the status of women. Educational institutions admitted women, and public places faced fines if they discriminated against women (for example cafes, cinemas, hotels), and veils were outlawed. Firstly only school girls were unveiled and in 1935 protests against the dress laws took place openly through telegrams to the Shah, and in semi-secret meetings held by Ulema. These were suppressed by force, including the storming and killing of demonstrators within shrines and mosques, with much bloodshed, arrests and exiles of senior Ulema. It was from this point on that Reza Shah declared the veil banned.⁶² In January 1936, Reza Shah was accompanied by his unveiled wife and daughter while he made a speech on the emancipation of women. Despite much protest, throughout Iran, several social events were organised at which government officials and employees were required to attend with their unveiled wives. From this point on government officials faced dismissal if they brought veiled wives to functions, and low-ranked

⁶¹ Ansari.p.48.

⁶² Atabaki and Zurcher.p.233.

government employees faced fines if they did not parade their wives unveiled thorough the streets.⁶³

It was the Ulema that protested the most to the unveiling. A British diplomat reported that there was much discussion on the reaction of the Ulema,

...various Mullahs wept over this rape of Islamic tradition, and the people are enjoying with a morbid horror and indignation definitely cautions, the prospect of some of the religious leaders dying of grief and strain, or else committing suicide...it is rumoured that a sayyid, prominent at Khoi, in resisting the order to unveil was arrested, shaved and sent home wearing a European hat, and that he was found dead in bed on the following morning.⁶⁴

The climax of the protests occurred on the anniversary of the Russian bombing of the Imam Reza Shrine in Mashhad, a Mullah spoke out demanding the repeal of the orders for male headdress, and female emancipation. Police were deployed and met with missiles and insults, and over 250 infantry and cavalry blockaded the shrine. The confrontation ended with the machine gunning of those in the shrine. Three days later there was still protest within the shrine and on the fourth night, the door was forced open and machine guns fired in to clear the shrine.⁶⁵ Opposition to the government was not tolerated, and even less so was opposition by the Ulema. By firing into the shrine the Shah demonstrated that he would not allow religion to interfere with government policy.

⁶³ Abrahamian.p.144.

⁶⁴ Cited in Fischer.p.98. (referenced to British Public Records Office, file number FO 416/94, 1936.)

⁶⁵ Fischer.p.99.

In addition to the unveiling, guidelines were published explaining how women were to behave in public so they may integrate into society. The thought of women interacting with men they may not know, and not being segregated in public, was as shocking as the unveiling itself in Iran's patriarchal society.⁶⁶ The decrees regarding dress increased, as Ulema were prohibited from wearing religious robes and the turban outside of mosques or religious places, uniforms were introduced to all schools; and the brimmed Phalavi hat was enforced by decree to apply to all males. Further, veiled women were banned from appearing in public.⁶⁷

The dress laws were the most visible reform that Reza Shah implemented as he hoped to improve nationalism and nation-building. Standardisation was seen as an important criteria for building the Pahlavi state. With a large number of tribal and ethnic groups in the country, the dress codes would enable Iranians to see themselves as being a community and in abandoning traditional dress and wearing Western style clothes, the Iranians would surrender to the advance of Westernisation within Iran and embrace the move towards modern practice. Internationally Reza Shah hoped that the European nations would see Iran as worthy of equal standing on the international scene, and that Iranians would not feel inferior to other states due to a difference in head covering or dress.⁶⁸

Overall through Reza Shah's reign much changed in Iran. Financial reforms, agricultural reforms, language reforms (to replace Arab words

⁶⁶ Ansari.p.69.

⁶⁷ Kamali.p.173.

⁶⁸ Atabaki and Zurcher.pp.227-228.

with new Persian terms) and trade reforms were conducted. Modernised transportation and communication was developed along with the exploitation of natural resources such as steel and iron. Reza Shah implemented industrialisation such as the development of concrete factories, grain processors, fruit drying and packing plants, rice cleaning, meat canning, soap, glass, paper and cigarette manufacturing plants that were established, state owned and operational by 1941. Infrastructure developments, city growth, electricity in homes and street lighting were all achievements of Reza Shah's government. He was able to do this through consolidation of power and autocratic central control, and through raising ideas of nationalism, helped by long periods of influence from outside.⁶⁹ He did not want to wait for Iran to slowly adapt and change towards Westernisation and modernisation, nor was he prepared to wait for due legal process to occur before changes were made. Through force and enforcement, Reza Shah's rapid modernisation transformed Iran. The modernisation and Westernisation caused much discontent among the traditional power bases that were repressed through his rule.

The traditional power groups within Iran were the tribes, the Ulema, the bazaaris and the landowners. Each group established their power through the reign of a Shah and had some degree of influence over the Shah's rule through their ability to apply pressure or rouse protest. Tribal power lasted as long as the Shahs were dependent on their strength to remain in the throne. As Reza Shah developed a loyal military force based on Western militaries, the tribes lost their place as a necessity for royal reign. As

⁶⁹ Bananai, pp.130-147.

change to land ownership was implemented, it affected the tribes as holders of tribal lands and also the landowners as a powerful group in their own right. The bazaaris contribution to the tobacco protest in response to the Shahs concessions to foreign countries, and the constitutional revolution demonstrated the strength the bazaaris had in society, and particularly in alliance with the Ulema. Together the bazaaris and the Ulema could wield significant influence over the Shah's political decisions. The Ulema influence penetrated the religious and cultural aspects of Iran gaining significant strength through the Constitutional Revolution, and then losing their power through Reza Shah's judicial reforms. The emancipation of women and the dress laws were an affront to the Ulema's strict Islamic principles, and the loss of their ability to enforce Shar'ia caused their anti-Western sentiment to grow stronger.

The key domestic groups wanted power over the Shah, and used opportunities to protest and influence political decisions. They had strong influence on the Shah's rule, protesting against the Shah's responses to international influences when such responses impacted on their own status or power. As the Pahlavi Shah was able to suppress the domestic groups and overrule them by force for the first time, their ability to influence political decisions was lost. Reza Shah's rapid Westernisation caused massive discontent among the repressed domestic groups and as their power over the Shah was lost, it was the international influences combined with the Shahs authoritarian approach that were identified as causes of their loss of power. The occupation of Iran in the Second World War, and abdication of the Shah in favour of his son, was identified as an

opportunity to reassert some of their traditional power. The last Shah would face some difficult challenges and the domestic power groups and international influences would have a significant impact on his rule, including the eventual fall of the monarchy.

CHAPTER THREE. IRAN UNDER THE LAST SHAH AND THE IMPACT OF WESTERNISATION.

Iran was under allied occupation in 1941 when Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was crowned Shah and the Ulema, tribal leaders and the landholding elite that had been suppressed under Reza Shah tried to reassert their power and regain the status that they had enjoyed before 1925. Groups that had benefited from Reza Shah's rule were equally determined to retain the power and influence they had gained since 1925. Mohammad Reza Shah was able to maintain domestic control to a point, as following the allied invasion the army suffered mass desertion and was about half its pre-World War Two size.¹ His challenge was to legitimise his power whilst establishing a well equipped security force, and gaining support from strategic allies in the West.

He was aged 22 at the time he was appointed Shah, and extremely inexperienced. The tension between international influence and independence, and domestic control remained through Mohammad Reza Shah's rule and eventually led to the Islamic Revolution which saw Iran's place in the international community changed and the domestic power structures overhauled. Outside influence and the desire for the Westernisation and development of Iran through suppression of the domestic power groups led to significant domestic discontent. The repression of domestic power groups and rapid Westernisation by Mohammad Reza Shah shifted the populace focus and triggered an overthrow and total rejection of the monarchy and the West.

¹ Daniel.p.146.

The period 1941-1953 saw instability in ministers and cabinets, with 148 ministers, and 31 cabinets in the twelve year period. From 1947-1951, there were six prime-ministers. The internal instability of Iran caused concern for America and the Shah was seen as the one consistent figure in Iranian politics. America wanted to stabilise Iran after the Second World War, concerned that Iran might fall to Russia in its weakened state, and encouraged the rebuilding of the army which in turn caused the Shah's domestic opponents to be increasingly suspicious of his gradual increase in power.

As he continued in the autocratic style established by his father, Mohammad Reza Shah worked to gain strength through establishing and consolidating royal armed forces and removing power from the tribes, Ulema, bazaaris and landholders. He increasingly had contact with the West as America's intention to stabilise Iran worked in conjunction with the Shah's efforts to Westernise Iran. As the Mossadiq affair turned into an international oil boycott, the Shah almost lost total control, which was a turning point in his rule towards increasing autocracy. State control of security through SAVAK (Security and Intelligence Organisation) and the military, and decreasing political freedom saw newly elected American President Kennedy pressure Mohammad Reza Shah to liberalise his rule.

This liberalisation took the form of 'The Revolution of the Shah and the People' or the 'White Revolution'. It was a twenty year programme of economic and social reform and political development that had the aims of

breaking the power of the feudal aristocracy, improving living conditions and educational facilities for peasants, reforming the administrative and justice systems, establishing democratic local government whilst developing the nation morally, socially and economically.² It was a means to make Iran into a modern nation along Western lines, without bloodshed. The Shah sought to ally Iran closely with the West through this domestic modernisation and Westernisation programme while building his international relationships. Domestic opposition was suppressed and the Shah increased his powers further, justifying the increasing autocracy as being essential to the modernisation of Iran.

Mohammad Reza Shah believed that to address the real causes of Iran's problems he had to get bread, housing, clothes, hygiene and education to everyone. He moved to develop a plan to this end through a total of nineteen principles. In 1963 the first six principles were announced; land reform as the distribution of land to those who worked on it; nationalisation of forest and pasture land; transformation of state enterprises into private companies; universal suffrage (particularly votes for women); and the creation of education and health corps, to teach in the villages.³ The domestic changes made during the White Revolution were significant, and the land, education, health and women's franchise reforms had the biggest influence on the domestic political situation.

² Watson, Keith. 'The Shah's White Revolution – Education and Reform in Iran', *Comparative Education*, Vol. 12, No. 1, March 1976.p.27.

³ Pahlavi.p.73.

The purpose of the land reforms was to break down the feudal aristocracy, give fairer distribution of wealth and land ownership, bring about fairer living conditions for peasants aiming for every peasant working his own farm. The Shah was influenced by the American post war ideology. The American Secretary of Agriculture wrote ‘The love of freedom is deeply rooted in the family farm community...This love of freedom is the real backbone of democracy. Farm families have moral values to offer that are of great importance to American democracy.’ President Truman said ‘We believe in the family size farm that is the basis of our agriculture and has strongly influenced our form of government.’⁴ The land reform occurred in three stages; firstly, landowners were prohibited from owning more than one village which left peasants who worked the land the option of buying the surplus through a loan payable over fifteen years. Secondly, the landowners who did not personally cultivate their land had to let it on a thirty year lease, or sell it to those that cultivated it; and thirdly, landowners that leased their land had to share the income with the worker, or sell the land to the worker.⁵ The Shah reported that as a result of the land reforms over two million peasants became land owners, agrarian production nearly doubled, and loans became readily available to peasants. However the reality was slightly different.⁶

Of the plots that were allocated to the peasants, the majority were too small for efficient and economic cultivation. Though the reforms were targeted

⁴ Cited in Araghi, Farshad. A. ‘Land Reform Policies in Iran: Comment’, *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol 71, No. 4, November 1989.p.1047.

⁵ Pahlavi.p.76.

⁶ Pahlavi.p.79.

to benefit the peasants, unforeseen divisions occurred within the peasant class. While some peasants benefitted from the reforms, some were left at a disadvantage. There was insufficient land to give every peasant family a plot, which left hundreds of thousands of landless peasants trying to get work on a plot of more than ten hectares which were rare, or to move to the city to look for employment. In 1974 there were 1.6 million peasant households, of which 72.2 % owned less than six hectares of land. The basic subsistence for a peasant family for one year required seven hectares, and of the smaller plots, the land was distributed through land parcelization, in up to 16 non-contiguous plots.⁷ Where peasants used to seek assistance from their landlords for irrigation and mechanisation, after the reforms the landlords felt released from their traditional obligation. The old decentralised agricultural system became more and more centralised as the new land owning farmers asked central government for help. Many small holders ended up selling their new farm to their old land lord and moving to the city for employment.⁸

The land reforms fundamentally changed land ownership within Iran designed to remove feudalism, establish capitalism and promote political stability through a change from tenancy to owner-occupied land holding. The reform program aimed to maintain and solidify the Shah's power by undermining the landed class in the countryside and cities which included many Ulema. The land reforms removed the socioeconomic power base of

⁷ Araghi.p.1048.

⁸ Ansari, 2003.p.159.

the landlords as they were deprived of their income and authority.⁹ By reducing the power of the landlords in the urban centres and parliament, the Shah could unify the existing power bloc, and by removing their dominance in the countryside, he could access the support of the peasantry. Because the peasants were identified as the group that supported traditional leadership, they were seen as being key to increasing mass support. In addition to the domestic power shift, the Shah hoped it would strengthen his international position, particularly in relation to America.¹⁰ The introduction of agri-business farming model from America and mechanised farming methods, further increased the numbers of unemployed while the government credit system left many peasant families in significant financial trouble.¹¹ One in three peasant families did not receive land and of the 1.64 million families that did, three out of four were allocated less than that required to become an independent commercial farmer.¹² Although the era of powerful landholders had ended, the peasants as a class were not better off under the new scheme, and the seeds of discontent were sown.

During the White Revolution the number of educational institutions tripled and enrolments were increased by hundreds of thousands to millions within kindergarten, elementary, secondary and vocational schools, and domestic and foreign colleges. A 'literacy corps' was made up of conscripted male high school graduates and volunteer females as the new army unit which

⁹ Lambton, 1969. p. 114.

¹⁰ Araghi. p. 1047.

¹¹ Araghi. p. 1048.

¹² Abrahamian 1982. p. 447.

worked to improve the literacy of peasants and the rural community.¹³ It consisted of around 74,000 men and women carrying literacy to far reaching villages.¹⁴ Mohammad Reza Shah stated that 85.1% of Iran was illiterate and over a fifteen year period, the number of pupils in rural areas increased by 692%.¹⁵ By 1966 the school attendance of urban seven to fourteen year olds was estimated at 75.8%.¹⁶ The education corps in the villages assisted with infrastructure including building and repairing schools, mosques, local roads and bridges, and laying underground pipelines. A special tribal education programme was developed offering tented schooling to children of the nomadic tribes in the Fars province. The schools moved with the tribes during migration. Over 3,000 teachers had been trained for this in the ten years between 1963 and 1973, and in Shiraz, a permanent secondary school for tribal children was established.¹⁷

The education policy had an unanticipated effect on the traditional class system, with the huge growth in education and the impact of Western student politics on Iranian students who had travelled abroad. The school system was overhauled in 1965 to direct students to the needs of the economy. University graduates were expected to find employment within the state bureaucracy, and as a result industry and business was suffering from a lack of middle-management knowledge and technical personnel. Educated students generally left Iran to work in the West and in 1974 to

¹³ Fischer.p.59.

¹⁴ Ramazani, Rouhollah. K. 'Iran's 'White Revolution': A Study in Political Development', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, April 1974.p.132.

¹⁵ Pahlavi.p.85.

¹⁶ Fischer.p.59.

¹⁷ Watson.p.35.

combat this, education was made free if students served the state for two years for each year of education after high school.¹⁸ This caused an accelerated growth of the professional middle class and a further change to the social structure. Many peasants affected by the reforms moved into the quickly expanding middle class.¹⁹ This growing middle class had increasing demands of the government for changes, which presented a difficult situation for the Shah, who was promoting modernisation as a means to get Iran out of the middle ages, while retaining the traditional status of the dynasty.²⁰

As the literacy corps showed early success in its implementation, the health corps was established. In January 1964, medical and dentistry students, and nurses were conscripted to give free services and teach healthcare in the villages. Often the health corps people travelled with the literacy corps. The function of the corps was to prevent epidemics, treat sickness and teach and promote good hygiene conditions in the villages and rural areas. Along with health education, work included digging wells, installing pumps, channelling water and establishing public baths. By 1976 over 1,240 doctors were employed, and 1,422 rural centres of hygiene and medicine were established.²¹ This flew in the face of more fundamental interpretations of the rule of women in Islam.

¹⁸ Fischer.p.59.

¹⁹ Bill.p.40.

²⁰ Ansari.Ali M 'The Myth of the White Revolution: Mohammad Reza Shah, 'Modernization' and the Consolidation of Power', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3, July 2001.p.8.

²¹ Phalavi.p.87.

The increased rights and protection of women was an area which drew particular opposition from the Ulema. The first steps towards women's emancipation had occurred under Reza Shah through his dress laws and education for women. During the White Revolution these were expanded introducing the right to vote and be elected to parliament. In 1967, the Family Protection Law was passed which introduced reforms relating to marriage, divorce and child custody. It restricted the traditional male rights of polygamy and arbitrary divorce whilst increasing women's rights within society and within a marriage.²² These reforms encompassed a large portion of the population, and were not restricted to class. The emancipated and educated women of Iran became symbols of Iran's modernisation and Westernisation to the pride of the Shah and the disgust of the Ulema.²³ Under the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, women held positions as ministers, deputy ministers, senators, Members of Parliament, mayors, provincial office holders, members of the armed forces and police, diplomats, judges, lawyers, director generals and professors throughout Iran.²⁴

The White Revolution did not come without protest. There was strong opposition from the religious institutions in particular and with an undercurrent of protest it became clear that vast numbers of the middle class weren't accepting the Shah's programme. The classes that supported traditional leadership had to be strengthened and bought into closer contact

²² Daniel.p.158.

²³ Mahdavi, Shireen. 'Women and the Shii Ulama in Iran', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, January 1983.p.18.

²⁴ Mahdavi.p.17.

with the political elite and it was the peasant class identified as such. With the Nationalist opposition in jail, the government got thousands of peasants to the polling booths to endorse the White Revolution reforms through a democratic process. In a corrupt nationwide referendum with an almost unanimous vote in favour, the reforms were legitimised.²⁵ Political opposition came from the National Front in the form of a boycott of the referendum and public criticism that reform measures should come from the Majiles, not the Shah. The Shah had little appreciation for social and cultural context of the White Revolution's developments, and forced a pace of change on Iran that was self-defeating and brought social upheaval. Changes and shifts in power happened faster than the people could adapt.²⁶

Domestic trouble broke out in the early 1960s initially in the tribal areas, triggered by the land reforms, but in overall opposition to the government taking control of traditional tribal lands. After the tribes' suppression under Reza Shah and subsequent re-claiming of their authority during the Mossadiq era, the tribal khans and landlords were realising that the land reforms would remove their income, power and influence.²⁷ The land reform plans to remove feudal land holdings caused concern amongst the landlords who would lose their economic and political power. They argued that the radical changes to the socio-economic patterns of the regions would cause mass disruption to agriculture and have economic impact on Iran.

²⁵ Bill, James A. 'Modernization and Reform From Above: The Case of Iran', *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 32, No. 1, February 1970.p.31.

²⁶ Andersen, Roy R. Seibert, Robert F. Wagner, Jon G.(Eds) *Politics and Change in the Middle East, Sources of Conflict and Accommodation*, Eighth Edition, Pearson Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 2007.p.151.

²⁷ Lambton 1969.p.113.

The Ulema contested that instead of bringing about progress, the land reform caused social and economic dislocation. They argued the reform contradicted Shari'a law, was not implemented under a Majiles, and was therefore unconstitutional. The Ulema took issue to the rights given to women as being contrary to Shari'a and Islamic practice, and had an issue with the education aims. With so few Iranians being literate, the Ulema were not questioned in their interpretation of the Qu'ran, because they were the only ones who could read it to interpret the writings and implement them as law. They derived their status and power from their religious authority which was enabled by their literacy, and scholarship in religion. Their authority was increased by the fact that the populace generally had to accept what they said, as people could not read the primary text themselves to get a different interpretation. The Ulema wanted to hold their power as the only legitimate authority on religious law, with the right to assert religious interpretations over policy.

As domestic discontent increased, the lessons the Shah had learnt through the Mossadiq incident and the subsequent coup, influenced his behaviour. As Mossadiq had essentially become a dictator, for the remainder of his rule, the Shah took steps to ensure that the circumstances that nearly cost him his position, didn't reoccur.²⁸ He was determined that the Prime Minister be a servant of the crown, and that defence of the crown be the most important consideration. Following the Mossadiq era, the National Front was disbanded and the Shah attempted to destroy the Tudeh Party.

²⁸ Cleveland,p.293.

To prevent any opposition to the monarchy an internal security force was established with the help of American CIA and Israeli advisors. The Sāzmān-i Ittilā‘āt va Amniyat-i Kishvar (SAVAK) or State Intelligence and Security Organisation helped the Shah achieve his two primary objectives; modernisation and the concentration of executive authority in his own hands.²⁹ In his own words

SAVAK was created, then, to put an end to subversive activities which constituted, from outside and inside, a serious danger to Iran...There were in Iran, as elsewhere, traitors, spies, agitators and professional saboteurs about whom our government and military leaders had to be informed. It was SAVAK's job to keep them informed.³⁰

The SAVAK were the most dominating force in Iran. All forms of political expression, organisations or activities were banned, and the mass media was censored to ban any expression of threat to the security of the monarchy. The SAVAK was an effective force for the Shah, crushing and demoralising all political opposition, manipulating citizen behaviour, controlling and redirecting public opinion for the benefit of the monarchy's security and stability.

Clerics and theological students who were deemed irreconcilable were persecuted, and some who spoke out against the American investments in Iran were tortured or killed.³¹ Execution, imprisonment and exile were rife and seemingly indiscriminate at times. One of the most notable actions of SAVAK was the Army purge in 1954, when around six hundred officers were accused of supporting Tudeh, and tried by military tribunal, resulting

²⁹ Avery, Hambly and Melville.p.444.

³⁰ Pahlavi.p.175.

³¹ Avery, Hambly and Melville.p.291.

in mass imprisonment and executions.³² America wanted to secure the Shah's position as much as the Shah himself did, so provided military aid (US \$500 million) and expansion of the army as the Shah adopted a pro-Western and anti-communist policy. Oil revenues increased from \$34 million in 1954-55 to \$437 million in 1962-63, which assisted the Shah in his plans to maintain control within Iran.³³ There was little the Ulema could do to enforce their authority and control over the Shah, with the loss of their traditional counter force of the tribes and landlords.

It was during this period that the Ayatollah Rulloah Khomeini began to preach against the Shah's regime and Iran's American ally.³⁴ Although most clerics opposed the land reforms and women's rights, it was Khomeini that excelled at mass politics. He avoided speaking out against the land and women's issues specifically, and instead denounced the Shah's regime in general for concerns such as living off corruption, rigging elections, and violating constitutional laws. He was outspoken about the Shah's suppression of the press and political parties, neglecting the economic needs of peasants, workers and merchants, undermining Iran's Islamic beliefs, encouraging indiscriminate borrowing from the West, selling oil to Israel and granting economic concessions to America.³⁵

Khomeini preached for moderate reforms, as opposed to radical changes.

In one proclamation he stated;

³² Saikal.p.62.

³³ Martin.p.20.

³⁴ Ayatollah is a title given to the most eminent Shi'a legal experts.

³⁵ Abrahamian, 1982.p.426.

My generation remembers that in 1941 the Iranian people were happy that the invading foreigners threw out the Shah. I do not want the present Shah to meet the same fate as the old Shah. This is why I beseech the Shah; respect the religious authorities, don't help Israel and learn from your fathers mistakes.³⁶

In referring to the abdication of Reza Shah, and stating the Iranian people preferred foreigners to the Iranian Monarchy, Khomeini was contradicting the Iranian attitude towards foreign intervention through its entire history, yet making it sound as though he was making reasonable requests of the Shah. This was not realistic, but Khomeini represented to the Iranian people that which the Shah lacked, and was openly opposing the Shah and appealed to the masses through their religious and traditional foundations. In his speeches Khomeini adapted words of the Koran into a contemporary context adapting the meanings to emphasise the Shah's reforms as being anti-Islamic. As all his followers knew the language of the Koran this was another means for him to influence the attitude of the general population without directly denouncing the Shah.

Khomeini organised a petition to be sent to the Shah asking for the Shah to break his 'chains of serfdom' with America and show his respect for Moslems and Islamic liberties. He asked him to cease imposing his will by bullets, and to employ the growing wealth of Iran to combat poverty and ignorance so the people would be free to build their own future. Khomeini had a deep hatred of Israel, seeing it as an instrument of the imperialist powers' policy to destroy Islam. With the Shah facilitating the destruction of Islam in Iran, Khomeini believed the only way to beat the foreign

³⁶ Abrahamian.1982.p.426.

interference and weakening of Islam was for the unity of all Muslims under Islamic rule.³⁷ The Shah responded to Khomeini's petition by sending a SAVAK officer and a Mullah⁽³⁸⁾ to tell Khomeini he must stop attacking the Shah, Israel and America and if he did so he would be free to speak on other matters. Khomeini spoke out against this ultimatum, and the Shah responded with a warning, but was reluctant to make the arrest due to his religious standing, and his mass support. Police and Army were sent to Qom in strength to prevent further meetings by Khomeini and the attention this caused was used by Khomeini as an opportunity to make one of his strongest anti-Shah and anti-Western speeches.³⁹

Following this speech in June 1963, SAVAK arrested Khomeini for his public protests, and the Shah made a speech stating the Ulema were a hindrance to the progress of Iran, and advised them to stay out of politics which was outside the bounds of religion. The Ulema responded by printing and distributing pamphlets against the Shah and government, and in Mashad when police tried to remove a pamphlet from a man, a protest ensued and a policeman was killed.⁴⁰ This triggered nationwide anti-government demonstrations in the major cities for three days. These were crushed with much bloodshed following Prime Minister Amir Alam's order of shoot to kill. In 1964 Khomeini was picked up by SAVAK and exiled to Turkey before being deported to Iraq in 1965.⁴¹ Khomeini continued to receive money in exile, which he spent on schools and welfare work within

³⁷ Bakhash.p.37.

³⁸ Mullah, or Mollah, is a religious cleric.

³⁹ Heikal, Mohamed. *'The Return of the Ayatollah'*, AndreDeutsch Limited, London, Great Britain, 1983.pp.87-89.

⁴⁰ Keddie, 'Religion and Politics in Iran' .p.89.

⁴¹ Cleveland.p.294.

Iran, and as the funding for recording machines and cassette tapes that were used to distribute his propaganda sermons and instructions through Iran.⁴²

The Shah managed to consolidate his power and through force had suppressed opposition in Iran, demonstrating that the army would back up the regime whenever necessary.⁴³

The 1963 demonstrations showed the strength of religion to mobilise the masses, the popular discontent and resentment towards foreign influence on domestic Iran and the power these feelings could provoke in mass demonstration and protest. They prompted the Shah to examine his own power bases of the courts, civil bureaucracy appointments and the military. Mohammad Reza Shah viewed the military and the monarchy as being inextricably linked. He frequently wore military dress in public, and established benefits to keep the Army's officer corps loyal, while increasing the size of the armed forces as a means to establish Iran as a regional power, and maintain domestic control. In addition to his military build up and White Revolution reforms, the Shah concentrated on Iran's position on the international stage.

When the Shah launched the White Revolution in 1961, one of the goals was to have a 'national independent foreign policy' with a principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Wary of the Soviet Union's opinion of Iran's relations with America, the Shah attempted to normalise Iran-Soviet relations. In 1962, whilst still opposing communism,

⁴² Heikal.p.84.

⁴³ Graham, Robert. *Iran, The Illusion of Power*, Croom-Helm, London, 1978.p.70.

the Shah assured the Soviet Union that he would not allow any foreign power to have military bases in Iran that could threaten their security. He also emphasised that CENTO was an organisation of economic importance, as opposed to a defensive pact. With the development of inter-continental ballistic missiles, America no longer needed a regional base for offensive weapons, and began to withdraw from the region, causing fear and uncertainty in the Shah. As Iran's income from oil grew, America declared Iran to be a developed country in 1965 and announced that by November 1967, it would end its aid to Iran. The Soviet Union was pleased with these developments, as a domestically, regionally and economically secure Iran would reduce its dependence on America.

The Shah feared the American withdrawal could lead to the foreign occupation Iran experienced in the world wars, and decided to end Iran's sole dependence on America by actively improving relations with the Soviet Union. Economic and technical co-operation between the two nations increased, and in economic deals the Soviet Union was prepared to yield to make the deal advantageous to Iran, in an attempt to create a dependence on the Soviet Union that Iran would find difficult to break.⁴⁴

In 1966, Iran and the Soviet Union arranged that Iran would supply the Soviet Union with \$600 million of natural gas in return for the Soviets building Iran a steel complex, machine tool plant and pipeline from northern Iran to Caucasus, and militarily, Moscow would supply Iran with \$110 million of light arms.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Yodfat.p.30.

⁴⁵ Saikal, in Avery, Hambly and Melville.p.449.

With the Soviet Union relationship strengthened, Mohammad Reza Shah was anxious to prove to Washington that a strong Iranian military was essential for Iran to be an effective regional ally, in a period of instability and regional conflicts. The 1956 Suez crisis, 1967 Arab-Israeli War and Britain's announcement of its withdrawal from Bahrain by 1971, were events that supported the need for a strong regional power and the Shah saw this as an opportunity for himself. He worked towards this end in three stages. Firstly, to portray himself as natural successor to the great Persian monarchs of the past, secondly, through building up the size and strength of the military, and thirdly, to secure means for paying for the arms purchases through increasing oil prices.⁴⁶

As he was moving to establish Iran as a regional power on the international scene, he was also moving on the domestic front. A coronation ceremony was organised in 1967 to crown himself and Empress Farah coinciding with the British withdrawal from the Gulf. To portray himself as the successor to the Persian monarchs, the Shah commemorated twenty five centuries of Persian rule, from the accession of Cyrus the Great in Persepolis. The ceremony was a display of excessive wealth and luxury designed to impress foreign officials, a \$300 million event with the majority of materials and foods made overseas, instead of locally. The event coincided with a summer of drought and famine which further isolated him from the people. Domestic opponents of the Shah claimed he was detaching himself from Islam which further lowered the Shah's

⁴⁶ Daniel.p.161.

standing with Iranians who viewed him as a pumped up autocrat, as opposed to associating him with past Persian glories.⁴⁷

It was through the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) that the changes to the oil prices were able to be made. Through the 1970s, the Shah played an important role in leading OPEC to raise and control the price and production of oil. He used the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the Arab oil embargo as the opportunity to challenge the international oil companies' monopoly on the Iranian oil industry. The Shah became the champion of the third world against domination and exploitation, and led the oil producers through an initiative giving OPEC authority to set a common price for oil. This had a flow-on effect for the international relations of Iran. As the price per barrel rose from \$2 in 1971 to \$12 in 1973, anger at the price increase from consumer nations was directed at the Arab states which wanted the price lowered, and not at the Shah.⁴⁸ The Shah was seen as the champion for the third world in increasing the oil prices by the Arab countries, and industrialised countries were more dependent on Iranian oil than ever, as the Arab producers were seen as unreliable. Industrialised countries acknowledged the Shah's position and attempted to secure oil supplies and get a share in the wealth from its revenue.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Dabashi, Hamid. *Theology of Discontent, the Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*, New York University Press, New York, 1993.p.451.

⁴⁸ Daniel.p.160

⁴⁹ Saikal in Avery, Hambly and Melville.p.450.

The Shah continued the policy of avoidance of Iran's dependence on a single nation and in the early 1970s, Iran was purchasing arms off the Soviet Union, Britain and America. In 1971, Iran and the People's Republic of China established diplomatic relations in response to the Soviet-Indian Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation, which both countries saw as a potential danger to themselves and their interests. The Indo-Pakistani war strengthened Iran's ties with China, as both countries had ties with Pakistan. The Soviet Union supported India, and as a formal ally of Pakistan, America was neutral and forbade Iran from supplying American made arms to Pakistan. The Soviet-Iraqi Friendship Treaty of 1972 caused concern for Iran, as it saw Iraq as a means for the Soviet Union to cause instability in the region, and later directly influence. With Britain's withdrawal from the Gulf, it appeared that the Soviet Union was making preparations to be the replacement power in the region. Concerns for security were felt as a combination of Iraqi claims on Kuwait; the independence of Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates; the Soviet Union's support for the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen; and the revolt in Oman taking place.⁵⁰ The Shah wanted to strike a balance with ties between America and the Soviet Union, but it was America that Iran dealt with the most.

The Nixon Administration in America (1969-1974) supported the Shah's stance on increased oil prices, and it was through the Nixon Doctrine that arms purchases became available. In 1969 the Nixon Doctrine established that America expected its allies to be responsible for their own military

⁵⁰ Yodfat.p.33.

defence, and in situations involving non-nuclear types of aggression, America would provide economic and military assistance if requested in accordance with treaty commitments.⁵¹ In the case of Iran, military aid was provided so it could undertake the responsibility of ensuring peace and stability in the region, and the Shah was allowed to purchase almost unlimited quantities of non-nuclear weapons. Iran was to take over Britain's role in the region, once it withdrew from Bahrain, and Iran resisted attempts by any other powers to replace Britain, in particular, the Soviet Union.

By 1976 Mohammad Reza Shah had established the sixth largest armed force in the world.⁵² This military build up suited America's interests, as with the withdraw of Britain from the region, America instigated a 'twin pillar' policy, that Iran and Saudi Arabia were the 'twin pillars' that would maintain the security of the Persian Gulf.⁵³ With the large amount of American equipment being purchased, instructors were needed for training which made Iran dependent on America once again for equipment and specialists. American contractors arrived in Iran in the thousands, which caused resentment from many Iranians who felt the Shah's dealings with the West were an affront to Iran's culture and national identity. There was \$20 billion of US equipment ordered between 1972 and 1978.⁵⁴ The American Congressional Staff Report of July 1976, stated that '...upon

⁵¹ Nixon, Richard, Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam, 3 November 1969, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1969, pp 901-909.

⁵² Daniel.p.160.

⁵³ Bakhash, Shaul. 'Iran and Iraq, 1930-80', in Potter, Lawrence G and Sick, Gary G. (Eds). *Iran, Iraq, and the Legacies of War*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2004.

⁵⁴ Yodfat.p.32.

delivery between now and 1981 of equipment ordered to date, Iran, on paper, can be regarded as a regional super-power'.⁵⁵

The involvement of America in the region had wider ripples, as in response to the Nixon Doctrine and Twin Pillar policies being implemented with Iran and Saudi Arabia, the Soviet Union strengthened its relationship with Iraq, signing a treaty of friendship and cooperation in 1972, which provided America with a Cold War justification for continued support in the Gulf. As America supported Israel in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Saudi Arabia led an embargo of the sale of oil to America that was supported by many Arab states. Iran took advantage of this and pushed the oil prices to the highest they had been from \$3 to \$12 per barrel, which sent much of the world into a recession lasting through the 1970s. America was unable to take a direct military role in the Gulf region, but the importance of the Gulf to American foreign policy significantly increased.⁵⁶

The period 1964 to 1976 was one of economic prosperity for Iran. There were more jobs, improved living conditions, the military and national budgets had increased, the bureaucracy had expanded and there were many people employed by the state. The Shah increasingly personalised the political system and listened less and less to advice, becoming more and more remote from his people.⁵⁷ From 1973 to 1976, the Shah was the sole policy maker, allocating oil revenues among various agencies and projects,

⁵⁵ US Congress Sub Committee on Foreign Assistance. Staff Report. *US Military Sales to Iran, July 1976*, Washington D.C., 1976, cited in Avery.p.453-454.

⁵⁶ Fawcett, Louise. *International Relations of the Middle East*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2005.p.275.

⁵⁷ Martin.p.23.

directly supervising the armed forces and security organisations, foreign oil and policy negotiations, nuclear power plants, and development projects. Public services were substantially expanded and modernised, education enrolments increased, security and military forces were expanded and re-equipped, and the Shah emerged as one of the leading figures in the Persian Gulf and OPEC. Close ties were established with Western Europe, Muslim countries, communist bloc countries, Israel, and particularly America.

The Shah's regime became increasingly repressive, and SAVAK grew to monitor every domestic organisation. The Shah made incursions into areas that he could influence, in an attempt to control all aspects of Iran. His actions increased the gap between rich and poor, as government policy favoured the elite, large companies and agribusinesses, over small businesses and cultivators. Many people in all areas of society were discontented but powerless to fight the Shah. The urban drift between 1956 and 1976 saw the urban population increase from six to sixteen million.⁵⁸

A good deal of government policy was influenced by America, and American firms were given precedence of contracts. There was an increase in luxury goods, music and films, and the American influence and increasing Westernisation was seen by some of the population as impure, a departure from Islamic values and undermining the ethical teachings of Islam, although by others as a positive and modern change. The 1960s and 70s saw a growth in reformist movements among the clergy stimulated by

⁵⁸ Martin.p.24.

the alienation of young people from religious institutions. The Ulema were increasingly repressed by the state, but as the gap between rich and poor increased, Islamic organisations filled the gap and drew the many poor into the mosque networks.

Further increasing his control in 1975, the Shah declared Iran to be a one party system, merging the two previous parties into Hezb-e Rastakhiz-e Melli, the National Resurgence Party. This was in direct opposition to his previous public statements that one party states were for dictators, and could be found in communist countries. The purpose of this move was to change Iran from a military dictatorship into a totalitarian one party state in which ‘democratic centralism’ would be observed, and help the Shah lead Iran toward a great civilisation.⁵⁹ The Shah asked Iranians to support the Resurgence Party through either its right or left wing, and said any opposing the party were non-patriots who should cease political opposition or face penalties.

Through SAVAK the Shah controlled opposition, and through the oil wealth, he was able to finance economic and military programs. The Resurgence Party intensified state control over middle, urban and rural classes and controlled all public media. The government press was releasing plans to replace the bazaars with efficient supermarkets, build highways and develop Iran along Western lines. Small businessmen feared the Shah would destroy them and their livelihoods. The Resurgence Party denounced Ulema as ‘medieval black reactionaries’ and claimed the Shah

⁵⁹ Abrahamian 1982.p.442.

was spiritual as well as political leader. The Muslim calendar was replaced by the royalist calendar, women were discouraged from wearing chador (full veil) to university, only state controlled organisations could publish theology books, and a religious corps was formed to teach peasants 'true Islam'.⁶⁰

In the mid 1970s Iran's economy began to feel the impact of the rapid modernisation the country had undergone, and several factors resulted in acute inflation causing an economic crisis. The Shah blamed the business community and declared war on them. When the inflation did not end, the Resurgence Party organised inspection teams to 'crusade against profiteers, cheaters, hoarders and unscrupulous capitalists'.⁶¹ SAVAK established guild courts that fined, banned or imprisoned bazaar members in the anti-profiteering campaign which caused the bazaaris to turn to the Ulema for help. As domestic opposition grew with the repression, international pressure was being applied to the Shah. Human rights organisations like Amnesty International and the United Nations International League for Human Rights pressured the Shah to address Iran's human rights situation. Groups of Western educated Iranian students established their own committees against SAVAK, and publicised Iran's repression through the Western media.

⁶⁰ Abrahamian. 1982.p.444; Mahdavi, Shireen. 'Women and the Shiite Ulema in Iran', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, January 1983. p.19.

⁶¹ A. Mas'oud. 'The War Against Profiteers', *Donya* 3, January 1976.pp 6-10. Cited in Abrahamian.p.498.

When US President Carter was elected in 1976, the Shah came under pressure to address Iran's human rights practices and take steps to liberalise the political system. Following a meeting with the Shah in 1977, President Carter '...referred to Iran as "an island of stability on one of the more troubled areas of the world".' And although he acknowledged the improvements the Shah had made to Iran during his reign, he was concerned about two things: the human rights practice in Iran specifically, and the amount of offensive weapons for sale internationally.⁶²

Particularly through 1978 with the Shah's growing uncertainty of his own position, the American administration supported the Shah in the hope that he could maintain rule in Iran. 'Not only had the Shah been a staunch and dependable ally of the United States for many years, but he remained the leader around whom we [America] hoped to see a stable and reformed government organized and maintained in Iran.'⁶³ America was concerned about the Soviet Union's role in the dissent in Iran aggravating the situation through propaganda, and worried that the Soviets might see the situation as an opportunity to move into Iran. The Shah responded to the pressure to try to maintain his relationship with America, particularly his access to weapons, and to try to maintain his reputation as a forward thinking moderniser. It is thought that the Shah believed his reforms were so popular that he could afford to loosen some control, and not put the regime at risk.⁶⁴ As the Shah made small concessions economically and

⁶² Carter, Jimmy. *Keeping Faith, Memoirs of a President*, Bantam Books, United States of America, 1982.p.437.

⁶³ Carter.p.440.

⁶⁴ Abrahamian.p.500.

politically it seemed from the outside that the situation was improving. A Swiss business research group concluded that uprisings against the Shah were ‘unlikely’, officials within the US State Department stated there was ‘no effective challenge’ to the Shah, and in August 1978 the CIA stated Iran was ‘not in a pre-revolutionary state’ and the opposition had the ‘capacity to be no more than troublesome’.⁶⁵ However, with the freedoms the opposition was encouraged at their new ability to raise their voices and began to increase their protest.

Through the 1970’s the culture of resistance had been growing, with Marxist and Islamic organisations becoming popular in rural and urban areas, and student movements were increasing. The Tudeh party split into Marxist and Maoist factions and developed guerrilla organisations, the two largest groups being the Fedai-ye Khalq-e Iran which was Marxist and the Mojahedin e-Khalq which was militant but followed Marxist-Leninism. Both groups attempted to create a revolutionary atmosphere through terrorist attacks and urban warfare, to shake the beliefs of the public in the power of the state.⁶⁶ The former National Front members formed the National Resistance Movement which developed a moderate secular wing (Second National Front), and a radical religious wing (Third National Front) which became increasingly influential and worked closely with a group called the Liberation Movement. This movement was led by two staunch supporters of Mossadiq, Mehdi Bazargan and Mahmoud Taleqani, who both believed that Islam was compatible with modernity and

⁶⁵ Daniel.p.167.

⁶⁶ Daniel.p.161.

progressive social values and that the Pahlavi autocracy should be destroyed, not reformed, and that religious support was essential to any way ahead for Iran.⁶⁷ SAVAK targeted these groups to quash any opposition to the Shah.

The political repression, the pervasive presence of SAVAK, press censorship, the Shah's perceived dependence on America and corruption, were long term causes of unpopularity and as the economic situation worsened, students became increasingly restless. The Shah responded to students by increasing resources in the form of student loans and scholarships, improving student food and dorms, while concurrently increasing repressive measures: arrests en masse for reading outlawed texts, and protesting or criticising the regime in classrooms. The experience of imprisonment however, was crucial in connecting students to other revolutionary movements, and prison became a recruiting place of students by other organisations. The culture of resistance increased through radio stations and the distribution of cassettes and publications. A trans-national sub-culture of resistance united the general populace under a new political ideology in the struggle against the regime.⁶⁸

In protest to the Resurgence Party, the Qom seminary closed, and street confrontations between the Army and some two hundred and fifty theology students resulted in the arrest and military conscription of the students. As

⁶⁷ Daniel.p.162. Martin.p.148.

⁶⁸ Moallem, Minoo, *Between Warrior Brother and Veiled Sister, Islamic Fundamentalism and the Politics of Patriarchy in Iran*, University of California Press Ltd, London, 2005.p.84.

clerics were arrested for writing against the regime, the Ulema organised a general strike at the bazaars, and the prominent Ayatollah Rouhani declared the Resurgence Party as being against Iran's interests, against the constitution and against the principles of Islam. From exile in Iraq, Ayatollah Khomeini advised all true believers to stay away from the Resurgence Party which violated individual rights, constitutional liberties, international laws, and intended to destroy Islam, ruin agriculture, waste resources on weapons and plunder Iran on behalf of American imperialism.⁶⁹ Following this proclamation Khomeini's close associates were arrested resulting in the imprisonment of more clerics at one time than ever before.

Within Iran several prominent clerics were leading the protests, who outranked Khomeini in the Shi'ite hierarchy, and were moderate in their demands to return to a constitutional government. As the Shah pursued a modernised Iran, rapid industrial growth caused housing and goods prices to increase. High inflation decreased the income of the middle class which was the Shah's principle base of support. The demand for oil decreased in 1976 as a result of the rising prices. The 30% inflation was blamed on the business community for 'price fixing', and industrialists and shop keepers were jailed for over pricing. The Shah instigated deflation by slowing investments and cutting state jobs which resulted in lower business activity and living standards, and higher unemployment. The trading networks and modern communications allowed the bazaars throughout Iran to form links

⁶⁹ Abrahamian.p.445.

between themselves and with the Ulema network. These growing networks looked to Khomeini for leadership.⁷⁰

In 1977 the National Front and fifty lawyers, judges, intellectuals, journalists former political leaders and academics circulated open letters against the Shah's repression and corruption and openly denounced the Resurgence party. The suspicious death of Ayatollah Khomeini's son in the same year began a cycle of unrest amongst religious society. Khomeini was very much an active participant in the protests openly denouncing the Shah, as being in exile, he had no reason to moderate his writings or recordings. The exile itself had made Khomeini a symbol of opposition to the Shah.⁷¹ He wanted to protect Islam from foreign and secular encroachment, accused the Shah of being dependent on foreigners and allowing Iran to be a victim of cultural imperialism. Resentment towards the Shah and public protest and demonstration increased. Many Iranians felt Iran's culture and values were being ignored for the sake of the Shah's entry into 'club West'. The populace believed a return to traditional Islamic values was the solution to the Westernisation or 'West-toxification' as one critic named it that was occurring in Iran.⁷²

An article printed in a government newspaper in January 1978 claiming Khomeini was the son of a trader of Indian origin and an agent of colonialism triggered violent uprisings and protest, the unexpected catalyst

⁷⁰ Martin p.26.

⁷¹ Martin. p.127.

⁷² Begolo, Zephie. 'Veiled Politics', *History Today*, September 2008, Vol 58, Issue 9, pp42-44.

for an unprecedented response. Hundreds of thousands of Iranians took to the streets and the uprising was beyond anything the Shah could control through the use of force. As protestors were killed, state suppression of the protests was marked every forty days with a mourning ceremony organised by the clergy. The demonstrations were targeting the symbols of state power, and Western influences such as liquor stores, banks, theatres, hotels and police stations. The forty day cycles maintained momentum for the uprising, and mourning cycles were observed in mosques which allowed a routine of political protest to be established within a Shi'a framework, giving the religious establishment the authority to direct the protest by default. The first forty days saw a crisis in Tabriz, and violent clashes on the streets led to the Shah deploying helicopter gunships and tanks to control the protests. The second forty days saw a crisis in Isfahan and Yazd, in which riot police were deployed, and the third forty day cycle saw crisis in twenty four cities across Iran.⁷³

Middle and working class Iranians joined the protest in June 1978 triggered by the economic recession, and marked the first time these classes had taken political action. Major demonstrations saw martial law imposed to regain control with limited success, until a fire in a cinema in Abadan. The doors of the cinema had been locked and over 400 men, women and children were killed. This event triggered more violent protest as the government blamed the opposition and protestors, and the opposition blamed SAVAK. At the mass funeral over 10,000 mourners chanted anti-Shah sentiments to which the Shah responded with concessions allowing

⁷³ Abrahamian.p.161.

political parties to campaign for election, so Iran could be a Western styled democracy, and appointed a new Premier Sharif Emami.⁷⁴

The next round of protest began on the last day of Ramadan fast as a controlled and permitted demonstration saw mass gatherings, outdoor prayers and political protest in the major cities. Control was soon lost and the gatherings developed into a rapidly increasing crowd with anti-Shah and anti-American slogans. Martial law was imposed in an attempt to regain control by force, and with large crowds barricading streets and targeting military vehicles with Molotov cocktails, the military was ordered to shoot to kill. Although casualty numbers varied, from the military claiming 477 died, to the opposition claiming 4,000 died, this day became known as 'Black Friday', and was a turning point for Iran as it became clear either a revolution, or a military counter-revolution, was needed to control the domestic situation.⁷⁵

The Shah was losing control of the military as they became unwilling to shoot unarmed civilians in the streets. In many cases it was the officers that were shooting as the soldiers refused to do so, and loyalty to the Shah was rapidly deteriorating. Immediately following Black Friday, President Carter communicated his support directly to the Shah. Following the steady escalation of protest within Iran, Carter received reports that the Shah would be unable to survive the crisis unless he took immediate and drastic steps. French intelligence in Iran reported to Washington that the

⁷⁴ Stempel, John. D. *Inside The Iranian Revolution*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1981p.292.

⁷⁵ Phalavi.p.173

Shah would be unable to survive the situation, and that the West would be able to work with Khomeini as he was anti-communist, and specifically anti-Russian. Khomeini declared that once the Shah had been overthrown Iran would be a reliable supplier of oil to the West, wouldn't ally with the Soviets, and was willing to have friendly relations with America.⁷⁶

As Khomeini and his supporters felt that the Shah had already been defeated, they stepped up the strikes and demonstrations whilst subverting the military through encouraging desertion. There were also meetings held with American officials to prove that relations with Iran could continue without the Shah.⁷⁷ While America preferred the clergy to the communists or leftists, the Soviet Union issued propaganda attacking the radical clergy favouring a constitutional monarchy over a powerful clergy and Islamic Republic.⁷⁸

Workers' strikes brought Iran to a standstill and in addition to pay or working condition demands, the workers were making political demands for the return of Khomeini and the end of the Shah's tyrannical rule. The Shah had lost support at home, lost control of the military, the oil industry and all government revenues were disturbed by the strikes, as the Bazaars closed, and Tehran suffered frequent power outages due to the strikes. Street protests and demonstrations continued and the Shah made erratic decisions in response to the situation, increasing martial law whilst giving amnesty to political prisoners, or ordering the army to take over

⁷⁶ Abrahamian.p.524.

⁷⁷ Daniel.p.172.

⁷⁸ Kamali.p.219.

newspapers then withdrawing them, and lifting all press censorship.⁷⁹ For the holy day Ashura on 10 December 1978 all demonstrations were banned, which was ignored. The Ayatollahs Taleqani and Sanjabi led demonstrations through the streets, and the army began to defect, refuse to fire, or fire on officers and royalists.⁸⁰ The Shah had lost control of the country, and in a desperate attempt to conciliate the middle and working classes, he appointed National Front member Shahpour Bakhtiar as Prime Minister, and the Shah left Iran on 16 January 1979 for exile in Egypt after persuasion from America and Bhaktair.

The demonstrations continued and in January 1979 around two million people in Tehran endorsed the Shah's exile, while from his own exile Khomeini declared that any government appointed by the Shah was illegal and that obedience of Bakhtiar was obedience to Satan.⁸¹ On the Shah's departure the populace were calling for Khomeini to return through slogans "Death to the Shah, Long Live Khomeini", and "God is Greatest, Khomeini is Leader". Through signs and graffiti, often the word Shah was written upside down or backwards to symbolise the toppling of the regime and Arabic script was used in many revolutionary banners to give an aura of religious sanctity to the revolution.⁸² The protests were huge, including many Iranian women protesting with the crowds dressed in the full black chador, which became a symbol of the Islamic movement demonstrating

⁷⁹ Abrahamian,2008.p.519

⁸⁰ Abrahamian,2008.p.170.

⁸¹ Abrahamian.2008.p.525.

⁸² Chelkowski, Peter. And Dabashi, Hamid. *Staging A Revolution, The Art of Persuasion in the Islamic Republic of Iran*, New York University Press, New York, America, 1999.p.108; Mahdavi.p.18.

solidarity in the revolutionary campaign against the Shah, and the anti-Western pro-Islamic sentiments of the masses.⁸³

Khomeini returned to Iran from his exile in Paris on 1 February 1979, and as the street demonstrations increased Khomeini declared they were a 'referendum for an Islamic republic'.⁸⁴ There were over three million people on the streets to greet Khomeini, who took a helicopter from the airport to the cemetery where he paid respects to the 'tens of thousands martyred for the revolution'. Khomeini claimed over 60,000 had died for the revolution, but the real figure was less than 3,000.⁸⁵ With the Shah gone, the army and domestic security disintegrated, and with a collapsed economy, many organisations were competing for power. Iran's revolutionary situation was volatile and chaotic and the outcome was uncertain. The main two options for power were an Islamic theocracy or a constitutional regime.

The relationship between Iran and America had been closer than ever after the Second World War in America's efforts to stabilise the Middle East and prevent Russian intervention. The White Revolution was the Shah's response to pressure from the American President to liberalise his rule, which worked to modernise and Westernise Iran. It successfully broke the power of the tribal Khans and landholders for good, created a new educated middle class and forced Western ideals onto society. The reforms provoked strong opposition from Ulema who protested the un-Islamic

⁸³ Begolo, Zephie. 'Veiled Politics', *History Today*, Vol. 58 Issue 9, Sep 2008. p.43.

⁸⁴ Martin.p.152.

⁸⁵ Abrahamian.p.161.

reforms and the implications they would have on Iran. Following the Mossadiq affair the Shah established SAVAK which became the most dominating force repressing political expression, or any public opposition. Resentment caused by American involvement and domestic repression gave rise to opposition to the Shah from many high ranking Ulema. Ayatollah Khomeini emerged as a charismatic leader who was exiled from Iran for his outspoken opposition and maintained a following from his exile.

The Shah developed his relationship with Russia and China and developed Iran's profile as a stable nation in an unstable region through OPEC and as the prosperity and modernisation of Iran grew, so did the domestic repression. Although the Shah tried to balance his international relations, it was America that dominated the Shah and it was America that was the regional hegemon. The Shah wanted Iran to be forward, developed, modernised and Westernised and it was this rapid Westernisation that to a large extent caused the Islamic revolution. Moving to a one party state caused massive discontent and domestic opposition became organised and widespread through underground networks. A government newspaper article against Ayatollah Khomeini tipped the balance and mass uprisings were beyond the control of SAVAK and the military. Anti-Western sentiments became anti-American specifically during the last Shah's reign and as his foreign and domestic policy was implemented through force and repression. The pro-Islamic and radical Islamic sentiments found a leader in Khomeini who returned to a volatile and revolutionary Iran where the future was uncertain. Westernisation, modernisation and repression after

centuries of international influence saw mass discontent become revolution.

Centuries of international influence and the Shah's requirements to balance international pressures with domestic control came to a head with Mohammad Reza Shah, as he found himself in the position where he was able to modernise Iran through forcing change on the population and repressing domestic power groups. Aiming to bring Iran into line with developed Western countries and make it a great nation, Iran's last Shah underestimated the response imposed Westernisation would have on society. The total rejection of the monarchy and the West led to the Islamic revolution overthrowing centuries of monarchic rule, leaving Iran with an uncertain future, both domestically and internationally.

CHAPTER FOUR. THE DOMESTIC IMPACT OF THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

In the period following the overthrow of the Shah, Iran's future was uncertain. A collapsed monarchy, a government appointed by the fleeing Shah and the religious leader declaring protesting crowds a national referendum for an Islamic Republic, meant the domestic future of Iran was anything but straightforward. Khomeini challenged the leadership of Iran and through a series of measures worked to gain control of the country and fulfil his vision for an Islamic state. Political institutions were established and the domestic opposition split three ways. Domestic repression was imposed in response to the opposition and Khomeini initiated a cultural revolution. Khomeini's death saw a change in leadership, and the establishment of a Presidential position. Successive Presidents changed the focus for Iranian politics and this chapter outlines these domestic changes that occurred after the Islamic Revolution.

With the Shah fleeing, Bakhtair's government was immediately challenged by Khomeini and changes were quickly made to create a new Iranian political system, rejecting everything Western, and developing a theocracy. The Islamic revolution saw Iran transformed into a religious state with a new government structure, political direction and domestic rule. Bakhtair's government was unable to enforce order and authority following Khomeini's return and as the military refused to fire on crowds, Bakhtair

turned to America for support with no results. The populace continued to protest organised by the Ulema in the hundreds of thousands across all the main cities. The religious network was interlinked which allowed rally after rally to be mobilised and co-ordinated across the cities of Iran.

The priorities for Khomeini on his return to Iran were to establish order and control, and a government. In the immediate post-Pahlavi period Iranians could exercise free speech, association and assembly for the first time in several decades. Khomeini's regime lacked the means to curb these basic freedoms and had to establish its power and system of governance, while still remaining onside with the populace during the tumultuous period. Khomeini selected Mehdi Bazargan as Prime Minister to lead a new government that was formed on 5 February 1979 and challenged the leadership of Bakhtair.

There were two Prime Ministers and political bodies jostling for leadership and control of Iran, but within one week the Shah's military collapsed, allowing the seizure of government establishments, and the Shah's appointed government was replaced by Khomeini's. Bazargan had been a popular and respected supporter of Mossadiq in the 1960s, who believed that Islam, social values and modernity were compatible in a democratic and anti-imperialist government. The Bazargan government contained veterans from Mossadiq's nationalist movement and some National Front members.

It was Khomeini's intention to reassure the government ministers and the armed forces that the removal of the Shah did not mean the downfall of Iran. Installing Bazargan as Prime Minister was the first part of a staged process to secure Khomeini's own position. Khomeini believed if clerics took power in Iran immediately the populace would assume that power and control had been their real objective of the revolution rather than the promotion of Islam and the removal of foreign interference and repression.

¹ Strengthening his own position, Khomeini established several groups which firmly placed power with Khomeini, and little with the government.

The Revolutionary Council was a primary structure created by Khomeini consisting of his advisers to essentially be a 'government in waiting'. It was established in secret in December 1978 whilst the Shah was still in Iran, and was designed to be a paramount body to which all other government bodies referred. The existence of the council and the names of its members were kept secret until after the revolution.² All members of the Revolutionary Council were Tawhidi leaders which meant those who accepted the dominance of God only, as opposed to non-Tawhidi who accepted human dominance. For the first year of the Islamic Republic, the Revolutionary Council held the actual power in Iran and Bazargan's government existed to execute its policies. It was the supreme legislative and administrative body of Iran led by Khomeini and the majority of its members were Ulema. The

¹ Martin, p.151

² Martin, p.150.

council could veto policies of Bazargan's government, or issue their own decrees. The role of Bazargan's government to restore administrative and economic security to Iran proved near impossible, as his work was overridden by the Revolutionary Council.

In late 1978 just preceding the revolution, vigilante groups called Komitehs (committees) were set up based from mosques as the establishments that the state couldn't suppress. It was the Komitehs that had distributed essential goods to the people during the strikes and power outages at the end of the Shah's reign and took over police and administrative powers within the cities. Bazargan believed his government's credibility hinged on gaining control over the Komitehs but instead of abolishing them, Khomeini harnessed their existing influence and power through a Central Komiteh.³ The central Komiteh was to watch over the local Komitehs and mosque guards that were established throughout Iran, and purge any clerics that were associated with religious leaders other than Khomeini, in particular those associated with Grand Ayatollah Shari'atmadari who was emerging as a strong opposition to Khomeini.⁴ The establishment of the Central Komiteh allowed Khomeini to dissolve unreliable Komitehs, and co-ordinate ones that were supporting him. It was through the Komitehs that Khomeini could ensure that the Islamic establishments and leaders were ones that were loyal to him. The Central Komiteh was under the jurisdiction

³ Hiro, Dilip. *Iran Under the Ayatollahs*, Routledge & Keegan Paul, London, 1985.p.100.

⁴ Fandon, John. *Iran*, Icon Books Ltd, New York, 2007.

of the Ministry of Interior which moved the Komitehs out of the mosques and into offices to formalise government control over regions. Their tasks included the recovery of unauthorised arms, arresting counter-revolutionaries, implementing the Islamic regime's programmes, protecting ministries, government assets and public buildings, preserving peace and order during referendums or elections, communicating Islamic revolutionary ideas to the masses and other regulatory tasks. As the Central Komiteh was one of the most powerful defence structures established the Revolutionary Guard was formed to give it some authority.

The Revolutionary Guard was a special force responsible to the Central Komiteh to 'protect the Islamic Revolution' formed by consolidating the Hezbollahis and Mojahedin-e Enqlab, militant groups run by the Revolutionary Council and Islamic Republican Party clerics, and any militants or gang members that could be recruited through the Mosques.⁵ Recruits came from the youths that had been active in the anti-Shah demonstrations, typically from the lower middle class or poor urban areas, dedicated to Khomeini and the revolution. They were seen by many as the counter force to the remainder of the Shah's army led by officers whose dedication to the revolution was questionable.⁶ The role of the Revolutionary Guard was to safeguard the revolution and its achievement, with the focus on the formation of a strong fighting force loyal to Khomeini.

⁵ Daniel.p.186.

⁶ Hiro.1985p.110.

Its slogan was “Our movement is Husayni and our leader is Khomeini” which drew on historical Islamic principles through the example of Imam Husayn⁷, the grandson of the Prophet who was martyred in 680 AD and established a political precedent for Muslims involving *jihad*⁸ and *shahadat*⁹. Recruitment for Commanders of the Guard Corps was open to Iranians that were honest; had Islamic piety; possessed revolutionary spirit and courage; adhered to the principles of Velayat-e-Faqih; had military spirit and experience; and had management and command abilities.¹⁰ The Islamic Revolutionary Guards developed an auxiliary, the Baseej which enforced Islamic standards on society.

The third organisation established was the Revolutionary Tribunal. This was not set up as an official and permanent part of the government but oversaw a series of ad hoc courts under the umbrella of the Revolutionary Council, headed by religious judges to pass sentence on former officials of the Shah’s government and anyone accused of counter-revolutionary activities. These tribunals executed hundreds of SAVAK agents, military officers and former politicians in their vengeance against all involved in the Shah’s regime, awarding punishments according to Shar’ia for ‘fighting Allah’ or ‘causing corruption on earth’. The revolutionary courts functioned

⁷ His death symbolised a fight between a tyrannous ruler and the liberator, an Imam and munafiqeen (hypocrite who feigns belief in Islam for personal power) and Tawhidi and non-tawhidi leadership.

⁸ Holy war, or fighting for the cause of Islam.

⁹ One who dies for the sake of Islam.

¹⁰ Hussein.p.142. Cited in ‘Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’, *Echo of Islam*, Tehran, 1, No. 1, April 1981.p.21.

outside the justice ministry, which had itself been directed by Khomeini to accelerate decisions and abolish the appeals system.¹¹

With Khomeini in charge of the Revolutionary Council, the Central Komiteh, the Revolutionary Guard, the Revolutionary tribunal and the populace, his state dwarfed the 'official' state rule of Bazargan, whom Khomeini had also appointed.¹² On 30 and 31 March 1979 a referendum was held providing a 'yes' or 'no' choice for "Should Iran be an Islamic Republic?". Prime Minister Bazargan wanted a third option to be available on the ballot for a Democratic Islamic Republic. Khomeini would not allow this on the grounds that Iran needed an Islamic Republic, not a Democratic Republic as the Western term 'democratic' was used by people who knew nothing of Islam. Islam was so perfect, no adjective was suitable to use with it, and particularly not a Western term.¹³ The referendum turned out a 98.2% 'yes' vote. To achieve this hundreds of thousands of youthful demonstrators were enfranchised as the voting age was lowered from 18 to 16, and voting was extended from one to two days. Over 20,251,000 people voted in the referendum, and on 1 April Khomeini declared 'the first day of the Government of God'.¹⁴

¹¹ Hiro, 1985.p.106; Daniel.p.187; Hiro, Dilip. *Iran: The Revolution Within*, The Institute For the Study of Conflict, United Kingdom, 1986.p.15.

¹² Abrahamain 2008.p.162.

¹³ Abrahamian.p.163.

¹⁴ Hiro, 1985.p.108.

By June Bazargan's government had a constitution drafted endorsing principles of an Islamic state, but not granting any special administrative or judicial powers to the religious establishment. Many clerical leaders were concerned that the constitution was so important it should be examined by an elected body of experts.¹⁵ This saw the Majles-e Khebragan, Assembly of Experts established which was a Constituent Assembly of 73 members each representing a particular province who were to be appointed through elections. The first election was organised for August 1979 and between the establishment of the Assembly of Experts and the elections for its representatives, followers loyal to Khomeini formed a political party 'The Islamic Republican Party'.¹⁶

The Islamic Republican Party was established with the aims of guarding the revolution, foiling counter-revolutionary attempts to reinstate the Pahlavi dynasty, and infusing Islamic principles into political, economic, cultural and military spheres of Iranian society. The Party was open to all who believed in the Islamic Revolution, wanted to purge society of the symptoms of the royal dictatorship and colonialism; establish human freedoms of speech, publication and association; end economic dependence on foreigners; end foreign plunder of Iran's resources; and have the Army defend the country from external threats as opposed to being an instrument

¹⁵ Bakhash, Shaul. *The Reign of the Ayatollahs, Iran and the Islamic Revolution*, Basic Books Inc., Publishers, New York, 1984,p.75.

¹⁶ Hiro.p.109.

of domestic suppression.¹⁷ The Party objective was to make the masses politically aware of Islam; prepare them to fight against despotism colonialism and imperialism; eradicate destitution, exploitation, corruption, illiteracy and privation from society. It wanted to free Iran's economy and agriculture from imperialist influences to achieve self sufficiency; replace the Western aspects of society with Islamic; and see the revolution continued successfully. On the international scene, the party stood for political, economic, cultural and material freedom working to safeguard Iran's freedom and sovereignty from Western or Eastern influences.¹⁸ These principles gave the Party appeal to many people given the discontent that they had felt under the Shah, and was seen as a positive political way forward for the country.

The Islamic Republican Party had a large following and wide influence. It was supported by the majority of the Ulema and the rural masses that had a lot to gain from a radical transformation of the political and social structure. The idea of a programme of Islamic social justice appealed to many. The main rival to the power of the Islamic Republic Party was 'The Freedom Movement' which had support of the middle class, professionals, bazaaris, Westernised university students and scholars, and mainly those opposed to an Ulema dominated government.¹⁹ The Revolutionary Guards were used to harass political opposition to the Islamic Republican Party, particularly

¹⁷ Hiro.p.109.

¹⁸ Hussein.pp140-141.

¹⁹ Cleveland.p.432

the leftists and liberals.²⁰ The elections for the Assembly of Experts saw supporters of Khomeini have landslide victories and 55 of the 73 seats went to clergy, most of whom had direct links to the Islamic Republican Party.

An initial constitution draft went before the Assembly of Experts to assess if it agreed with the vision of an Islamic Republic and Khomeini addressed the first assembly informing them that the constitution should be based only on Islam. The document was re-written by the Assembly of Experts into a constitution that required all Iran's laws and regulations to comply with Islamic rules and standards, making the Ulema the dominant governing authority in the state.²¹ The Islamic government would strive to achieve the development of moral virtues, free education, scientific and technical research, the elimination of colonialism, and prevention of all foreign infidels, despotism, autocracy, and monopolism.²²

Importantly, the draft constitution established a new political-religious position of Just Faqih (Supreme Jurist). An Islamic government requires an Islamic leader and this leader must be a Just Faqih. The President, members of the national assembly and councils were to be elected by the people, but the ultimate authority of the country lay with the non-elected officials of the Council of Guardians and the Just Faqih.²³ This Jurist embodied and

²⁰ Daniel.p.186.

²¹ Cleveland.p.433.

²² Hussein..137.

²³ Cleveland.p.433.

protected the character of the Republic, had to be pious, just, courageous, capable and knowledgeable, acquainted with the circumstances of the age, and recognised by the majority as leader.²⁴ He must know the Shari'a thoroughly and must be just in its application. The Imams possessed the qualities of a Just Faqih but since the last Imam has been in occultation for eleven centuries, an alternative to an Imam must be found to avoid living in anarchy, or under an alien or atheist government. Although a Just Faqih lacked the infallibility and personal superiority of an Imam, he was deemed qualified to head an Islamic state and rule with the assistance of legislative, executive and judicial bodies.²⁵

The system of Vilayat-e Faqih was established for Iran, which is the rule of divine law as interpreted and applied by the Just Faqih. The Just Faqih could appoint members to the Council of Guardians, the chief officials of the judiciary, the Chief of Staff of the armed forces, the Commander of the Revolutionary Guard, and the majority of members of the Supreme Defence Council. Candidates for President must be approved through him, and he could remove the President if he was deemed incompetent by the Majiles. The Just Faqih was given the authority to declare war and peace and was to ensure that the Republic retained its Islamic identity through guarding the people until the 12th Imam returned from occultation.²⁶ Ayatollah Khomeini was appointed as the Supreme Jurist for life, and with this appointment his

²⁴ Martin.p.160.

²⁵ Hiro.p.116.

²⁶ Martin.p.160.

place as the overarching authority both religious and political was legitimised and sealed. He was to be succeeded by an equally qualified jurist, or by a council of three to five jurists to be elected by another Assembly of Experts if a qualified individual was not available.²⁷

The proposed constitution established that amongst the duties and power of the Just Faqih was the authority to appoint the highest judicial authorities in Iran to the Council of Guardians. This council was established to ensure legislation passed by the Majiles conformed to Shari'a and could veto all legislation passed by the Majiles. It was a twelve member council, six of whom were to be Just Faqihs conscious of the current needs and issues of the day, appointed by the leader or leadership council, and six jurists specialising in Shari'a elected by the Majiles from a list of candidates approved by the supreme Judicial Council.²⁸

Not all Ulema supported the position of the Just Faqih or the appointment of Khomeini in that position. Many objected to the position for being too close to the Sunni concept of the Caliphate. On the day the powers of the Just Faqih were to be written into the constitution draft, several clerics pleaded for reconsideration, citing that the role of the Faqih conflicted with the principle of popular sovereignty already approved in the constitution. They argued it would be seen that the clerics had established their own

²⁷ Bakhesh.p.84.

²⁸ Hiro.pp.121-122.

government, that criticism normally directed at political authority would be directed at the clergy, making the religious authority vulnerable, and eventually Islam's power would decline.²⁹ Several Ayatollahs held in great respect both in and outside of Iran, some of whom were senior to Khomeini, held moderate views and were considered by many as more appropriate for the position of Just Faqih. Ayatollah Shari'atmadari, Mehdi Bazargan, Ayatollah Taleqani, and Abul Hasan-e Bani-Sadr openly criticised Khomeini's view of Vilayat-e Faqih, arguing there was no provision for Ulema to intervene in state matters unless parliament was going to enact a law contravening Shari'a, or there was no leader available to establish order in society. They held that the duty of the government was to govern, and the Ulema could advise on Shari'a but had no role in politics.

Khomeini said those who did not believe in the political leadership of the Ulema were enemies of the revolution, that the movement to reduce Islam to a system of ritual and worship was a deviation from the true faith encouraged by the imperial West to weaken Muslims and their countries, and Islam was divine law and should therefore be applied as a form of state.³⁰ These differences led to clashes between the leftist revolutionaries and the clergy in late 1979 as the debate was taken to the public forum through newspapers, interviews, and public discussions and speeches. The complete change of Bazargan's draft constitution prompted Bazargan, seven

²⁹ Bakhash.p.85.

³⁰ Hiro.pp.116-117.

members of the Provisional Government and Shariatmadari to send a petition to Khomeini pleading him to dissolve the Assembly of Experts before the Constitution went to referendum, because it violated popular sovereignty, lacked consensus, endangered Iran to clericalism, elevated Ulema to the ruling class, and undermined religion as any shortcomings of the government would be blamed on Islam.³¹ This petition was ignored and Khomeini's constitution was the one that went to referendum.

The organisations established under the new regime forced Iranians into line with Islamic values through the same intimidation and violence the Pahlavi Shahs had used when they modernised. The position of Islamic Jurist was the realisation of Khomeini's dream of an Islamic state ruled by the religious establishment, and society was under as much, if not more restriction, than it had been under the Pahlavis. As Shari'a became the law of the land interpreted by those Ulema that had mastered Islamic Jurisprudence, the revolution elevated the Ulema from interpreters of divine will for the people and monarchs, to the rulers themselves.

The overriding councils and governing establishments of the Islamic Republic made Bazargan's programme impossible to implement. He could not fight the constant clerical opposition to his domestic policies and attempts to maintain good relations with America. The Islamic movement had radicalised, and Bazargan's liberal government was no contest for the

³¹ Abrahamian 2008.p.168.

radical clergy who had the real power in their hands. The American hostage situation provoked interesting domestic developments as it showed a clear division between the main opposing domestic groups in Iran. A protest march consisting of Marxists and leftist Mujahidin, religious students, intellectuals and Fedai-e khalq to the occupied American Embassy was stopped by the Revolutionary Guards, Hezbollah, and radical clergy who would not co-operate with leftists and Marxists. The leftists had believed that the clergy would support them in their fight against America as a common enemy; however the clergy response and the division in the groups was consistent with Khomeini's stance that he would not work with the communists, even in the overthrow of the Shah. For Khomeini and the radical clergy, the enemy of their enemy was not their friend and they would not unite with the leftists, even in a common cause.³²

The seizure of US hostages in November 1979 led to domestic political tension and was a political setback for the moderate clerics. A failed rescue attempt by America which resulted in a helicopter crash and the deaths of eight American servicemen assisted Khomeini, who claimed it was divine intervention. President Bani Sadr could not impose his will on the multiple political power centres or dominating Islamic Republic Party. His demands that the students hand the hostages over to the Islamic Revolutionary Council to allow a UN commission to meet them was refused. Bani Sadr referred the matter to Khomeini as the next most powerful person in Iran

³² Kamali.p.224.

who ruled in favour of the militant students, and stated that the Majiles would decide what to do with the hostages once it had convened which would not occur for another three months.

Khomeini used the opportunity of the American hostage crisis to submit the revised constitution to a national referendum on 2 December 1979. He declared that people abstaining from voting would be abetting the Americans and desecrating the martyrs of the Revolution.³³ To rally voters for the constitutional referendum he referred to America as a satanic power wanting to destroy Iran, and to vote to prevent the enemies of Islam fulfil their dreams.³⁴ Millions of Iranians were rallied to march against America, and on the day of the referendum 15.7 million people cast votes. Shariatmadari and his supporters refused to endorse the constitution and boycotted the referendum, but despite this a 99% vote in favour of the constitution gave Khomeini constitutional powers that far surpassed any Shah.

Candidates for President were not allowed to be clerics as decreed by Khomeini, and the first elections were held in January 1980. After two candidates were removed from running by Khomeini, Abol Hasan-e Bani Sadr won by a 75 % majority. He was appointed leader of the Revolutionary Council and delegated as Commander in Chief of the armed

³³ Abrahamian 2008.p.168.

³⁴ Hiro.p.139.

forces by Khomeini in February 1980. The President was the highest official authority after the Supreme Jurist, presiding over cabinet, appointed ministers, ambassadors, governors, mayors, and the directors of the National bank and NIOC. Following the establishment of the new government of the Islamic Republic, the failure of Bazargan's liberal government and the election of Bani Sadr as President, there remained tensions between various groups within Iran's political circles.³⁵ Many clerics supported Bani Sadr's presidency, but within a few months much of that support had gone. Despite his best attempts Bani Sadr had as little influence as Bazargan had had in government.

Bani Sadr increasingly lost power as the Majiles elections were corrupted to ensure his allies or affiliates were banned from running or disqualified after being elected to seat Iranian Republican Party members. The Majiles rejected Bani Sadr's choice for Prime Minister and selected a career thug that would do the Iranian Republican Party's dirty work.³⁶ In protest Bani Sadr refused to countersign bills passed through parliament that were designed to reduce the powers of the president, and urged his supporters to protest. Khomeini warned that no one could oppose the Majiles, and any that did would meet the fate of Mohammad Reza Shah. He urged Bani Sadr

³⁵ Martin p.166.

³⁶ Daniel.-p.200.

to return to Islam, and somewhat hypocritically told him not impose dictatorship on Iran.³⁷

While the domestic and international political situation was in turmoil in the years following the revolution, the domestic groups that had existed but were repressed during the Shah's rule were still active. They had growing support and open meetings and demonstrations for their own particular goals, as well as combining in co-ordinated centralised protests as the new freedoms following the Shah's overthrow were exploited.³⁸ The groups could be mainly divided into three categories; Islamic, centre and centre left which included liberals and socialists, and radical left. The Islamic Republican Party established prior to the Assembly of Experts election was the major pro-Khomeini Islamic group, and the Islamic People's Republican Party was its main opposition. This latter party was founded by bazaar merchants, middle class politicians and clerics opposed to Khomeini, and associated with Shariatmadari and the more moderate clerics.³⁹

In the centre left were the National Front and the Freedom Movement which were both established pre-revolution. They were anti-Shah but pro-constitutionalism and heavily represented in Bhaktiar's provisional government. The National Democratic Front was the third main centre left group which stood for political freedoms, human rights, economic

³⁷ Hussain.p.157.

³⁸ Hussein, *Islamic Iran* ' p.129.

³⁹ Bakhash.p.67, and Martin.p.165.

programmes that benefitted the majority of the population, and a decentralised political system based on elected local councils.⁴⁰ The Tudeh Party⁴¹, Fedai Khalq⁴², and Mujahedin-e Khalq dominated the Marxist-Leninist movement and saw the Islamic revolution as a step towards the socialist revolution that they believed would follow. The Fedai Khalq conducted revolutionary action and were heavily involved in instigating violent clashes in the Turkoman and Kurdish areas.⁴³ There were also regional organisations such as ‘Kurdish Democratic Party’, ‘Cultural and Political Society of the Turkoman People’, ‘Islamic Unity Party’, and the ‘Cultural, Political and Tribal Organisation of the Arab People’ that wanted ethnic or cultural political autonomy at the provincial level.⁴⁴

The Mujahidin became one of the largest domestic groups formed during Khomeini’s reign. There have been several Mujahidin groups throughout Iran’s history, before and after the revolutionary period.⁴⁵ The Mujahidin-e Islam was formed after World War Two.⁴⁶ The Mujahedin of the Islamic Revolution was a force of around 6,000 armed men established by an amalgamation of three Islamic Militia groups just weeks before Khomeini

⁴⁰ Bakhsh.p.68.

⁴¹ Continued to function as a wing of the KGB in Iran since its establishment in 1942, sought to undermine Islamic Iran to eventually take control of Iran once Khomeini died by placing agents in military and police positions in preparation for an overthrow following the revolution.

⁴² Also spelled Fedayin-e Khalq Fedayan-e Khalq, Fedai-ye Khalq-e Iran, or Fedaiyan-e Khalq followed strictly Marxist ideology formed in 1965 at the same time as the Mujahedin-e Khalq.

⁴³ Bakhsh.p.69.

⁴⁴ Hiro.p.103.

⁴⁵ Mujahedin, also spelled Mojahedin, Mujahiddin, or Mojahedeen. Derives from the term *jihad*, Holy Warriors, or Soldiers of God, those who struggle in the name of Islam, Warriors of the Islamic faith who oppose forces that threaten or seek to destroy their religious beliefs. A Mujahid is a warrior for a holy cause, Mujahidin being a group of Mujahids.

⁴⁶ Hiro.p.46.

ordered the Revolutionary Guards to be established. This was a pro-Khomeini group who, in conjunction with the Movement of Militant Muslims had attacked the American Embassy.⁴⁷ The Mujahedin-e Enqelab was cultivated by the clerical faction of the Revolutionary Council and the Islamic Republican Party, in preparation for a national armed forces or police. It was this group that was amalgamated with the Hezbollahis to form the Revolutionary Guards in May 1980.⁴⁸ The Mujahedin-e Khaleq founded in 1965 by former Liberation Movement members, was the major domestic opposition to Khomeini.⁴⁹ It was after the removal of President Bani Sadr that the Mujahidin-e Khaleq began to mount guerrilla warfare against Khomeini's regime. They declared war on the government as they believed there was no hope for a just and constitutional opposition to the government.

In addition to his legitimised and established government functions, Khomeini had several groups on his side, the main group being the Hezbollah⁵⁰ who would attack areas of Western influence that Khomeini would refer to in his speeches. Hezbollah had tenuous ties to the Islamic Revolutionary Party and disrupted any demonstrations held by anti-Khomeini groups, particularly the Mujahidin-e Khalq. The Hezbollah and

⁴⁷ Hiro.p.109.

⁴⁸ Daniel.p.186.

⁴⁹ The group had split two in 1975 with a Marxist Leninist organisation to concentrate on workers, and an Islamic leftist organisation to focus on students. They carried out guerrilla activities to overthrow the Pahlavis and were committed to an Islam and Marxist fusion for an egalitarian Islamic Society (Hiro p.146)

⁵⁰ Also spelled Hizbullah, Hizbollah, or Hizballah, Party of Allah, or Party of God. Has several branches, internationally, but strongly supported by the government within Iran. Used to break up anti-regime demonstrations. Also known as 'club wielders' for use of violence against non-Khomenist protests.

the radical clergy led the Revolutionary Guards and attacked all groups that were opposed to Khomeini and the revolutionary government. Hezbollah were openly active in support of Khomeini's decisions during the Cultural Revolution and in enforcing Khomeini's decisions on the streets against the other protest groups.

Khomeini decreed the Mujahedin-e Khalq as Marxist, and therefore atheist and would not be tolerated in the Islamic Republic as he struggled to maintain control of his goals for Iran. In 1981 the government decided to stop the Mujahidin from operating, publicly banning all protest action.⁵¹ A bomb at the Islamic Revolutionary Party conference killed over seventy men including ministers and deputies of the party. The Mujahidin were blamed and several thousand executions followed as Khomeini stepped up the repression, in order to establish the power and control of Iran that he had worked towards as his ultimate goal.⁵² Khomeini warned Iranians that the danger Communists posed was no less than that America posed, and as the groups became more active protesting for the freedoms Khomeini had preached, the regime got tighter and tighter.⁵³ The Tudeh Party was accused of spying for the Soviet Union in 1983 and many members were killed or imprisoned. The Feda'iyan was declared illegal in May 1983, and the Kurdish Democratic Party was driven into Iraq in 1982-1984 after major

⁵¹ Mottahedeh, Roy. *The Mantle of the Prophet, Religion and Politics in Iran*, One World, Oxford, 1985.p.389. and Hiro.p.181.

⁵² Keddie *Modern Iran*.p.253.

⁵³ Hussain.p.181.

assaults in which Iran took all rebel-held Kurdish territory.⁵⁴ As the opposition to Khomeini was removed over time, the freedoms and benefits that were anticipated following the fall of the Shah did not meet the expectations of society. Protests against the regime for Marxist, Leninist or moderate Islam goals were repressed and the power of the Islamic Republic was firmly established.

Khomeini had worked himself into a position where he regarded himself to be the final authority on where the revolution should take Iran, and by virtue of his appointment and his influence, he was able to impose his personal interpretation on the nation. The restrictions imposed after the Islamic Revolution were the same if not worse than those of the Pahlavi period and had started immediately. A press law was passed shortly after the election of the Assembly of Experts and enforced on 7 August 1979 as Revolutionary Guards occupied newspaper printers and confiscated that day's issue. Demonstrations the following day were dispersed by Revolutionary Guards and the opposition co-ordinated a protest march on 12 August consisting of the National Democratic Front, Fedai-e Khalq and Mujahidin which was attacked by Khomeinists and the Revolutionary Guards.⁵⁵ As the society and the regime were Islamic, Khomeini stated there was no place for those who opposed or questioned the importance of Islam in all aspects of life. Radical clerics who saw the universities as

⁵⁴ Keddie *Modern Iran*.p.254.

⁵⁵ Hiro.pp.128-9.

centres of protest against clerical rule launched a ‘cultural revolution’ sending Revolutionary Guards into the major universities targeting the political centres and bolting campus doors.⁵⁶

Bani Sadr intervened and got a guarantee that universities could stay open until the end of Spring, when they would close to adjust their curriculum for the revolutionary needs of the Iranian people. This became a three year close down for most universities. Khomeini supported the radical clergy stating that Iran didn’t need universities that educated the Shah’s government, but needed people educated with loyalty and responsibility to Islam and the people. The Islamisation was embraced by the radical clerics, while the secular and religious left and the liberals opposed it.⁵⁷ The Cultural Revolution was a major blow to Iran’s cultural and intellectual life that had grown under the Shah, and encouraged emigration by students, teachers and professionals as over 20,000 teachers were dismissed and nearly 8,000 military officers were removed for being too Westernised.⁵⁸

On 7 March 1980 Khomeini suspended the Family Protection Law of 1967/75 which had given women the right to apply for a divorce without permission of her husband, required a man to get consent from his wife before taking a second wife, and transferred family affairs from Shari’a to

⁵⁶ Kamali.p.224.

⁵⁷ Martin.p.169.

⁵⁸ Keddie *Modern Iran*.p.250.

secular courts.⁵⁹ He banned co-education and ruled women employed in government ministries must dress to Islamic standards with veils. This triggered mass demonstrations by women each day. On 11 March Revolutionary Guards fired over women's heads, and the following day men stoned and attacked the demonstrators with knives. On 13 March Khomeini's office said the Chador was desirable, but not necessary.⁶⁰ Iranians had learned the power of mass protest to influence controversial decisions made by their leaders, and women in particular, seemed to have more assurance of their position within society. The role of women in the struggle for the Islamic Republic had been acknowledged in the preamble and Article 21 of the Constitution, and Khomeini acknowledged them as the pillar of the family. With the family being the fundamental unit in society, their role in the development of children was noted as being their most serious responsibility.⁶¹ Despite this formal recognition, the freedoms women had gained under the Pahlavi modernisation was then replaced by repression in the Islamic Republic.

In August 1982 the Supreme Judicial Council declared all un-Islamic modern codes null, and judges were ordered to use Shi'ite codified laws or fatwas from Ayatollahs. Judges were only allowed to be Mojtaheds and secular judges could hear cases if they were proficient in Shari'a, otherwise they were dismissed. This significantly affected the courts, as the Islamic

⁵⁹ Hiro.p.55.

⁶⁰ Hiro.p.132.

⁶¹ Martin.p.163.

ruling on many issues was unclear.⁶² A retribution bill was passed by the Majiles that reintroduced flogging, amputation, stoning and capital punishment. Textbooks were revised to remove any Western influence and moves to Islamise all education and have an ideological commitment to the revolution became a requirement for admission to university.⁶³ As society and the regime were Islamic, there was no space in Iran for those who opposed or questioned Islam and its importance in society. Political parties were labelled as materialist, atheistic, hypocritical or deviant, depending on their ideology, and were all deemed to be un-Islamic. Khomeini himself was the ultimate arbiter in deciding who or what was Islamic or not.⁶⁴

Khomeini launched a cultural revolution, so all non-Islamic aspects would be removed from the government, the military, the judiciary, and public and private enterprises as well as the education system. The Islamic leaders had the duty to purify society from the Western influences that had corrupted it. Through the mid 1980s as the Assembly of Experts was implementing Islam as a total system, women were purged in accordance with the Islamic principles and much of the benefits they had been awarded under the Pahlavi reforms were ended. The return to codified Shari'a revived polygamy, child marriages (nine years old for girls) and the re-veiling of women was made compulsory. Liquor and all music except religious music was banned, and Western films, night clubs and mixed bathing were

⁶² Bakhash.p.227.

⁶³ Keddie, *Modern Iran*.p.257.

⁶⁴ Hiro.p.135.

prohibited. Gender segregation was re-enforced, with co-education banned except for universities, where classrooms nevertheless separated the genders. Interestingly, the demand for female teachers, doctors, social workers and other professionals increased, and although the education was discouraged, they maintained their 30% share in education they had under the Shah.⁶⁵ The numbers of females in universities was significantly reduced, as they were discouraged from working, and encouraged to stay home and devote themselves to motherhood. The rights and status of women during the Shah's rule were substantially reduced until the Iran-Iraq war, during which time their work was required for the war effort. The streets were patrolled by Khomiteh members to enforce Islamic morality and dress code which particularly pertained to females.⁶⁶ A baby boom occurred between 1979 and 1986 as children born rose from 1.6 million per year to 2.2 million. This demographic increase would become a factor in Iran's politics in fifteen years.⁶⁷

When the veil had been removed by the Shah, mass protests against Westernisation and forced unveiling occurred, but over time unveiled women became a symbol of a modernised and Western Iran. In the build up to Khomeini's revolutionary movement, veiled women in defiance of the Shah's Western ways became a symbol of the Islamic revolution. Once the Islamic Republic had been established, the protest against the re-

⁶⁵ Clawson and Rubin.p.104.

⁶⁶ Keddie *Modern Iran*.p.257. and Hiro.p.135.

⁶⁷ Clawson and Rubin.p.104.

Islamisation of women in society was marked by protests of unveiled women in defiance of Khomeini's Islamic ways. As increasing Islamisation was embraced by the radical clerics, the secular left, religious left, and liberals opposed it. President Bani Sadr became the principal champion of the causes resisting the purges of non-Islamic sympathisers from universities and the state system.⁶⁸

In February 1981 Khomeini had reminded the Ulema that 'they should in no way interfere in matters for which they are not qualified' as their interference 'will be an unforgivable sin, because it will lead to the nation's mistrust of the clergy.'⁶⁹ He did not want political unpopularity to taint the people's view of the Ulema or of Islam. However, this caused concerns when Bani-Sadr wanted political process followed, instead of following Ulema judgements. Once the Iran-Iraq war began, conflict increased between the Islamic Republic Party and Bani Sadr. With the hostage crisis continuing and the war effort underway, Bani Sadr's attempts to respond to either issue were rebuffed by Khomeini or the Majiles. At the conclusion of the hostage crisis, Bani Sadr publicly attacked the Islamic Republican Party's handling of the crisis. A group of Hezbollah attacked a speech rally

⁶⁸ Martin.p.168.

⁶⁹ "Khomeyni Message to the Nation" broadcast 11 February 1981, FBIS-SAS-029, 12 February 1981. Cited in Brumberg, Daniel. *Reinventing Khomeini, The Struggle for Reform in Iran*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, America, 2001.p.117.

in March 1981 and when Bani Sadr ordered them arrested an investigation into the order was deemed a violation of law.⁷⁰

Pressure on Bani Sadr increased as he called for youth to stand up to violators of the law and resist tendencies towards dictatorship. Khomeini called Bani Sadr to obey the Islamic parliament, the Prosecutor General and the Supreme Defence Council and dismissed him as Commander in Chief. Pro-Bani Sadr protests mounted by the Mujahedin e-Khalq were broken up by Revolutionary Guards.⁷¹ Impeachment proceedings were started against Bani Sadr in June 1981, as he was charged with un-Islamic behaviour, aligning himself with enemies of the Revolution, both within and outside Iran. Bani Sadr went underground and called for an uprising against Khomeini's power and open hostilities against the regime by Mujahedin started.⁷² Bani Sadr's successor was killed in a bombing, and as voters went to the polls for the third time in twenty one months, Ali Khomeini was the first cleric President elected in October 1981.⁷³ Iran's government was now dominated by Mullahs in all of its branches and two and a half years after the revolution, had a fully theocratic government.

When the Iran-Iraq war ended, Iran had lost between 450,000 and 730,000 dead, and between 600,000 and 1,200,000 wounded in the war, and had not

⁷⁰ Keddie *Modern Iran*.p.252.

⁷¹ Hiro.p.183.

⁷² Hussain.p.158.

⁷³ Wright.p.17.

made significant political gains.⁷⁴ The revolutionary fervour of the masses had been exhausted from the long drawn out conflict, and Khomeini addressed the domestic situation to ease growing domestic discontent. Khomeini's enforcement of Islamic compliance was relaxed, chess was permitted after being banned as a form of gambling, and international trade began to improve. Khomeini fired his successor Ayatollah Montazeri for condemning the mass executions that had occurred, and called on the government to 'correct past mistakes' on the tenth anniversary of the revolution. As the first ten years had been the deconstruction of monarchy and Western influences within Iran, Khomeini did not want to relax the standards for fear it would dilute Islam.⁷⁵

Under Khomeini tens of thousands of Iranians were repeatedly jailed, and members or sympathisers of Mujahidin were killed by execution after arrest. Members of the Bahai faith were arrested or killed for being the wrong religion, and religious prosecutions were rampant. Theocratic republicanism saw mass pre-publication censorship by the state but Khomeini's laws could not be argued as they represented the voice of God.⁷⁶ He justified his autonomy stating 'people love the clergy, have faith in the clergy, and want to be led by the clergy. It is right that the supreme religious authority should oversee the work of the President and the other

⁷⁴ Clawson and Rubin.p.113.

⁷⁵ Wright, Robin. *The Last Great Revolution, Turmoil and Transformation in Iran*, Alfred A. Knopf, Random House Inc, New York, 2000.p.17.

⁷⁶ Juan Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War, The Politics, Culture and History of Shi'ite Islam*, IB Taurus Publishers, London.p.204.

state officials to make sure they don't make mistakes or go against the law of the Koran.'⁷⁷ By virtue of his appointment and influence, he was able to impose his personal interpretation of Islam on the nation and there was nothing opposition could do. Between 1983 and 1986 was the period of heaviest action against the people, with 'cleansing' of the schools and universities, media, cultural areas other than Islam, penal and banking codes. Iran was considered the biggest threat to the Persian Gulf, the opposite of its status as a Twin Pillar for security of the region and as it extended its network to propagate militant Islam it presented a significant challenge to the West.

Khomeini's sudden death in 1989 saw the second phase of the Islamic Revolution from 1989 to 1997. The then President Khamenei was selected as successor to Khomeini and promoted from the rank of *hojat ol-islam*⁷⁸ to *Ayatollah*, many believe for the position, rather than on his religious education merits. The President was Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani who would hold two terms as President. He redesigned the power structure of the government through constitutional amendments, abolishing the Prime Minister position, and converting the position of President from a political figurehead to the highest government job, and weakening the role of the *Just Faqih* in the process.⁷⁹ This allowed him the scope to define the direction of

⁷⁷ O. Falleci, 'Interview with Khomeini', *New York Times*, 7 October 1979. Cited in Abrahamian, 2008.p.164.

⁷⁸ Rank within Islamic hierarchy.

⁷⁹ Wright.pp.21-22.

Iran in the post-Khomeini era. The President was the second highest post after the Just Faqih, and was the solely elected representative in Iran. It is noted that Iran does not have a presidency or open elections by the Western standard. The Just Faqih has control over all military, security, intelligence, foreign policy, police, justice and media, and can limit candidates for both President and the Majiles, and use his religious authority to block any legislation or government action.⁸⁰

The Just Faqih no longer had to be recognised by the majority as leader, but was chosen from religious scholars that had the appropriate legal and political skills by the Assembly of Experts. They were recognised as an equal to the people in the eyes of the law, and no longer held the sole authority as Khomeini had.⁸¹ As it was the President who was responsible for implementing the constitution and as the only elected leader in Iran Rafsanjani gained a measure of charismatic authority that superseded that of Khamenei.

The political emphasis shifted from radical Islam to a more pragmatic approach which was more concerned whether people had food, jobs, homes or schooling as opposed to how many people visited Mosques. The political system was purged of radicals, and a new priority of efficiency over piety was established. Rafsanjani's cabinet was dominated by technocrats, one

⁸⁰ Cordesman, Anthony H. 'The Election: Iran as Usual?', Talk, Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C., June 15 2009.

⁸¹ Brumberg.p.151.

third of whom had studied in the West.⁸² For the 1990 Majiles elections, the Council of Guardians disqualified almost all the candidates as they had failed to pass written and oral tests in Islamic jurisprudence, which was the first action against the radicals.⁸³ A five year plan was passed through the Majiles in 1989, which was to downsize the state control from the wartime era and released a lot of the government regulations off the economy. Iran underwent another scheme of modernisation and Westernisation including privatisation of many businesses, opening Iran to foreign investment, establishing diplomatic ties with foreign nations, establishing free trade zones and role of Western investment (except American) in Iran's economy was revived. The economy recovered well in the two years after the Iran-Iraq war, mainly because of an increase in international oil prices and foreign loans. Initial successes in the economy were mirrored in improved social conditions. Infant mortality was reduced by half, consumption of meat, sugar and rice increased, telephone lines through Iran increased, as did higher education.⁸⁴

In trying to boost the economy the bazaaris benefited, and the poor were the hardest hit. An economic boom following the end of the Iran-Iraq war was followed by the collapse of the economy in 1993, which saw the oil market weakened with a combination of stalled reforms and the exaggerated boom

⁸² Brumberg.p.152, and Wright.p.23.

⁸³ Brumberg.p.173.

⁸⁴ Rubin and Clawson.p.119.

after the war years, and Iran was unable to pay its debts.⁸⁵ Income disparities that used to be associated with the Shah were back, and Rafsanjani blamed the economic collapse on the Majiles that was dominated by Islamic leftists.⁸⁶ Declining living standards resulted in workers' riots in many of the major cities that were brutally repressed by the Revolutionary Guards. Rafsanjani's political purge of the radicals backfired as a new group of political, social and fiscal conservatives were elected in the 1992 Majiles. Over one third of the candidates for the Majiles were disqualified by the Guardian Council which saw most of the leftists removed, and the previously strong Islamic Left lost control of the Majiles to the conservatives. By the early 1990s clerical membership of the Majiles was down to 25%.⁸⁷ The technocrats Rafsanjani had appointed were removed for trying to restore Western capitalism, obstructed reform laws, and instigated a clampdown on society restructuring cultural expression and social relaxation that had been creeping into Iranian society.⁸⁸ Progress that had been made was halted, and there was a growing discontent amongst the populace.

The Islamic Leftists changed once they had lost power influenced by events within Iran, and in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Many advocated for democracy, human and civil rights, improved international relations and

⁸⁵ Clawson and Rubin.p.123.

⁸⁶ Ansari, 2003.p.246.

⁸⁷ Garthwaite.p.277.

⁸⁸ Wright.p.23.

opposed government controls, strict ideological controls and state centred economic planning. Domestically educated male and female students, professionals, clergy educated in Western philosophy and others were beginning to discuss human and women's rights, domestic freedoms, government transparency and their disillusionment over government controls and continued economic hardships.⁸⁹

Rafsanjani won a second presidential term in 1993 by a small majority on low voter turnout. His second term 1993 to 1997 saw domestic difficulties and discontent increase. Oil prices slumped and foreign debt rose by \$25 billion from 1991 to 1993. Inflation was over 30% per annum and workers riots like those in 1992 recurred in 1994 and 1995. Political divisions increased as did frictions between Rafsanjani and Ayatollah Khomeini.⁹⁰ Domestic political factions formed groups as those eliminated from running for the Majiles united. The Combatant Clerics Society (Majma-ya Rouhaniyan-e Mobarez) championed exporting the revolution and a highly socialised vision of the economy that Rafsanjani wanted to restrain. A second group, the Combatant Clergy of Tehran Association (Jamaa-ye Rouhaniyan-e Mobaraz-e Tehran) was the main rival group, backed by the Bazaaris. The Combatant Clergy increased its hold on government and gained the support of Khomeini, managing to get control of the Ministries of Intelligence, Interior, Culture and Islamic Guidance, and the state media.

⁸⁹ Keddie, 'Modern Iran' .p.266-67.

⁹⁰ Wright.p.23.

The modernists that supported Rafsanjani called themselves the Servants of Reconstruction (Kargozaran-e Sazandegi).⁹¹

There was no major legislation passed between 1992 and 1996 in Rafsanjani's second presidential term and the government was identified as being politically incompetent. Domestic life was restricted, poverty common and many who had supported the revolution became discontented and felt that the Islamic Government had left them behind. Iran's politics was at breaking point and before the 1997 elections to replace Rafsanjani, Iran was more corrupt and had more factions than it had had during the reign of the Shahs.⁹² The 1997 Presidential elections saw a shift in popular opinion and the revolution move in a new direction. The Majiles speaker Nateq Nouri who had the support of Ayatollah Khamenei, senior judges, military officers and the majority of the Majiles was picked to win the election a year out and secure the right wing into power. Khomeini had allowed three other minor candidates to run, one of whom was a moderate cleric to keep the left happy. The mass discontent at the government and its blatant support for a single candidate saw the public rally behind Mohammad Khatami as an outsider, and an alternative to the political, economic and social status quo. Khatami ran a twelve day campaign and won with a 70% majority vote. Voter turnout was the highest it had been since 1979 with 29 million voters compared to the 16 million of the previous

⁹¹ Daniel.p.231.

⁹² Wright.p.23.

presidential election.⁹³ Khatami carried 24 of the 26 provinces showing Iranians wanted reform and rejected the authoritarian regime which was unwilling to change.⁹⁴

Khatami's first 18 months saw the formation of political parties to disperse power beyond the centre as stated in the constitution, but never implemented. Books and movies previously banned were permitted, magazines and newspapers were given freedoms of press, women and men could mingle in public, university students could address each other on campus, and women wore makeup. Khatami wanted to improve Iran's international relations, including with America and in 1998 the first internet café was opened as a highly prized window to the West.⁹⁵ He toured Iran with a small entourage advocating for minority groups and the Kurds, and appointed a female as his vice-President. Although his reforms were modest, they were enough to provoke a strong response from the right including Ayatollah Khomeini, Nateq Nouri who had retained his position as Speaker of the Majiles, and the head of the judiciary, secretary of the Council of Guardians, and Chairman of the Assembly of Experts.⁹⁶

⁹³ Faribanks, Stephen. 'Theocracy versus democracy, Iran considers Political Parties', in Mohammadi, Ali (Ed), *Iran Encountering Globalisation. Problems and Prospects*, Routledge Curzon, London, 2003.pp.212-3.

⁹⁴ Clawson and Rubin.p.127; Wright.p.25; Ansari, 2004.p.247.

⁹⁵ Wright.p.26; Rubin and Clawson.p.129.

⁹⁶ Daniels.p.240.

The landslide victory in the election caused many to believe that Iran was entering a period of fundamental reform. Many Islamic leftists became more reformist and formed the Islamic Iran Participation Front, while a more moderate pro-reform group, including Left Islamic groups and centrist Servants of Construction, was united under the coalition the Second of Khordad (the date of Khatami's election). Conservatives backed Khomeini who was more powerful than Khatami and maintained control of all major institutions, except the Majles and Presidency.⁹⁷ Through his power of veto, Khomeini was able to prevent many proposed changes that Khatami wanted to implement and hard line factions worked to retain the Islamic Revolution untouched and keeping themselves in power. Khomeini retained control of the Revolutionary Guards and the judiciary, and therefore all means of repression. Opposing the popular move for reform, the right stepped up persecution of religious and ethnic minorities, raiding Baha'i communities, arrests of Jews accused of espionage for Israel, and banning the use of Azeri language causing all six Kurds on the Majles to resign.⁹⁸

Khatami believed that he could achieve a synthesis between Iran's Islam and the Western world. He believed Iran could adapt Western ideas without being subverted by the West, and that democracy would allow for the fulfilment of Iran being able to stand up to the West as an equal. Despite this approach, he did not believe that an overthrow of clerical rule was the

⁹⁷ Keddie, *Modern Iran*.p.270.

⁹⁸ Clawson and Rubin.p.129.

means, he wanted to reform the status quo, keep everything within the law, and take a middle road approach that avoided any rapid or violent change.⁹⁹ Ayatollah Khomeini held the opinion that rapprochement with the West wasn't possible, and dialogue was unnecessary, as Iran and Islam had nothing to learn from the West, and Western influence would poison Iran's independence and identity. Khomeini blamed the West for causing Iran's problems, believing the West wanted to dominate the Middle East, and the world, and hinder all other nation's development.¹⁰⁰

The 1998 elections for the Assembly of Experts saw the Council of Guardians vet over 200 of the 396 clerics who applied for the Assembly.¹⁰¹ Khatami struggled to make political headway and the rift between Khatami and Khomeini widened. A series of murders occurred in 1997 and 1998 of writers, journalists, scholars and intellectuals critical of the Islamic Republic prompted a response from intellectuals imploring Khatami and Khomeini to find the murderers. Khatami established a special task force to investigate and Khomeini publically blamed the crimes on foreign agents.¹⁰² By January 1999 the Ministry of Intelligence admitted it had been involved in the murders which reflected the repression of the Pahlavi era. A campaign against the reformists ensued and the hard liners blocked reform through the institutions they controlled. Attacks on students at Tehran University

⁹⁹ Rubin 'Tragedy of the Middle East'.p.121.

¹⁰⁰ Rubin 'Tragedy of the Middle East'.p.123.

¹⁰¹ Daniel.p.241.

¹⁰² Daniel.p.241.

protesting press censorship was a turning point in domestic politics which saw the hardliners gain the initiative. On 8 July 1999 hundreds of thousands of students were demonstrating and the Revolutionary Guards and Police attacked a dormitory setting it on fire, and beating the students. Protests turned into riots that lasted six days over eight cities.¹⁰³ Khatami missed the opportunity to channel public anger toward the hardliners. The Revolutionary Guards and Police were visible targets for directing opposition toward Khomeini and his regime but Khatami was marked by his inaction.¹⁰⁴

The populace grew discontent and as Iran's economy was suffering from the foreign debt and oil prices dropped by 50% from 1996 to 1998, the Economic Rehabilitation Plan issued in August 1998 and the third Five Year Plan of May 1999 had limited prospects to improve support of the masses.¹⁰⁵ The 2000 Majiles elections saw reformists win 200 of the 290 seats, and the hardliners backed by the judiciary and Khomeini were able to increase repression and restrict freedoms such as press and free debate in the Majiles.¹⁰⁶ The 2001 presidential election saw Khatami re-elected with a 78% majority, but five million less voters than 1997. For his second term, Khatami had just as much difficulty in implementing his policies as he had in his first term. Of the 295 reforms introduced by the Majiles, 111 were

¹⁰³ Daniel.p.245.

¹⁰⁴ Rubin 'The Tragedy of the Middle East' .p.127.

¹⁰⁵ Clawson and Rubin.p.131.

¹⁰⁶ Clawson and Rubin.p.133.

vetoed by the Guardian Council, and the reforms that were anticipated by the masses never came. Khatami lost his image as a man who could make changes and the judiciary increased repression and human rights violations.¹⁰⁷ The hardliners withdrew from open politics, but maintained obstructions for reforms which made the reformist government seem inefficient and was held accountable for its failure to improve Iran by the masses.

Despite the fact that the economy improved as oil prices increased and foreign borrowing decreased, public opinion had shifted away from the ineffective reformists and the hardliners held the advantage. The 2004 Majiles elections saw hardliners win as 210 reformists lost their seats. Over 2000 candidates, including 82 members of the previous Majiles were banned from running by the Guardian Council and voter turnout was low. The conservatives secured their position in the Majiles and for his final year as President, Khatami had little power.¹⁰⁸ The 2005 presidential elections saw ultra-conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad voted into power, backed by hardliners and another shift in domestic politics occurred.

Ahmadinejad was an ultra-conservative hardliner who represented a return to simple values and a move away from the leftist approach, which saw movements towards secularisation and Westernisation that were threatening

¹⁰⁷ Farndon.p.161.

¹⁰⁸ Farndon.p.162.

to Islamic values. He was the only Presidential candidate that spoke out against future relations with America during the election campaign and his election saw a marginalized minority branch of the conservatives come to power that had been radicalised by the Iran-Iraq war. It was also a victory for Supreme Leader Khomeini who was able to control Iran's domestic and foreign policy through the conservative faction. Ahmadinejad's rule saw Western-styled establishments closed down, the removal of left-wing newspapers, mass censorship imposed, arrests of dissidents, and crackdowns in the universities. Student activists were arrested, lecturers fired, and testing of university staff for religious knowledge instituted.

Ahmadinejad began a campaign to get Iran to prepare for the return of the hidden Imam which many ulema were unhappy that he was manipulating religion for political gain seen as a step toward removing the democratic element of Iranian government to create a theocratic dictatorship.¹⁰⁹ His mentor Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi argues that there is no need for elections as the government's Islamic element should override the republican element and officials should get their authority from God. Ahmadinejad's rule polarised Iranian society between conservatives and reformists, with a small pragmatist faction in the middle.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Farndon.p.173.

¹¹⁰ Clawson and Rubin.p.134.

The 2006 elections for the Assembly of Experts saw 79% of the seats won by members of the Combatant Clergy with reformists and fundamentalists achieving only 18 of the 86 seats suggesting that Iranians wanted a shift toward more moderate politics. Ahmadinejad has used the ‘enemy abroad’ as a tool to reshape domestic politics for his own purposes. It has been used to justify the hardline leadership within Iran, and as the concept of resisting the foreign oppressor is so ingrained in Iranian culture, this concept overrides aspects of his rule that people may disagree with. For example, public criticism of his religious views or mis-management of the economy can be overlooked by the more important characteristic that he promotes the defence of Iran as the highest priority, which means dissent or criticism of the regime are characterised as unpatriotic. The use of the foreign threat serves the purpose of strengthening authoritarian style rule, and keeping attention focused abroad, rather than at the errors of the government or domestic issues.¹¹¹ Maintaining the image of the West as an enemy was assisted by the West’s conservative approach to Iran, which was largely in response to a hard line, controversial and uncompromising approach from Ahmadinejad which put a strain on foreign relations.

The poor performance of the President in regards to Iran’s relations and economy within his first year prompted 173 parliamentary deputies to call for his impeachments which were all turned down by Khomeini. Five of the President’s cabinet ministers allegedly met with the Supreme Leader to state

¹¹¹ Ansari, Ali M. ‘The Ahmadinejad Presidency: Image and Foreign Policy’, *Adelphi Series*, 47:393.p.46.

they could not work with Ahmadinejad to which Khomeini responded that he was learning on the job, and his removal would put the stability of the regime in doubt.¹¹²

Ahmadinejad had promised to bring ‘the country’s oil money to every family’s dinner table’ in his 2005 election campaign, yet by 2007 the population was worse off than they had been under Khatami, with 18% inflation and 30% unemployment.¹¹³ In 2006 over 40% of the population lived below the poverty line compared to 27% during the Shah’s reign.¹¹⁴ Ahmadinejad believes in self sufficiency, even if it means lower living standards as he views the global economic system as a Jewish-crusade conspiring to keep Muslim states in a weak and dependent position. In April and May 2007 Iranians from the post-revolution baby boom were targeted by the Islamic Moral brigade’s crackdown on ‘immodest dress’, an example of continued repression in the already socially restricted state.¹¹⁵

The 2009 Presidential elections in Iran caused the biggest demonstrations in major cities since the Islamic Revolution. A campaign between Ahmadinejad and a top contender, reformist candidate Mir Hussein Musavi saw a record number of voters, with the announcement of Ahmadinejad’s success within three hours of the polls closing. Despite a government ban

¹¹² Mokhtari, Fariborz. ‘Mahmud Ahmadinejad’s Presidency: What does Iran Really Want?’, *American Foreign Policy Interests*, Vol 28, No. 5, 01 October 2006.p.361.

¹¹³ Taheri, Amir. ‘Iran’s Economic Crisis’, *Opinion Journal*, 9 May 2007.

¹¹⁴ Taheri, Amir. ‘Getting Serious About Iran: For Regime Change’, *Opinion Journal*, November 2006.

¹¹⁵ Taheri, 2007.

on unauthorised public gatherings, protestors gathered en masse for support of Musavi. Media was shut down and mobile phone and internet networks were disrupted to prevent information or footage of the demonstrations from leaving Iran. Mass arrests and suppression of demonstrators by Revolutionary Guards indicate that many Iranians want a more moderate President, with improved foreign relations and economy management, and are willing to protest alleged vote rigging and fraud. The state was willing and able to impose the contentious election result by force, as Khomeini confirmed Ahmadinejad as President and the Guardian Council confirmed the validity of the election result. Divisions became apparent in the clerical establishment and the government blamed foreign interference in Iran's domestic affairs by Britain and the West, for the protests.¹¹⁶

Following the Islamic Revolution, the Iranian political system became essentially a theological dictatorship. Rejection of Westernisation and suppression of the domestic population sees another repressive regime ruled by the few. In the thirty years since the Islamic Revolution, Iran's domestic rule has changed, but not necessarily improved for the majority of Iranians in line with the freedoms pressed for at the time. The post-revolution baby boom population have only known the Islamic Republic, but are showing their desire for a more balanced government and social freedoms, both of which they have little power to change or influence.

¹¹⁶ Addis, Casey.L. 'Iran's 2009 Presidential Elections', *Congressional Research Service*, 6 July 2009.

In 1979 the Shahs' appointed government struggled to gain control of Iran and was immediately challenged by Khomeini. Through a staged process Khomeini initiated measures to gain control of Iran and shape its future to his vision for an Islamic state. Political institutions were established as he appointed a Prime Minister, stood up the Revolutionary Council, Central Komiteh, Revolutionary Guard and Revolutionary Tribunal. A referendum established an Islamic Republic on 1 April 1979 and a constitution was drafted for approval by an Assembly of Experts. Political parties were formed before elections for the Assembly where the Islamic Republican Party was founded by Khomeini and dominated politics. The constitution established a Just Faqih, Council of Guardians and President to rule Iran, and gave Khomeini unprecedented powers who was appointed the Just Faqih for life. It established Shari'a as the law of the land and made Ulema the ruling class. Despite significant opposition from some Ulema, the constitution was ratified by a referendum. Bani Sadr was elected as President but had little influence as he was bullied into doing what the Majiles wished for Iran.

Domestic opposition split three ways into Islamic groups with the basis in bazaaris and moderate Ulema opposed to Khomeini; centre left who were anti-Shah but pro-constitution, and left Marxist-Leninist groups. In response to the opposition Khomeini initiated suppression of any opposition

and warned the masses that Communists were no less dangerous than America was. As the repression against opposition increase, the restrictions against society became harsher. A cultural revolution saw Iran become a hard line Islamic state with few freedoms and political repression far worse than that of any Shah. Khomeini's death in 1989 saw Ayatollah Khomeini appointed as Supreme Leader and as a hardliner, he had tension with the President during Rafsanjani and Khatami's presidential terms imposing his will on Iran despite what the President, or masses' wanted. President Ahmadinejad's election in 2005 saw a return to the hard-line Islamic approach. The domestic state of Iran has changed markedly in the years since the Islamic Revolution and the country has not yet reached a balance between what the Supreme Leader, the clerics, the President, or the populace want for Iran. The domestic changes following the revolution were established relatively early, but a political system and structure that satisfies most of the Iranian domestic groups is not yet achieved.

CHAPTER FIVE. THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION AND IRAN'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION: A RADICAL SHIFT.

The Islamic Revolution has had a significant impact on Iran's international politics, and on its place within the international community. As the future of the state was uncertain in the period immediately following the revolution, the key nations that had relations with the Shah's Iran were hopeful for continued good relations. Several key international incidents in the immediate post revolution period shaped the Islamic Republic's place within the international community, and as the political situation changed both regionally and internationally the Islamic Republic's responses to developments shaped its policies, which in turn led to changes in its international relationships.

The reaction of Muslim groups to the Islamic revolution varied throughout the region. In Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood saw the revolution as the struggle between Islam and non-Islam and the press depicted the Iranian Muslims as escaping from their misery and depravity of an enforced secular identity. The Muslim Brotherhood idealised the new regime and blamed its weakness on the enemies of Islam, criticized the Western press portrayal as attacking the Arab press, and representing it as obscurantist and reactionary.

¹ Saudi Arabian Shi'a took the Iranian revolution as an opportunity to unite over existing discontent at their government over the neglect of the Shi'a community, leaflets were dropped in Shia towns and villages calling for

¹ Martin.p.190.

non-cooperation and organising demonstrations that demanded Saudi Arabia stop selling oil to America and support the Iranian revolution.²

Foreign policy for the Islamic Republic was initially based on two principles, 'neither East nor West but Islamic Republic', and 'export of the revolution'. Relations with America were hostile due to the longstanding influence America had in Iran and the hostage crisis, and the Iran-Iraq war post revolution reinforced the hostility. Anti-Western could more accurately be described as anti-American, and the 'not East' principle saw a less hostile relationship develop with the former Soviet Union.³ Khomeini based Iran's foreign policy on the principles of Shi'a Islam as opposed to Iranian nationalism.

The post revolution period can be broken down by Presidential leadership of Iran. The Khomeini era 1979 until 1989, the Rafsanjani Presidency from 1989 to 1997, Khatami from 1997 to 2005, and the current rule of Ahmadinejad have all seen changes to Iran's international politics, and relationship with the West. As the pre-revolutionary period was heavily influenced by America, and anti-Americanism was a strong aspect of the revolution, the relationship between America and the Islamic Republic has been particularly strained at times, starting with the hostage crisis in 1979, through to the current contentions over the nuclear issue and terrorism.

² Martin.p.194.

³ Rakef, E. P. 'Iranian Foreign Policy since the Iranian Islamic Revolution: 1979-2006', *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, Brill, Issue 6, 2007. p.167.

Given that Iran was one of America's strongest regional allies in the Gulf, America announced it would attempt to work with the new regime. This presented an impossible challenge, however, with two major international incidents involving America in the years immediately following the revolution. American embassy personnel in Tehran were taken hostage for 444 days, and Iraq invaded Iran resulting in an eight year war. Both had a role in establishing how the new Islamic Republic of Iran would address the international environment, and developments in the strategic environment and key leadership roles saw changes in Iran's place in international politics.

In November 1979 American President Carter accepted the exiled Mohammad Reza Shah into America for medical treatment, which saw Khomeini urge students to expand their attacks against America and Israel with full force to compel America to extradite the deposed Shah. Khomeini feared that America would not stand for the revolution, and would conduct a coup like that of 1952. On 4 November 1978, students climbed the walls of the embassy and took 57 American Foreign Service personnel hostage. The students demanded America return the Shah to Iran and warned the Islamic government that any attempt to draw America to the negotiating table would be a betrayal of their glorious and divine Islamic movement.⁴ As Khomeini called for militant action against America, Bazargan's efforts to restore relations with America and end the crisis were futile. Seeing Khomeini had

⁴ Irfani,p.193.

no intention to order the release of the hostages, Bazargan and his cabinet resigned on 6 November.

By the time of the constitutional referendum on 2 December 1979, America and Iran were firmly opposed. The hostage incident had presented Khomeini and his supporters with an opportunity to focus Iranians on ‘proof’ that American imperialism was still at large, and strengthened the radicals at the expense of the moderates. It provided a current and palpable issue to politically educate the masses and rally support for the constitution and new regime. Khomeini rejected the opportunity to talk with an American delegation, and President Carter stopped a military shipment worth \$300 million that had already been paid for. Deportation procedures were started for Iranian students residing illegally in America, and an economic blockade was imposed as Iranian oil imports were banned and Iran’s assets in US banks (about \$8,000-\$10,000 million) were frozen. Khomeini declared Carter ‘an enemy of humanity’, and closed airspace and waters to US ships and aircraft.⁵

The upcoming American Presidential elections caused concern for Khomeini regarding the hostages. He was comfortable with dealing with the ‘moderate’ President Carter but not prepared to confront his likely successor Ronald Reagan. Khomeini wanted to retain control of the hostages until he saw fit to end the crisis, but as time passed the political

⁵ Hiro, pp.138-39.

value of the hostages to the Iranians diminished, and Iran's isolation was compounded by the Iran-Iraq war, increasing pressure on Iran to end the hostage situation. Four demands were tabled for the release of the hostages: the return of \$24 billion of the Shah's wealth held in America; President Carter formally apologise to the Iranian people for mistakes and crimes America had made against Iranians in the past; assurance that American companies that had lost their contracts in the revolution would not demand compensation from Iran for the annulment of the contracts; and a promise that the American government would not interfere in Iran's internal affairs.⁶

When the Shah died in July 1980, demands for his extradition and trial became irrelevant. Negotiations through Algeria as an intermediary ended on 19 January 1981 as the Algiers Agreement was reached. The hostages were released to America on 20 January, the day of Ronald Reagan's inauguration, with America confirming that 'US policy is not based on interference, and America does not interfere in Iran's political affairs'.⁷ America agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of Iran and formally ended the relationship between the two countries. Through a special court in the Hague America's claims against Iran were adjudicated, and America returned \$2.3 billion to Iran, withholding \$7.7 billion to cover American and international claims against Iran and lifted all the economic sanctions.⁸ The

⁶ Irfani.p.193.

⁷ 'Which Victory' (editorial) *Enqelabe Islami* No. 956, 23 January 1981. Cited in Erfani.p.194.

⁸ Daniel.p.109; Ansari, Ali M, *Confronting Iran, The Failure of American Foreign Policy and The Roots of Mistrust*, Hurst & Company Ltd, United Kingdom, 2006.p.99.

outcome of the hostage crisis was almost wholly favourable to America, and Iran lost much international support that it may have had against the concurrent Iraqi aggression.⁹

Iran's volatile political situation had deteriorated further in September 1980 when the Iraqi Army invaded Iran. The invasion pretext was the claim that Iran had violated the 1975 Algiers Accord establishing the border between Iran and Iraq, but it is likely that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was concerned with the Iranian constitution's stated goal to spread the Islamic Revolution throughout the world starting with its neighbours. Disturbances in Khuzistan to liberate and re-unite Arabs with the greater motherland indicated that the province may be ready for 'liberation', and the opportunity for Iraq to reclaim territory through invasion was perhaps better than ever, with Iran in a vulnerable situation over the hostages with no military ties with America. Reports of conflict between President Bani Sadr and Islamic Revolutionary Party members, low morale amongst Iranian military officers, and the fact that Saddam Hussein liked to keep the Army busy as the most likely source of a successful challenge to his own rule were contributing factors to the invasion.¹⁰

Iraq's invasion of Iran was a continuation of differences that had affected the region for centuries, Arab versus Persian, Sunni versus Shi'a, pan-Arab

⁹ Keddie *Modern Iran*.p.252.

¹⁰ Hiro.p.167.

versus pan-Islam. Saddam wanted to undermine or overthrow the revolutionary government with an Iraq-friendly regime, enhance Iraq's standing in the Gulf and Middle East, and restore Iraqi control over the Shatt al-Arab.¹¹ The ideological aspects of the conflict contributed to its intensity and prolongation, as Khomeini was fighting for religion, not territory, and these aspects influenced the military and strategic alignments within the Gulf.

In the first few days of the war Iraq had some successes, but retaliation by Iran was quick and successful. Iraq had underestimated Iranian nationalism as despite the existing domestic differences, the Iranians united in support of the government defending Iran against their historical foe, the Arabs. As the Iranian Army had been purged, the clerical leaders of the country believed the only effective defence would come from the ideologically motivated Revolutionary Guards. A surge of patriotism following the Iraqi invasion brought volunteers from all over the country including clerics, theological students, tribe members, Khuzistani Arabs and Kurdish autonomists. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) called for a ceasefire on 28 September and Iraq was willing, but Iran refused. The radical clergy were using the war to legitimise the elimination of civil society and create a totalitarian regime through terror, mass arrests and executions.¹² The clerics had full control of the war effort and the government after the removal of

¹¹ Bakhash Shaul. 'The Troubled Relationship: Iran and Iraq, 1930 – 80' in Potter and Sick (eds).p.22.

¹² Kamali.p.225.

Bani Sadr. Iran saw the war as an opportunity to gain control over the Shi'ite shrines in Iraq, increase Iranian power in the Gulf, and use the war as a vehicle to spread the Islamic Revolution.¹³ The continuation of the Iran-Iraq war after this point was a manifestation of Khomeini's personal views regarding Saddam Hussein, ethnic Arabs, Sunni Muslims and Islamic fundamentalism rather than based on military or strategic calculations.¹⁴

As Khomeini declared that the invasion was a blasphemy against Islam, the war became a rallying point for uniting Iran against a common enemy somewhat healing the domestic rifts and factions that had developed. Political speeches were banned in Iran until after the war finished.¹⁵ Iran referred to the war as the 'imposed war' on the belief that America encouraged Iraq to attack following its humiliation from the hostage situation. Iraq referred to the war as 'Saddam's Qadisiyya' referring to the Arab defeat of the Persians in the 7th Century AD, and the West referred to the conflict as the Iran-Iraq War, or the Gulf War.¹⁶ Khomeini believed Islamic unity should take precedence over political divisions and that the war was an opportunity to liberate Muslims in Iraq from their insufficiently Islamic governments. Saddam believed that the Arabs were the rightful

¹³ Daniel.p.209.

¹⁴Beasley, Ryan K. Kaarbo, Juliet. Lantis, Jeffrey S. Snarr, Michael T. (Eds) *Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective, Domestic and International Issues on State Behaviour*, CQ Press, Washington, 2002.p.224.

¹⁵ Hiro.p.176.

¹⁶ Potter and Sick.p.4.

leaders of Islam, Khomeini's government were imposters, and emphasised Iraq's own origins by referring to the 'Persian Gulf' as the 'Arabian Gulf'.

As Khomeini's actions and rhetoric threatened the stability of the region and challenged the legitimacy of Arab regimes, the regional states changed from avoiding involvement to choosing a side. Iran had military successes and Khomeini claimed that the defeat of Iraq would allow for the Iraqi people to '...set up their own government according to their wishes as an Islamic one. If Iran and Iraq merge and become amalgamated all the smaller nations of the region will join them.'¹⁷ The prospect of an Iran and Iraq merger and the impact of this threat on the rest of the Gulf States were used by Saddam to get many states onside. Iraq pitched itself as a shield to all the Gulf States from Iran's hegemonic ambitions. The Arab states provided \$35-\$50 billion finance, and supported Iraq by selling oil and providing overland and port access for oil exports.

Once Iraq had withdrawn by July 1982, it was Iran that became the aggressor for a longer and bloodier phase of war. The aim was to instil a revolutionary clerical government in Iraq, if not rule the country directly, and once Iran was the aggressor, Iraq gained wide international support.¹⁸

America shared intelligence with Baghdad, encouraged allies to supply Iraq

¹⁷ Quoted in Chubin and Tripp, *Iran and Iraq at War*, Westview, Colorado, 1980.p.164. Cited in Potter and Sick.p.24.

¹⁸ Clawson, Patrick and Rubin, Michael. *Eternal Iran, Continuity and Chaos*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2005.p.108.

with weapons, sold 'dual use' technology like helicopters, provided economic credits for the purchase of American agricultural goods, but did not need to become directly involved in the conflict as the dispute on the border had little effect for the region as a whole.

President Carter had declared that the United States would use all military means at its disposal to confront any hostile power from trying to dominate the Gulf. President Reagan increased the military budget finalising and implementing the Carter administration plans for a 'Central Command' in the region. American aircraft were flown from Saudi Arabia to provide battlefield intelligence to the Iraqis, and negotiations for military base rights in the region were conducted.¹⁹ America backed Saudi Arabia as the remaining 'pillar' from the Twin Pillar policy and began to reconfigure its military power to focus on the Gulf region.

Although the Reagan Administration stated that no military equipment would be provided to the Iranian government, when Israeli Prime Minister Begin asked for permission to transfer American made weapons to Iran this was approved. Israel became a US proxy and huge transfers of American weapons were supplied to Iran through Israel.²⁰ As the threat posed by Khomeini increased, the United States and European allies became concerned that Iran's Islamic fundamentalism might spread throughout the

¹⁹ Fawcett.p.276.

²⁰ Lando.p.58.

Gulf, which would threaten the moderate governments of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and endanger the oil supply to the West. Despite Iraq's human rights record, and its status as a terrorist state, America leaned towards Iraq as the preferred choice to win the conflict as it would protect the oil supply from being dominated by Iran.²¹

In 1984 alone, Iraq spent \$35 billion on arms purchases and became the largest importer of major weapon systems in the world. This was a significant achievement, considering America had placed a ban on shipping arms to Iran or Iraq, and the United Nations resolution called for an international embargo of weapons to either side.²² Almost 50% of weapons to Iraq were provided by the Soviet Union, and France provided 28%. A 1987 report identified that 26 countries were supplying both Iran and Iraq with weapons.²³

Khomeini's regime was viewed as more threatening than Saddam Hussein's rule, and as the conflict continued, the West turned a blind eye to Iraq's atrocities in the hope of an Iranian defeat. In 1983 Iraq used chemical warfare against Iran, initially against soldiers, then against Iranian civilians. The United Nations became involved in investigating the use of chemical warfare but it was several years before it was accepted that Iraq had used

²¹ Lando.p.60.

²² Ladno.p.61; Hiro, Dilip. *Iran: The Revolution Within*, The Institute For the Study of Conflict, United Kingdom, 1986.p.14.

²³ Lando.p.76.

chemical weapons.²⁴ America was one of the first to condemn the use of chemical weapons in warfare, and encouraged its allies to impose export restrictions on chemical precursors. Claims that Iran had used chemical warfare in retaliation were unconfirmed by United Nations investigations and there was no evidence of any attacks. The lack of real consequences for Iraq for using chemicals in the conflict gave Iraqi leadership the signal that there was no reason to restrain their use, and began to target domestic Iraqi Kurdish guerrillas and civilians. The refusal to single Iraq out as the perpetrator for the killings enabled Iraq to conduct genocide of the rural Kurds using gas as a weapon of terror.²⁵

The flow-on effect of the lack of consequences for Iraq's use of chemical weapons was that Iran took the opportunity to develop its own chemical warfare programme and to attempt to develop biological and nuclear weapons. The repeated use of chemical weapons by Iraq and the lack of response to this by the international community caused Iran to claim a double standard set by the UN Security Council, stating Iran had no choice but to develop its own capability as its only means of self defence against Iraq.²⁶

In 1985-86 the Reagan administration conducted secret diplomacy with Iran to arrange for Israeli arms to be sold to Iran, in exchange for the release of

²⁴ Ansari.p.237.

²⁵ Hilterman, Joost.R. Outsiders as Enablers, in Potter and Sick.p.158.

²⁶ Hilterman.p.159.

American hostages in Lebanon, and the provision of funding to the Nicaraguan opposition forces in Lebanon, the 'contras'.²⁷ Arguing that there was need to improve relations with Tehran to counter an increasing Soviet influence, President Reagan signed a directive that America would help Iran obtain selected weapons. Initially hostages were freed once weapons were received by Iran, but by May 1986 negotiations stalled. To make Iran desperate for more American weapons, a CIA initiative to get Iraq to escalate the air war and bombings within Iran was implemented. The CIA provided the Iraqis with intelligence on Iranian targets and in response to increased bombings, Iran requested significant arms from America to repel Iraq. As weapons were provided to Iran, American hostages in Lebanon were released, although as some were released, more were taken to ensure that America would continue to provide arms.²⁸ The CIA was supplying satellite intelligence to both Iran and Iraq to ensure neither side got the upper hand and prevent either side from winning. When the Iran-contra scandal became public in November 1986 Iran had re-equipped with between \$500 million to \$1 billion of American weapons.

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait became involved in the conflict as Iraqi attacks on Iranian oil facilities and shipping were responded to by Iranian attacks on Kuwaiti and Saudi shipping. Iran was determined to keep the Gulf shipping lanes open as it had no land based pipelines to maintain the sale of oil as its

²⁷ Fawcett.p.277.

²⁸ Lando.p.76.

economic lifeline. Attacking Iraqi ships in the Gulf extended to attacks on Saudi and Kuwaiti ships, in an attempt to prevent their assistance to Iraq.²⁹ Kuwait asked the United States and the Soviet Union to protect its ships from attack in the Gulf. America was already significantly assisting Iraq through goods supply and intelligence, and happily responded to the request offering to re-flag any Kuwaiti ships that were sailing under the USSR flag.³⁰

The United States Navy moved into the Gulf in 1986 once the Iran-contra scandal became public under the pretext of Iran's attacks on ships in the Gulf. In July 1988 an American ship mistook an Iranian civilian airliner for an Iranian air force jet and shot it down. Khomeini was convinced that the attack on civilian aircraft was the precursor to America launching an assault on Iran which triggered Iran to accept UN Security Council Resolution 598 which called for a ceasefire to the war.³¹ Ayatollah Khomeini realised the survival of the Islamic state depended on ending the war but likened this ceasefire to drinking a chalice of poison.³² America was cast as the Great Satan which meant it was the symbol of the worldly oppressed and anti-religious. This terminology put Iran as the oppressed, righteous, martyred victim who would triumph with God's help in the end. When Iran was

²⁹ Ansari.p.237.

³⁰ Bakhash in Potter and Sick.p.24.

³¹ Fawcett.p.277.

³² Brumberg.p.142.

unsuccessful in any area it was seen as the martyrdom of the righteous, but any victory against America was claimed as evidence of God's favour.³³

Iran tried to maintain normal relations with Western Europe, Japan and China and aimed to resist Western influence and culture and emphasise Islamic authenticity and culture which influenced foreign policy. Exporting the revolution, Khomeini saw himself as the leader of the world's Islamic community, rather than the head of one state, and through Islam he believed the great powers could be combated. The new rulers saw the revolution as a model that would trigger further revolutions in the Middle East and sought to advance such revolutions through rhetoric, finance and action.

The change in the relationship with America from regional ally to 'great Satan' was one of the most marked differences in the Islamic Republic's international relationships since the revolution, but not the only one. There were several significant changes in Iran's international relations both globally and regionally during Khomeini's time to 1989. By March 1979 Iran had severed relations with South Africa (which had imported 90% of its oil from Iran), and in April, Iran ended relations with Egypt over the Camp David peace treaty with Israel.³⁴ The revolution caused Israel and America

³³ Andersen, Roy R. Seibert, Robert F. Wagner, Jon G.(Eds) *Politics and Change in the Middle East, Sources of Conflict and Accommodation*, Eighth Edition, Pearson Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 2007.p.84.

³⁴ Wright, Martin. (Ed) *Iran The Khomeini Revolution*, Longman Group UK Limited, Essex, Britain, 1989.p.53.

to become closer allies as both had lost their regionally ally of Iran through the revolution.³⁵

Relations with Canada ended in 1980 after Canadian diplomats helped six American embassy staff flee Iran. As Britain was supportive of America over the hostage crisis, Iran's relations with Britain were strained and worsened through 1985 to 1987 as Tehran detained a British businessman on charges of spying. Following the resolution of the hostage crisis many European nations maintained trading relations with Iran, although Britain, France, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands sent naval forces to the Gulf during the Iran-Iraq war to protect shipping against Iranian attacks. Japan and Italy were the two top buyers of Iranian oil and maintained strong trade relations, but favoured Iraq during the war.³⁶

A breakdown in the relations with Britain occurred in 1989 after Indian born British citizen Salman Rushdie's book 'The Satanic Verses' was published in Britain, and aroused furore from Muslims around the world. Most Muslim governments banned the book, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia with Muslim leaders calling for the death of Rushdie.³⁷ Khomeini issued a fatwa against Rushdie that he had committed blasphemy, and condemning him to death. Khomeini announced that to kill him would be a religious

³⁵ Ansari.p.100.

³⁶ Wright, Martin.p.59.

³⁷ Hunter, Shireen T. *Iran After Khomeini*, The Centre for Strategic and International Studies, The Washington Papers, Washington DC. 1992.p.119.

virtue rather than a sin, which received strong international support from Muslims. Britain campaigned to its allies against the fatwa which saw the European Community members recall their ambassadors from Iran in 1988 and impose economic and financial restrictions on Iran. The Majiles severed diplomatic ties with Britain, and the relations with the Soviet Union began to improve.³⁸

Relations with the Soviet Union were strong at first following the revolution, until Khomeini stressed that Iran was ‘neither east nor west...we are enemies of international communism’. The USSR was uncomfortable with Iran’s Islamic fundamentalism because of the potential threat it posed, with the millions of Muslims living in Soviet Central Asia.³⁹ Despite Sovietisation, Islam had not disappeared from the Soviet Central Asia republics and Moscow was concerned Islamic revivalism from within would threaten its domestic stability. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was a move that aimed at safeguarding the Soviets from the Islamic Republic, and Iran condemned it as a hostile act against all Muslims of the world. Afghanistan had to be safeguarded as if the Afghan Mujahedeen succeeded with Iran’s help, the Soviet Union’s internal stability would be significantly threatened. In November 1981 Iran called for the unconditional withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan and the

³⁸ The Islamic Republic of Iran, *From Revolution 598 to Reconstruction*, (no publisher or date of publication).p.10-11; Waxman, Dov. *The Islamic Republic of Iran: Between Revolution and Realpolitik*, Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism (RISCT), Conflict Studies 308, United Kingdom, 1998.p.24; Rouleau, Eric. ‘European Union and French views of the Islamic Republic’ in Hoogland.p.151.

³⁹ Stempel, John. D. *Inside The Iranian Revolution*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1981.p.318.

right for the Afghan people to determine their own political destiny, recommending the establishment of an Islamic council and peace keeping force to supervise the withdrawal.⁴⁰

The boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics was supported by Iran, and the Soviet Union declared neutrality on the Iran-Iraq war and stopped selling arms to Iraq. Iran did a \$10 million 'arms for oil' deal with the Soviet Union in the early stage of the war but when Iran invaded Iraq in 1982 and became the aggressor, Russia backed Iraq, and Soviet supplied weapons devastated many Iranian towns from 1982.⁴¹ Through 1984 and 1985 relations improved as an economic co-operation protocol was adopted and by 1988, Iran was serving as mediator between Russia withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan, and the Afghan resistance.⁴² Many Eastern European states followed the example of the Soviet Union and built economic ties with Khomeini's regime. Following the Rushdie affair, as Iran's relations with the West degraded, relations improved with Russia. An Iranian delegation visited Moscow in January 1989, and the Soviet foreign minister visited Tehran the following month. A formal agreement on military cooperation allowed Iran to rebuild its depleted military following the war.

⁴⁰ Hussein, pp.183-4.

⁴¹ Bruce, James. 'Land of Crisis and Upheaval', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Vol 22/004, 30 Jul 1984. p.26.

⁴² Wright, Martin.p.60.

The Arab Gulf states were cautious of the Islamic Republic and wary that it may encourage their own Shi'a minorities into revolutionary action. Iranian spokesmen denounced many of the Gulf's leaders as un-Islamic in line with the policy of exporting the revolution. During the Iran-Iraq war most states saw Iraq as the lesser threat to themselves in the region. The Gulf states were united by the common potential threat and in 1981 formed the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) which consisted of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. Security was the key reason for the establishment of the GCC and the three states that the members felt most threatened by were the Soviet Union, Iran and Israel. All GCC members had good relations with the West, and accepted the United States as a great power that could check the Soviet Union's interventions.

From 1982 when Iran was the aggressor in the Iran-Iraq war, the GCC states warned that Iran crossing Iraq's border posed a threat to all Arab nations. Economically trade relations were relatively strong and after initial troubles, by 1985 the relationship with Saudi Arabia had improved significantly. The Crown Prince of Qatar stated that Qatar admired Iran as a country in the forefront of a struggle with Israel, and in 1986 trade between the United Arab Emirates and Iran increased to US \$1,000 million.⁴³

In 1987 several hundred Iranian's were staging political demonstrations on the annual Haj (pilgrimage) to Mecca, denouncing Israel, America, the

⁴³ Wright.p.61.

Soviet Union and pro-Western leaders of the Gulf nations. One demonstration resulted in the deaths of over 300 Iranians and several Saudi Arabian and other nationalities. Mobs in Tehran retaliated by attacking the Saudi and Kuwaiti embassies and Iranian leaders called for the freeing of the holy shrines of Mecca and Medina from the Wahaabis⁴⁴. A Saudi Arabian spokesman called for the overthrow of the Iranian regime and in April 1988 severed diplomatic relations after Iran refused to cut the number of Iranians on Haj and refrain from political demonstrations.⁴⁵

Khomeini worked to establish relations with the more radical Arab states of Libya, Syria, South Yemen and Algeria. Trade and diplomatic relations with these states were developed and expanded, but with the remaining Gulf states the relations were strained and Iran was increasingly isolated after it pursued Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war, even after the Iraqis had been pushed behind the border. The Arab world stood with Iraq against Iran's aggression and blamed Iran for the criminal acts that had occurred during Haj in Mecca.⁴⁶

Turkey's policy toward Iran had three key points; to co-exist with Iran, maintain neutrality in the Iran-Iraq war, and take advantage of the war to expand its economic ties with Iran. In doing so, Turkey hoped this would

⁴⁴ Moslem minority sect the Saudi royal family belonged to.

⁴⁵ Hussein.p.193; Hunter.p.105.

⁴⁶ Wright.p.62.

prevent Iran from falling within the Soviet sphere of influence.⁴⁷ Ten days before Iraq invaded Iran, Turkey had a military coup as the Turkish Generals were concerned that leftist groups and Kurdish Nationalist groups were developing strong alliances.⁴⁸ Turkey's two primary concerns with Iran's revolution were that the Islamic fundamentalism would spread to Turkey, and that the revolution would fail and allow for the creation of a Kurdish state.

Throughout the Iran-Iraq war, Turkey was concerned that Iraq could no longer control northern Iraq, and the Kurdish Democratic Party or the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan would co-operate with the nationalist Kurdish organisation Partia Kakarea Kurdistan.⁴⁹ The three areas that resulted in Iran and Turkey's co-operation were their mutual desire to manage the Kurdish issue, benefit from the oil and gas resources, and to refrain from damaging each other's Central Asia policy, particularly regarding Azerbaijan and spheres of influence in northern Iran.⁵⁰ Iran wanted to maintain relations with Turkey as one of its two Islamic neighbours and increased trade substantially through the early 1980s.

⁴⁷ Bolukbasi, Suha. 'Turkey Copes with Revolutionary Iran', *Journal of South Asia and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol xii, no. 1 and 2, 1989.p.95.

⁴⁸ Olson.p.2.

⁴⁹ Chehabi, H. E. *Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the last 500 Years*, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Oxford in association with I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, London, 2006.p.204.

⁵⁰ Olson.p.11.

Turkey was strategically important to America as it produced a base for American strategic and tactical forces and its importance was enhanced after the revolution in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the uncertainty following the death of Yugoslavian leader Tito. Following Turkey's leadership coup in June 1979, all political activity was banned and Marxist and Islamic leaders were repressed.⁵¹

After the death of Khomeini in 1989, Iran's foreign policy under Rafsanjani 1989-1997 changed little overall, although there were changes in the international environment that impacted on Iran. Rafsanjani's government was calling itself a progressive government and although there was hope for improved international relations when he was voted into office, there were no significant achievements during his first term. The fact that Iran had accepted the UN Security Council Resolution 598 just before Rafsanjani took office lifted the international pressure on Iran's foreign policy somewhat, but did little to improve relations between Iran and America, the Soviet Union, European Union countries or the GCC.⁵² Iran's foreign policy was based on the intention of living peacefully with its neighbours and the foreign minister reinforced that Iran's diplomacy was aimed at building friendly relations with all neighbouring countries based on mutual

⁵¹ Hussein.p.192.

⁵² Roshandel, Jalil. 'Decision-Making Process in Foreign Policy', in Hoogland.p.130.

interest and respect.⁵³ Rafsanjani's foreign policy differed from that of Khomeini as it was based on national interest rather than religious ideology.

The fall of the Soviet Union overturned the existing balance of power regionally and globally. It resulted in the establishment of independent Muslim republics with oil reserves, meaning Iran could develop political and economic ties with its new neighbours.⁵⁴ The dissolution of the USSR saw Iran share land and sea borders with 15 states. The new states were all in the early stages of nation building and former communist officials who dominated the new governments were suspicious of the Islamic movement. Many states engaged in ethnic and territorial strife of their own which changed the regional dynamic in which Iran was operating.⁵⁵ Iran had developed positive relations with most of the central Asian states that emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet Union, hoping to profit economically as it became a major trade link to the newly independent states.⁵⁶ Russia allied with Iran in the economic, political, military and nuclear domains as Iran became a counter balance to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and the West's efforts to control energy resources in the Gulf.⁵⁷

⁵³ Marschall, Christin. *Iran's Persian Gulf Policy, From Khomeini to Khatami*, RoutledgeCurzon, Taylor & Francis Group, London, 2003.p.21.

⁵⁴ Waxman, Dov. *The Islamic Republic of Iran: Between Revolution and Realpolitik*, Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism (RISCT), Conflict Studies 308, United Kingdom, 1998.p.8.

⁵⁵ Sick, in Keddie and Mathee.p.363.

⁵⁶ Rakel.p.176.

⁵⁷ Hunter.p.121.

Relations between America and Iran were tense through Rafsanjani's tenure. The first Bush administration had the attitude that Iran was less important than Iraq or the Gulf Arab states and a no-war, no-peace, circumstance between Iran and Iraq was the best they could hope for. As Iran had little international support, America believed Iran would eventually move to America on America's terms. President Bush said of the American hostages held by Lebanese groups (tied to Iran) that their unconditional release would cause America to see Iran favourably as good will begets good will. When Iran made progress in getting some hostages released however, America did not change stance, and saw it as a success that a hard line approach to Iran achieved a desired result.

As Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1991 and America responded against Iraq, Iran's two worst enemies were pitted against each other. Some hard-line revolutionaries wanted to assist Iraq and undercut America's policy, but Rafsanjani adopted a neutral stance which earned considerable goodwill in the West, and led to improvement in Iran's relations with Saudi Arabia.⁵⁸ With the 1991 Gulf War, Iran's dependence on Moscow increased as Iran's main enemy, America became the prime military power in the Gulf and established defence agreements with some GCC states, allowing US military equipment to be pre-positioned in the region. Although America was grateful for Iran's non-interference in the conflict, Iranian sponsorship of

⁵⁸ Clawson and Rubin.p.120; Andersen, Seibert and Wagner.p.284; Rubin 'The tragedy of the middle East'.p.133.

Palestinian terror groups and Hezbollah was too significant an issue for America to make any serious rapprochement.

The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan did not end the war, and Iranian backed Shi'a forces were taking losses. The 1996 military victories of the Taliban in Afghanistan saw closer relations develop between Russia and Iran, as the Sunni Taliban were enemies of the Iranian backed Shi'a forces. Russia was concerned the Taliban would penetrate the Central Asia region, or Russia which had a 20% Muslim population. The additional drug trade that had developed in Afghanistan concerned both Iran and Russia, which had signed an agreement to fight the narcotics trade in 1999.⁵⁹

Between 1992 and 1997 relations with America degraded, with US President Clinton citing Iran's hostility toward the Arab-Israeli peace process, Iran's support for international terrorism and its pursuit of nuclear technology as unacceptable behaviour.⁶⁰ In 1992 the US Congress passed the Iran – Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act barring commercial and government arms sales, the transfer of restricted goods, technology and nuclear material to either country as a part of dual containment.⁶¹ In 1993 America announced its dual containment policy which involved the political quarantine of Iran and Iraq, including partial sanctions against both

⁵⁹ Freedman, Robert O. 'Russian-Iranian Relations in the 1990s', *MERIA, Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol 4, No.2, June.

⁶⁰ Keddie.p.264.

⁶¹ Marschall.p.190.

countries, as a unilateral policy largely ignored by the rest of the world. Dual containment was an expansion of the Bush administration's regional strategy to 'contain' Iraq following Desert Storm.⁶²

The policy aimed at isolating Iran regionally and internationally until it gave up its opposition to the Arab-Israeli peace process, support for groups opposed to the process, and Iran's ambitions for nuclear, biological and chemical armaments.⁶³ American companies could still do business with Iran, however. A billion dollar oil deal by a private American company to develop Iran's offshore oil prompted the US Administration and pro-Israeli lobby to announce total embargo on Iran in April 1995.⁶⁴ The policy caused Iran to fear an attack from America and triggered mass arms purchases for self defence. America armed its Arab allies in response, which prevented dialogue between the two countries.⁶⁵

The Iran-Libya Sanctions Act 1996 saw imposed sanctions on any country or international company that intended to invest more than \$40 million (later reduced to \$20 million) in Iranian oil or gas, by depriving that country of access to American markets and finance. It was a 'with us or against us' policy which did not impress much of Europe and many Western countries,

⁶² Berman.p.55.

⁶³ Ansari 'Confronting Iran'.p.136; Fawcett.p.278; Rakal, Eva Patricia. 'Iranian Foreign Policy Since the Iranian Islamic Revolution: 1979-2006', *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, Brill, Issue 6, 2007. pp 159-187.p.171; Marschall.p.199.

⁶⁴ US Executive Order No.12959, 1995.

⁶⁵ Marschall.p.191.

which saw it as American imperialism and an irrational expression of America's obsession against the new enemy, now the Soviet Union had fallen.⁶⁶

As 1997 saw President Khatami elected into power, Iran's official foreign policy focused on integrating Iran into the international community and presenting a balanced and tolerant image of Iran to the world. He made strong efforts to gain the confidence of the regional and international forces.⁶⁷ Khatami focused on improving Iran's relations with the GCC and Gulf states which was helped by his obvious popularity within Iran following his election, and by his approach that national interest was more important than the duty of Islamic leadership for the world.

In 1997 Iran hosted the Organisation for the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Tehran which indicated a positive change in Iran's relationship with the GCC. Almost all of the 55 member states attended the Islamic Conference, including American allies Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey. Iraq and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) participated with the indication that a new restraint and moderation was being adopted by Iran. Following the conference, Saudi Arabia and Iran significantly improved their relations. Both had a mutual desire to stabilise the Gulf region and

⁶⁶ Ansari 'Confronting Iran' p.144; Hiro 'Iran today' p.277; Marschall p.192.

⁶⁷ Beasley, Ryan K. Kaarbo, Juliet. Lantis, Jeffrey S. Snarr, Michael T. (Eds) *Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective, Domestic and International Issues on State Behaviour*, CQ Press, Washington, 2002.p.227.

benefit from the oil resources and a formal co-operation agreement was signed in May 1998 designed to foster commercial, technical and commercial activities.⁶⁸ Numerous visits through the Gulf region were made, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Khatami seemed to be successfully improving relations.⁶⁹ By mid 1998 the only real issue of contention in Iran's relations with the Gulf Arab states was the dispute over the sovereignty of Persian Gulf islands Big Tunb, Little Tunb and Abu Musa which were claimed by both Iran and the UAE, although both have been occupied by Iran since the Shah's rule.⁷⁰

Efforts to improve relations with the European Union had positive results. Development of relations with Europe began at the OIC conference and were reinforced as Khatami condemned terrorism of any sort, stating in a CNN interview in January 1998 that Iran is not a nuclear power and does not intend to become one. He expressed that the hostage crisis had used unconventional methods that would not be used in today's Iran, which led to improved attitudes of European countries toward Iran. This was reinforced by the response and investigation ordered following the series of murders of writers, journalists, scholars and intellectuals of 1997 and 1998.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Daniel.p.249; Rubin, 'The tragedy of the Middle East'.p.123; Marschall, Christin. *Iran's Persian Gulf Policy, From Khomeini to Khatami*, RoutledgeCurzon, Taylor & Francis Group, London, 2003.p.146.

⁶⁹ Beasley, Kaarbo, Lantis and Snarr.p.227.

⁷⁰ Freedman, Robert O. 'U.S. Policy toward the Middle East in Clinton's Second Term', *MERIA Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol 3, No.1. March 1999.

⁷¹ Sick, Gary 'Confronting Terrorism' in Lennon and Eiss.p.235

The fatwa issued by Khomeini against Rushdie remained an issue for normalisation of relations with Europe as a fatwa could only be rescinded by the issuer. With Khomeini dead, Khatami's government expressed its desire to disassociate from the fatwa in 1998, which was accepted by Britain which immediately upgraded diplomatic relations and led to the exchange of ambassadors in 1999.⁷² This saw further improvement of relations between more European countries, and in 1999 Khatami was the only Iranian leader since the revolution to visit a Western country when he visited Italy (including the Pope in Rome), France and Germany.⁷³ Iran's relationship with France improved significantly as it became a leading trade partner, along with Russia. France rejected America's efforts to isolate Iran through the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, and joined with Russian and Malaysian energy companies to develop a southern gas field.

Although progress was made by Khatami to break down Iran's isolation, not all Iranian politicians agreed to Khatami's policies, and in some key areas there were disagreements or inconsistencies with Khomeini and Khatami's approaches. As Khatami made efforts to improve relations, the conservative clerics still had overall control in Iran and the closing of the Rushdie fatwa

⁷² Chubin, Shahram. *Whither Iran? Reform, Domestic Politics and National Security*, Adelphi Papers number three hundred and forty two, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Information Press Ltd, Oxford, United Kingdom, April 2002.p.32.

⁷³ Chubin.p.29.

by Khatami caused a wave of criticism from Khatami's hard line opponents.⁷⁴

Iran's relations with America were a focus for Khatami, and progress was made following the re-election of President Clinton in the year Khatami had his landslide victory at the polls. As Iran was developing relations with European and Gulf states, America's policy of containment was collapsing. The sanctions against the French, Russian and Malaysian energy companies were waived and US Secretary of State Madeline Albright noted that America would like to develop with the Islamic Republic a roadmap for improved relations.⁷⁵ In 1999 Clinton acknowledged that Iran may have been justified in some of the grievances it held against Western countries.⁷⁶ In 2000 Secretary Albright expressed that the actions of America in the 1953 coup were regrettable, and that America had been short-sighted in supporting Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war. She called upon Iran to join America and write a new chapter in history.⁷⁷

Ayatollah Khamanei responded by stating that America was misguided if it believed an acknowledgement without an apology would cause Iran to forget their past treason, hostility and injustices.⁷⁸ UN Sanctions were lifted

⁷⁴ Freedman, Robert O. 'U.S. Policy toward the Middle East in Clinton's Second Term', *MERIA Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol 3, No.1. March 1999

⁷⁵ Freedman, Robert O. 'U.S. Policy toward the Middle East in Clinton's Second Term'.

⁷⁶ Ansari 'Confronting Iran' p.176; Freedman, Robert O. 'U.S. Policy toward the Middle East in Clinton's Second Term'.

⁷⁷ Ansari 'Confronting Iran' p.177; Saikal p.87.

⁷⁸ Hiro, 'Iran Today' p.278.

on some Iranian goods in an effort that had little practical impact, but was an important political step forward. There was a change in attitude toward Iran, as the US President sought normalisation of relations. America's Congress was suspicious that Khatami couldn't control the radicals as they openly opposed the moderate policy approach that Khatami had toward America.⁷⁹

Following the 2000 Majiles elections, Khatami couldn't effectively react to political overtures America was extending due to hard-line domestic opposition. As President Clinton's term was ending he made more overt efforts at establishing positive relations between the two countries, sending a letter to Tehran through the Swiss Embassy outlining a program for normalisation of the relationship. Khatami missed the opportunity, but both Presidents were facing conflicting domestic support and opposition toward advances in the relationship. With the victory of President George W. Bush in the American elections, Iranian analysts believed it would see the return of oil to America's foreign policy, which would be an advantage to Iran. However, in August 2001, the economic sanctions against Iran were renewed, and signed into law by President Bush. Khatami was re-elected in the Iranian elections of 2001 and one of the concerns for Iran was America's relations with the Taliban in Afghanistan. Iran was the only Islamic country that criticised the Taliban for having perverted Islamic teachings and had

⁷⁹ Freedman, Dr Robert. 'American Policy toward Iraq and Iran in Clinton's second term', *Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs*, No 402, 27 Adar 5759, 15 March, 1999; Saikal, Amin. *Islam and the West: Conflict or Cooperation?*, Palgrave MacMillan, Hampshire, Great Britain, 2003.p.87.

mobilised in preparation for military retaliation in 1998 after Taliban militia murdered Iranian diplomats. It looked as though the Bush administration was prepared to consider oil deals with the Taliban, and Iran saw that the Taliban were the product of US allies in the region, particularly Pakistan.⁸⁰

A turning point for American-Iran relations was the al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on America on 11 September 2001. Following the terrorist attack President Khatami expressed his condolences to America, and the Mayor and Fire Chief of Tehran expressed official condolences to their New York counterparts. Where some states openly celebrated the attacks against America, Iranians held public candlelight vigils, demonstrations against terrorism and suspended 'death to America' chants at Friday prayers for several weeks.⁸¹ Iran called an emergency meeting of the OIC which adopted a stern position against terrorism, and Khomeini called on Muslims to jihad against terrorism.⁸² Officially Iran opposed the subsequent attacks on Afghanistan but did not interfere, and co-operated with search and rescue and humanitarian relief.⁸³ Khatami saw America's attack on Afghanistan as an opportunity that would remove the Taleban, weaken Pakistan's influence allow Iran greater regional power, and facilitate improved relations with America. Iran pledged \$560 million aid for reconstruction and declared its support to Karzai's interim government. The regional interests of America

⁸⁰ Ansari, 'Confronting Iran', pp.181-182.

⁸¹ Ansari, *Confronting Iran*, p.181.

⁸² Afrasiabi, Kaveh. Maleki, Abbas. 'Iran's Foreign Policy After 11 September', *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Winter/Spring, Vol IX, Issue 2, 2003, p.259.

⁸³ Sick, 'Confronting Terrorism' in Lennon and Eiss, p.236.

and Iran converged in the overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and Saddam Hussein in Iraq, but the removal of these regimes were replaced by the overt presence of American military forces in the region which presented a new security risk for the Islamic Republic.⁸⁴

Iran was praised by UN Secretary General Kofi-Anan in January 2002 for its conduct in relation to Iraq and there were positive constructive developments in American approaches to Iran. Iranian hardliners weren't happy with the developments and some in Israel and America were concerned an American-Iran relationship would further strain America-Israeli relations. This was compounded by Bush's need to maintain Israeli-Palestine relations in order to maintain the coalition in Afghanistan. Any good-will between Iran and America essentially ended with the American President's 2002 State of the Nation address. In this address, Iran was labelled a part of the 'axis of evil' along with Iraq and North Korea, posing a grave and growing danger by aggressively pursuing weapons of mass destruction and exporting terror while an 'unelected few' repressed Iranian's hope for freedom.⁸⁵ Countries identified as supporting international terrorist organisations by the US State Department in the post September 11 period were Iran, Syria, North Korea, Cuba, Sudan, Libya and Iraq.⁸⁶ Where the

⁸⁴ Baghat, Gawdat. 'Iran, The United States, and The War on Terrorism', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Taylor and Francis Group, 26, 2003.p.94.

⁸⁵ US President George Bush, State of the Union Address 19 January 2002.

⁸⁶ Navias, Martin.S. 'Global Terror and International Finance after 9/11' in Ankersen, Christopher (Ed). *Understanding Global Terror*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 2007.p.180.

hard-liners within Iranian politics were already anti-American, this statement alienated the moderate and reformist elements of Iran, including President Khatami.

Khameini condemned the American administration's policy and 'arrogance of power' calling upon Iranians to fight any form of American interference in Iran's internal affairs.⁸⁷ He called America the 'most hated Satan in the world' while Khatami stated that Bush had spoken 'arrogantly, humiliatingly, aggressively, and in an arrogant way'.⁸⁸ While political relations with America deteriorated, Iranian public opinion indicated 74% of Iranians over 15 years of age favoured resumption of relations with America, while 46% believed that American policies were to some extent correct, against Iran. Journalists who published the government-commissioned poll results were jailed for wrongful analysis of the country's political, economic, social and cultural situation. The hardliners were shocked at the results and during the last year of Khatami's rule, US-Iranian relations were very poor.⁸⁹

American rhetoric towards Iran indicated that they wanted a regime change without the use of US military. President Bush said, 'The people of Iran want the same freedoms, human rights, and opportunities as people around

⁸⁷ Ansari, *Confronting Iran*.p.184; Lennon and Eiss.p.236; Fawcett.p.278.

⁸⁸ Ederer, Edith. 'In New York, Iranian Minister says Tehran is 'Shocked and Dissapointed' at Bush Speech', Associated Press, 2 February 2002. cited in Rubin and Clawson.p.153.

⁸⁹ Rubin and Clawson.p.154.

the world...Their voices are not being listened to by the unelected people who are the real rulers in Iran...as Iran's people move toward a future defined by greater freedom, greater tolerance, they will have no better friend than the United States of America.'⁹⁰ This was followed up by a speech by the National Security Council Staff member Zalmay Khalilzad who said 'U.S. policy is not to impose change on Iran but to support the Iranian people in their quest to decide their own destiny...We will continue to speak out in support of the Iranian people.'⁹¹ Where Khatami wanted dialogue with America, Khomeini considered that dialogue would be more harmful than establishing ties with America. Khatami had little effect in his last year of office, and the 2005 election of Ahmadinejad saw a change in US-Iranian relations for the worse.⁹²

As Ahmadinejad took the hard line approach, his foreign policy was characterised as being extremely anti-American and anti-Israel. Some of his most contentious rhetoric has been with regard to Israel stating that Israel should be 'wiped off the map', 'Israel must be uprooted and erased from history', and claiming that the Holocaust was a fabrication.⁹³ This has caused international outrage and Ahmadinejad's approach to international relations have been detrimental for the Islamic Republic. His anti-Israel

⁹⁰ President Bush, "Statement by the President", July 12 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/07/20020712-9.html>, cited in Clawson and Rubin.p.157.

⁹¹ Khalilzad, Zalmay. 'Where is Iran-and U.S-Iran policy-Headed? Address at The Washington Instituted for Near East Policy, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC07.php?CID=168>. cited in Clawson and Rubin.p.157.

⁹² Rakel.p.179.

⁹³ Rubin, Michael. 'Iran Means What it Says', *AEI*, Washington, January 2006.

rhetoric, nuclear goals and domestic repression prevent good relations between the Islamic Republic and the West.

The election of American President Obama in 2009 has made some steps toward improving the US-Iranian relationship, indicating he wanted open dialogue with Iran. The uprisings following Ahmadinejad's contentious re-election in 2009 saw cautious responses from the US President and the Secretary of State noting that the violence was troubling, and the people of Iran must choose their own leaders. Obama expressed that America and the international community was appalled and outraged by the threats, beatings and imprisonments in Iran, but respected Iran's sovereignty and confirmed that America would not get involved in Iranian affairs. France's President Sarkozy indicated he was 'profoundly troubled' by the political situation, and the new UN General Secretary joined world leaders in supporting an enquiry into the disputed election results.⁹⁴

Iran's post September 11 relationship with Russia had seen adjustments in foreign policy to enhance Iran's regional security, given the pro-American encirclement posed by Kuwait, Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan. Both Russia and Iran have a mutual interest to contain US power within the region. Russia's peaceful support for, and diplomatic ambivalence to, Iran's nuclear programme are of concern to America,

⁹⁴ President Barak Obama, US Press Conference, 23 June 2009, 4.06pm; Solomon, Jay and Spiegel, Peter. 'Obama Says Iran Must Pick Its Own Leaders', *Wall Street Journal*, 16 June 2009.

Europe and the Gulf states.⁹⁵ US policy precluding Iranian control of Caspian Sea exports caused concern of isolation and encirclement for Iran. Khatami claimed America was applying pressure on the central Asian countries to bypass Iran in their oil and gas exports to the European Union. As a pipeline through Iran is the cheapest and shortest route to get oil and gas to the Western markets, Washington's decision on the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline to exclude Russia and Iran strengthened Iran and Russia's relationship, which was reinforced by the sale of Russian nuclear technology to Iran.⁹⁶

Iran's relationship with the GCC did not recover after the islands dispute, and is unlikely to improve until the US-Iran relationship improves. Iran has looked to China for alternative security arrangements, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) founded in 1996 by Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan posed such an opportunity. Ahmadinejad was in attendance with observer status at the 2006 SCO summit which concerned America. America is suspicious of Russia's and China's willingness to provide Iran with nuclear and military technology. Iran and China's relationship deteriorated after American pressure on China in the 1990s ended a technology sale to Iran. In 2003, American imposed sanctions on Chinese companies for violating US sanctions on Iran, which caused China to look toward giving Iran SCO membership as a balance to

⁹⁵ Afrasaibi and Maleki.p.261.

⁹⁶ Ozden, Zeynep Oktav. 'What has (or has not) changed in US-Iranian Relations During the Khatami Period?', Istanbul University, International Relations Department, 2003.

Iran's Russian tilt.⁹⁷ Iran gained observer status at the SCO as it worked to align itself with the People's Republic of China as the EU and America push to economically and politically isolate Iran.

The biggest issues that prevent improved international relations for the Islamic Republic of Iran are its nuclear ambitions, and terrorism. In the Iran-Iraq war Iran lost around 50% of its military equipment and the remainder was mainly obsolete due to the loss of parts and servicing from America. Impressed by Iraq's technology during the war in which Iran's superior numbers had little advantage over technology, Iran's post-war rearmament focused on air defence, naval capability, long range, ballistic and chemical weapons and missiles. Iran's aspirations for weapons of mass destruction and nuclear technology pose the greatest strategic threat to the region, and the most political tension since the revolution. Weapons of mass destruction are a part of Iran's deterrence policy against Iraq, and Israel which has nuclear weapons that can target any area in Iran.⁹⁸ Iran considers its deterrent strategy essential to maintain defensive capabilities, and as a missile manufacturing country it does not need any other country, to assist, so is impervious to US-led efforts to restrict technology to Iran.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Afrasaibi and Maleki.p.265; Cohen, Roger. 'Iran's China Option', *New York Times*, 02 Feb 2009.

⁹⁸ Waxman.p.20.

⁹⁹ Rafsanjani, Friday Sermon, Iran radio, 11 Dec 1998 in BBC ME//3049 MED 12-15, 15 Dec 1998, Cited in Chubin, 'Wither Iran'.p.55.

Given that Iran is located in vicinity of three countries (India, Pakistan, Israel) that possess nuclear weapons, Iran sees the desire for conventional and non-conventional weaponry as legitimate. Iranian leaders view themselves as encircled by potential enemies; Iraq, the Arab states of the Gulf that host American military, Pakistan encouraged anti-Iranian activity in Afghanistan, and the Central Asian republics, once Soviet, now sectarian with US bases, and Israel, a nuclear power with an interest in Muslim holy places.¹⁰⁰ President Ahmadinejad's stance on self sufficiency and Iran's right to process uranium for energy is concerning for the West, and a major obstacle to improved international relations, despite Iran's consistent statements that it does not seek nuclear weapons.

Iran's acquisition of nuclear technology began during the rule of Mohammad Reza Shah who in 1959 acquired a research reactor, encouraged by the Nixon administration to expand his nuclear interests in order to keep technologically abreast of Britain and America. In 1974 Iran announced its intention to order five nuclear power plants from France, America signed a 10 year agreement to supply enriched uranium to Iran, Britain trained Iranian nuclear scientists, and Canada signed an agreement for nuclear cooperation.¹⁰¹ Iran's first nuclear power station at Bushehr was well underway by the Islamic Revolution but all work stopped in 1979 as Ayatollah Khomeini declared nuclear energy un-Islamic. Bushehr was

¹⁰⁰ Yaphe, Judith S. 'U.S.-Iran Relations: Normalisation in the Future?', *Strategic Forum*, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defence University, No. 188, January 2002.p.3.

¹⁰¹ Ansari 'Confronting Iran' p.64.

bombed in the Iran-Iraq war and when President Rafsanjani tried to continue the work post war, America was set firmly against Iran acquiring nuclear technology.

America applied international pressure to prevent Western countries from assisting Iran but despite persistent effort, Russia agreed to nuclear and missile cooperation with Iran in 1990 and assistance in completing Bushehr. Russia became Iran's principal nuclear ally. In 1991 China supplied technology to Iran, and a 1994 contract with Russia to build the generators for a nuclear power plant was of concern to America. America designated China as a 'principal supplier of nuclear technology to Iran'¹⁰² and applied diplomatic and economic pressure to China formally pledged to cease nuclear contacts in October 1997. Within three months American intelligence found that China had continued nuclear talks with Iran despite the pledge. Iran developed nuclear cooperation agreements with North Korea which helped Iran build secret atomic facilities through the 1990s, and it is alleged that Pakistan provided Iran with nuclear technology and the IAEA investigated the involvement of companies in Germany, Switzerland, Austria and other Western European nations.¹⁰³

American opposition to Iran having nuclear capability continued and the Clinton administration argued that Iran's gas and oil resources meant it did

¹⁰² Office of the Secretary of Defence, *Proliferation: Threat and Response*, 1996, US Department of Defence, Washington, 1996. Cited in Berman.p.36.

¹⁰³ Berman.p36-37; Rakel.p.185.

not need nuclear powered electric plants. Despite Russia's assurance Iran was pursuing nuclear power, not nuclear weapons, America and Israel weren't convinced and made concerted efforts to put hurdles in Iran's way. In 1996 Clinton passed the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, and in March 2000, renewed his 1995 executive order banning all trade and financial deals with Iran.

As a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Iran was guaranteed the right to acquire nuclear power plants, and there are no barriers on building uranium enrichment facilities to produce fuel-grade uranium. Obligations under the treaty are to keep the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) informed and allowing inspections to ensure nuclear facilities are for peaceful purposes only.¹⁰⁴ In 2003 after an information leak by a political branch of the Mojahidin-e Khalq (MEK), it was revealed to the West that Iran had two previously unknown nuclear facilities developed in 1996 and 2000, one of which had technology to enrich uranium.

The ability to enrich uranium is not required to run research reactors or power generators and Iran argued that they had done nothing wrong, as under the NPT they did not have to disclose having the technology or facilities to the IAEA, but only if they intended to enrich uranium. Iran argued their secrecy was a result of nuclear powers not fulfilling their

¹⁰⁴ Clawson and Rubin.p.139.

obligations of the NPT to facilitate the development of civil nuclear power in Iran, which was supposed to be one of the benefits of signing the treaty. Iranian officials queried why Iran was under such scrutiny from the West, whilst Israel, Pakistan and India had become nuclear powers. The West argued they were not signatories to the treaty so were not subject to its requirements, which suggested that signing an international treaty gave countries a disadvantage over those that flouted international convention.¹⁰⁵ Inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities by the IAEA discovered traces of enriched uranium, the facilities were sealed, and negotiations began between European Union countries of the IAEA (Britain, France and Germany), and Iran.

The UN and European Union with American support offered to sell Iran light-water reactors to generate power, but could not be converted to make nuclear weapons. Russia offered Iranian scientists a programme that would teach them how to enrich uranium, while not having the equipment in Iran. Both offers were declined as Iran claimed it would make her dependent on other nations.¹⁰⁶ The European countries wanted Iran to sign and ratify an Additional Protocol, which allowed for more intrusive inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities. America was pushing the IAEA to get Iran reported to the UN Security Council, and Iranian conservatives were questioning why Iran was under so much pressure to sign an additional protocol in order to

¹⁰⁵ Ansari 'Confronting Iran'.p.200; Tarock, Adam. 'Iran's Nuclear Programme and the West', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 4, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2006. p 655.

¹⁰⁶ Pollack.p.361; Chubin.p.72.

comply with a voluntary agreement.¹⁰⁷ The IAEA said that the discovery of two undisclosed nuclear facilities was a matter of trust, but the trust failure was mutual as Iran felt it was being targeted specifically despite its compliance to the treaty.

Iran agreed to sign and ratify the Additional Protocol and suspend its plans to enrich uranium pending further negotiation. Europe recognised Iran's right to develop peaceful nuclear energy, and further negotiations saw an agreement confirming the first protocol signed in November 2004. Negotiation continued through 2005 with much pressure and interference from America, at times jeopardising Europe's progress and increasing distrust and suspicion between the countries. Iran was determined to negotiate terms that the West saw as non-negotiable, and as America belatedly came on board with Europe's stance Iran was increasingly rejecting offers.¹⁰⁸ The IAEA board met and Russia, China and India preferred that Iran's nuclear issue be resolved within the IAEA framework, and not referred to the UN Security Council noting that Iran enriching uranium was not violating the NPT itself. The West was demanding Iran commit itself to a policy no other nuclear energy country is required to sign, and as talks came to a stalemate with both sides accusing the other they had entered the talks in bad faith, the Europeans assured America that if Iran

¹⁰⁷ Ansari.p.205; Tarock. p 649.

¹⁰⁸ Ansari 'Confronting Iran'.p.229.

backtracked on the Additional Protocol signed in 2004, they would join America in referring Iran to the UN Security Council.¹⁰⁹

At the end of Khatami's term in 2005, Iran attempted further negotiations on the nuclear issue and threatened to begin uranium enrichment in March, before deciding to defer the decision to await the European counter offer in August. The June 2005 Presidential election of Ahmadinejad changed the nuclear discussions, as the President announced that Iran would continue its nuclear programme, despite what the IAEA said. In 2006 negotiations ended, and Iran reopened the nuclear facilities with domestic protests rallying that nuclear power is Iran's inalienable right. Threats were exchanged between America and Iran, with American Vice-President threatening meaningful consequences if uranium enrichment occurred, and Iran threatening that it could match any harm and pain that America could inflict. The issue was referred to the Security Council and Iran stepped up their nuclear programme.

On 11 April 2006 Ahmadinejad announced that 'Iran has joined the nuclear countries of the world'¹¹⁰ and in July the UN Security Council passed a resolution giving Iran 30 days to stop enrichment. In December 2006 the Security Council passed resolution 1737 giving Iran 60 days to halt uranium

¹⁰⁹ Tarock.p.661.

¹¹⁰ 'Iran Says It Is Making Nuclear Fuel, Defying U.N.', *The New York Times*, April 12 2006, *The Washington Post*, April 12 2006.

enrichment after failing the first deadline for sanctions were imposed blocking import and export of sensitive nuclear material and equipment.¹¹¹

Iran ignored the resolution and American President Bush called for immediate consequences, whilst European leaders allowed Iran two weeks to clarify its position. Ahmadinejad argued that American and British domination of the Security Council was the key issue, and confirmed Iran did not have interest in developing nuclear weapons. In March 2007, the Security Council passed resolution 1747 tightening the sanctions, and in March 2008, resolution 1803 required Iran to cease all research and development of Uranium enrichment. Iran refused, saying that it was only enriching for peaceful purposes and has the right to continue, under IAEA standards and practices.

Iranian technology continues to develop. In February 2009 during the 30 years celebration of the founding of the Islamic Republic, a satellite was launched into orbit making Iran one of only eight other nations that have used their own technologies to do so. President Ahmadinejad praised the launch stressing the fact that Iranian experts had achieved it themselves ‘with God’s help and the desire for justice and peace the official presence of

¹¹¹ United Nations Security Council SC/8928, Resolution 1737, Security Council 5612th meeting, ‘Security Council Imposes sanctions on Iran for failure to halt uranium enrichment unanimously adopting resolution 1737’, 23 December 2006.

the Islamic Republic was registered in space'.¹¹² Washington was worried that the launch establishes the technological basis for developing long range ballistic missile systems and through the launch Iran used a civilian platform to show military technology development.

The nuclear issue is as yet unresolved. In March 2009, America (under President Obama), Britain, Russia, China, France and Germany agreed to invite Iran to a meeting to find a diplomatic solution to the nuclear issue to which Ahmadinejad said Iran would not bow on the nuclear issue, but talks would be the framework for managing global issues.¹¹³ As Iran denies possession or intent for nuclear weapons, and with no policy for chemical, nuclear, or biological weapons of mass destruction, the intention for Iran to acquire them is gathered from inference and speculation. A nuclear armed Iran is seen as a threat to the regional and strategic balance in power with Iran's denial of a nuclear weapons programme and continued international pressure to stop its nuclear programme there is limited scope for dialogue and resolution on the issue.

It seems unlikely that there will be a resolution on the nuclear issue that will satisfy the international community and the Islamic Republic, as neither side of this issue is willing to concede on the key points. As America and the West fear Iran developing a nuclear weapon, Iran fears the West bombing

¹¹² Fathi, Nazila and Broad, William. 'Iran Launches Satellite and U.S. Takes Wary Note', *The New York Times*, 4 February 2009.

¹¹³ Reuters, 'Iran's Ahmadinejad Rejects Western Nuclear Proposal', 25 May 2009.

their nuclear facilities shown by an August 2009 request from the Islamic Republic to the United Nations to consider banning attacks on nuclear installations.¹¹⁴ This is an unresolved issue of ongoing tension, telling Iran not to go nuclear, yet stating Iran is considered a grave threat to international security and stability does not seem to be a successful approach to reassure Iran that they have no need for nuclear weapons.¹¹⁵

The second major concern of the West from the Islamic Revolution was Iran's support of terrorist groups and this increases the nuclear threat in the eyes of the West, not necessarily because of Iran having access to nuclear technology, but the risk of nuclear weapons getting into the hands of terrorists.¹¹⁶ The use of terrorism as an instrument of coercion and intimidation was widespread during the first fifteen years of the Islamic Republic, which served to isolate the country and confirm its status as a 'rogue' state, unwilling to participate in international politics. Iran supported terrorist groups as a means to spread the revolution, to change policies or eject foreigners from the region (eg bombing US Marine barracks), promote the Iranian Islamic model (eg in Lebanon and North Africa), or to gain leverage or influence on an issue (eg the Palestinian peace process).¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Worth, Robert. F. 'Iran Seeks Ban on Striking Atomic Sites', *New York Times*, 14 August 2009.p.14.

¹¹⁵ Lievan, Anatol. *America Right or Wrong: The Anatomy of American Nationalism*, HarperCollins, London, 2004.p.96.

¹¹⁶ Mokhtari.p.363.

¹¹⁷ Chubin.p.90.

Following the revolution, Iran was regarded as a leading proponent for state sponsored terrorism, using fear for political purposes. With the open goal of spreading the Islamic Revolution, the development of Islamic movements throughout Africa and the Middle East led to Iran's isolation in an attempt to pressure Iran to stop sponsoring terror groups, and reduce the danger posed to the international community by Islamic movements.¹¹⁸ The Islamic Revolutionary government is credited with financing Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, Hamas in Gaza, the United Islamic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and other terrorist organisations. Immediately post revolution the Mujahedin-e Enzelab and Fedai Khalq emerged as the principal groups which amalgamated with Hezbollah to form the Revolutionary Guards. The anti-Khomeini opposition, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), established within Iran pre-revolution used terrorist tactics against Iran to achieve an overthrow of the Iranian government.¹¹⁹

Where the MEK were suppressed and excluded from power during Khomeini's establishment of the Islamic Republic they sided with Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war and established a network within Iran to undermine the leadership.¹²⁰ The MEK dominate an opposition parliament in exile, the National Council of Resistance of Iran which seeks an overthrow of post-revolutionary Iran's leadership. The MEK were sponsored by Iraq through

¹¹⁸ Chubin.p.88.

¹¹⁹ Stempel.p.53; Lutz, James M, and Brenda J. *Global Terrorism*, Routledge, New York, 2008.p.58.

¹²⁰ Rathmell, Andrew. 'Politics in Tehran', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol 6, Issue 7, 01 July 1994.

the 1990s and early 2000 as a way of exerting pressure on Iran throughout and post the Iran-Iraq war. Iran itself is a victim of terrorist action, and as America attacks the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Iran while it had supported the Mujahedeen through Pakistan against the Soviets in Afghanistan, Iran's stance is that America uses the term terrorism too loosely and only to suit its own political goals. As the only Shi'a state, Iran has considered it its duty to support Shi'a populations in neighbouring countries.¹²¹ Iran denies the use of terrorism based on the bias of the West to label terrorism to include legitimate national resistance and liberation struggle and as a victim of terrorism at the hands of the MEK Iran feels it has the right to retaliate. Iran sponsors the Iraqi opposition group The Supreme Council for the Revolution in Iraq, resulting in mutual state sponsored terrorism emerging from the Islamic revolution.¹²²

In Lebanon the Iranian revolution had its most profound effect. The Shi'a in Lebanon were the poorest and most deprived group consisting of about 30% of the population. A movement was organised within Lebanon headed by Iranian Musa al-Sadr, with the same vision that Khomeini had, but with his disappearance in 1978 the leadership waned, and the radical nature of the organisation was taken up by Hezbollah. Hezbollah developed into a tightly structured political organisation with a large popular following.¹²³

¹²¹ Chubin,p.89.

¹²² Boyme, Sean. 'The Iranian Government and Its Leading Opposition', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol 12, Issue 4, 01 April 2000.

¹²³ Martin,p.194.

In 1978 Hezbollah was founded in Lebanon by Shi'a activists inspired by the events in Iran. After Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 the Hezbollah waged a successful guerrilla war forcing them out. Opposition to Israel was a key component of much of the Islamic terror groups. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was launching attacks on Israel and in 1982 Israel sent armies to attack Beirut where the PLO were based. Iranian Revolutionary Guards moved into Lebanon's Beqaa Valley in support of the PLO.¹²⁴ America and allies formed a multi national force in 1982 and went into Beirut successfully extracting PLO leaders. US President Reagan sent in US Marines as peacekeepers as tensions in Lebanon increased in the hope of face-saving the Israelis from their costly Lebanese operations. This move proved to Iran that America was interfering in Islamic affairs and Iran took the opportunity to develop Hezbollah into a formidable force.¹²⁵

A campaign of bombings targeting the US embassy in Beirut, US Marine barracks, and French soldiers in 1983 was linked to the Beqaa Valley, and to Hezbollah, and as the multi national force withdrew immediately, Hezbollah's operations against Israel continued, and Islamic terrorists began taking hostages from early 1984.¹²⁶ Hezbollah took many American and European hostages in Lebanon with considerable evidence that Iranian leadership were involved in some of the seizures. The Iranian government

¹²⁴ Farndon.p.145.

¹²⁵ Saikil.p.78.

¹²⁶ Farndon.p.147.

denied all involvement but had direct contact with some of the hostage takers including the provision of diplomatic passports.¹²⁷

The Iran-Contra affair saw Iran involving itself in getting US hostages released in return for the supply of military parts for which Rafsanjani (as Majiles speaker) received heavy criticism for deals with the 'great Satan'. US President Reagan received criticism when the deals became public for operating against US Congress votes, and contradicting US policy of never negotiating with terrorists or countries (like Iran) that supported terrorists.¹²⁸

The Iran-Contra affair showed Iran that Washington was willing to conduct double deals if it suited, and when it became public that America was doing deals with the opposition, it made Washington averse to conducting any future secret talks with the Iranian government. This had a long term effect on the Iran-American relations as quiet diplomacy got ruled out as a means of improving bilateral relations.¹²⁹

Iran's desire to remove American influence from the Gulf region and its willingness to support groups that use violence and terrorism to achieve their goals see small groups that may be nothing more than local annoyance become serious threats to regional stability and peace with Iranian funding.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Chahabi, *Distant Relations*.p.227-229; Gelvin.p.290.

¹²⁸ Farndon.p.149.

¹²⁹ Hollis, Rosemary. The U.S. Role, in Potter and Sick.p.199.

¹³⁰ Pollack.p.359.

At the end of the 1991 Gulf War Iran developed ties with Hamas in support of the Palestinian uprisings designed to sabotage the American sponsored peace process. A Hamas office was opened in Tehran in 1991 and Iranian assistance has ranged from \$20 to \$30 million per year. Hamas and Hezbollah train together in Lebanon and Iran's deputy foreign minister said that support to Hamas was part of the responsibility Iran had toward the Palestinian people.¹³¹

During Rafsanjani's second term as President (1993-1997) anti-Israel terrorism increased, as did general anti-American terrorism in the region. In 1996 Iranian agents helped Saudi Shi'ite blow up American Air Force barracks in Khobar (Saudi Arabia), Iranian agents killed five oppositionists abroad, and Iranians were caught smuggling mortars into Belgium to use within Europe. Bahrain arrested over fifty people who had been trained in Iran in preparations for overthrowing Bahraini government, a Hezbollah suicide bomber targeted Israeli civilians in Jerusalem, and hundreds of rockets were shipped from Tehran supplied to Hezbollah for use in the war against Israel.¹³²

¹³¹ Emerson, Steven. 'Tehran and Terrorism: Iran Under President Muhammad Khatami', The Investigative Project, United States Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near East and South Asia Affairs, Washington, 14 May 1998.

¹³² Rubin and Clawson.p.125.

Terrorism was used by factions to advance their goals, as much as it was used by the government to pursue strategic goals from the Islamic revolution until Khatami's election as President coincided with Iranian public opinion turning against Iran's international isolation, killings of Iranian Kurds in Berlin, and the 1997-1998 series of international murders of writers, journalists, scholars and intellectuals exposing that Iran couldn't remain anonymous in its use of terrorism. With Khatami's election, Iran began to distance itself from terrorism as the new president announced that Iran was explicitly against terrorism in all forms, and that Iran will fight against it in line with its religious, cultural and moral codes.¹³³

With the official policy that Iran does not support terrorism, Khatami's first term and President Clinton's second term saw relatively little dialogue between the two countries regarding Iran's support for terrorist groups. Direct dialogue on counter-terrorism did not occur, but multi-lateral cooperation saw Iran and America both benefit from the UN Security Council Resolution 1267 which placed sanctions on the Taliban in Afghanistan as it, and its terrorist allies threatened both countries.¹³⁴

America has had to be careful in its official policy not to support or condone terrorist groups, even when they share goals. In 1998 a letter signed by 220 members of Congress was asking that the MEK be removed from the list of

¹³³Chubin.p.92.

¹³⁴Pillar. Paul. R. *Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 2001.p.178.

foreign terrorist organisations so it could be supported by America, as it shared an interest in regards to Iran. This is unhelpful for Washington, but its official policies have limited success. As the Bush administration has tried to win Iran's cooperation whilst criticising its support for Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad the contrary behaviour does not instil confidence or cooperation in Iran.¹³⁵

The 2002 nomination of Iran as a part of the Axis of Evil by Bush received criticism, including by American allies. There were no concrete links between Iran, Iraq or North Korea and the Al Qaeda group responsible for the September 11 terrorist attack. It is believed that the Israeli discovery of 50 tons of Iranian weapons aboard the *Karine-A* headed to Palestine highlighted Iran's role in undermining the Arab-Israeli peace process and allowed the war on terror to be put in a broader context.¹³⁶

In 2005 Bush described Iran as the 'world's primary state sponsor of terror'. British Prime Minister Tony Blair said of Ahmadinejad's call for Israel to be wiped off the map 'If they carry on like this, the question people will be asking is –when are you going to do something about Iran? Can you imagine a state with an attitude like that having access to nuclear weapons?'¹³⁷ The US containment policy failed to isolate the Islamic Republic, and prevent

¹³⁵ Ansari.p.100.

¹³⁶ Rubin and Clawson.o,153; Robertson, Anne. E. *Terrorism and Global Security*, Infobase Publishing, New York, 2007.p.63.

¹³⁷ Webster, Philip. 'Blair hints at military action after Iran's disgraceful taunt', *Times*, 28 October 2005. cited in Keen, David. *Endless War? Hidden Functions of the 'War on Terror'*, Pluto Press, London, 2006.

Iran from acquiring nuclear technology and since Ahmadinejad's election there has been no effective method of gaining leverage over Iran, or its politics in the region. It is remembered by Iran that America has used nuclear weapons in a war, that it used chemical warfare against civilians in Vietnam, supplies almost half of the world's arms exports and holds huge supply of weapons of mass destruction. Iran's support for terrorism supports its anti-Western orientation, which has remained relatively consistent in the years since the revolution, and there has been no effective means for the West to modify Iran's behaviour or mitigate the threat it poses to the stability of the region.

The Islamic revolution transformed Iran from America's close ally to a threat to the regional and international strategic interests of America and her allies. In the immediate post-revolution period active, anti-American behaviour saw the hostage crisis which set the tone for Iran's international politics and relationship with the West. The Iran-Iraq war at the same time saw many states support Iraq in the war, once Iran became the aggressor in an attempt to balance the threat the new Islamic Republic presented to the region and interests of the West within the region. The Iran-Iraq war showed Iran that the benefits of non-conventional weapons, and the lack of international response to Iraq's use of chemical weapons was taken as implicit allowance for technology development. The Iran-Contra affair

demonstrated that America was willing to conduct double deals for its own political gain and made Iran shy of developing close relations with America.

As Khomeini died and President Rafsanjani was elected relations between US President Bush and Iran were tense. The 1991 Gulf War saw Iran's two enemies Iraq and America pitted against each other, and with the election of President Clinton US-Iranian relations deteriorated with the introduction of the dual containment policy, the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act and a series of economic sanctions implemented against Iran. President Khatami's election saw positive steps toward improving the relationship which were limited due to Ayatollah Khomeini's interventions. The terrorist attacks on America in September 2001 changed the US-Iranian relationship again as US President Bush listed Iran as a member of an 'axis of evil'. The election of President Ahmadinejad in Iran in 2005 put an end to any hope of improved relations with his hard line approach and stubborn insistence on Iran's right to develop nuclear technology, and anti-Israel and anti-American rhetoric. Britain and the European countries relationship with Iran post-revolution was generally aligned to that of America, particularly so after the 2001 terrorist attack on New York.

Iran had strong relations with the Soviet Union following the revolution until its invasion of Afghanistan which was seen by the Islamic Republic as an act of hostility against all Muslims. Economically the relations between

the two developed and military agreements for the supply of weapons assisted Iran in the Iran-Iraq war until Iran became the aggressor state. The collapse of the Soviet Union upset the balance of power in the region and Iran had instability on its borders with the new countries. Russia developed close relations with Iran politically, economically, military and nuclear technology wise as a balance to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation threatened the control of the energy resources in the Gulf region. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the victory of the Sunni Taliban saw Russia and Iran united in their opposition to Kabul, and after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Russia enhanced Iran's regional security given their mutual desire to also curb US power within the region. The relationship has included the transfer of nuclear technology to Iran which has left Iran and Russia somewhat aligned against American anti-nuclear rhetoric.

Iran's international relationships with regional countries post revolution saw most local states supporting Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war, because of the threat the new Islamic Republic posed to the region, particularly given the fact they had Shi'a minority populations. The GCC was formed to curb the different Soviet, Iranian and Israeli strategic threat to the region, which accepted American presence in the region as a check. Khatami's era saw a positive change in the GCC-Iran relationship, and improved relations with Saudi Arabia in the mutual desire for regional stability.

Iranian foreign policy has been shaped by key events in the post-revolution period, and has been subject to considerable international pressures over control and influence within the Gulf region. Most countries want to prevent the spread of Iran's Islamic fundamentalism throughout the region and the threat Iran presents as a state sponsoring terrorism, and with Iran's nuclear ambitions mean its inter-state relations are anything but straightforward. As the leaders in the West, and those of the Islamic Republic change, and respond to international events, the relationships with Iran change. Where Iran is determined not to amend its own policies and sticks to its principles (for example its right to nuclear technology), this has an impact on the perceived threat Iran presents, and how it is treated by the international community.

Since the revolution Iran has changed from being a Westernised, forward thinking country allied with America and the West, to being politically and economically isolated from the international community. The implementation of the Islamic fundamentalist government has seen a drastic change in the way in which Iran behaves, and in the way it is treated. The West sees Iran as a threat to the peace and stability of the region, and the world, with its nuclear goals, and hard-line approach to its policies. Although there have been periods of rapprochement since the revolution, the majority of the Islamic Republic's existence has seen isolation and distrust

which is a far cry from the close ties that had developed between the Shah's Iran, and the West.

CONCLUSION

International pressures for change in Iran have been a major part of the country's history. As the ruling Shahs had to contend with intentions of large powers, those pressures have presented significant challenges to that rule. As policies were implemented to keep onside with the international powers this was sometimes at the cost of domestic power groups that had significant influence on the Shahs' rule from within Iran. The consistent interference of the outside powers within Iran shaped much of the country politically and militarily and due to its strategic importance within the Gulf region it was a key country to the great powers of the time.

From the establishment of a united empire, Iran has been challenged by outside influences. Iran's position was strategically important to Britain and Russia as a buffer between the powers, but also because of oil interests in Iran and the Persian Gulf. Britain and Russia wanted to limit each other's interest and advantage. This mutual rivalry between the powers was a major contributing factor to the maintenance of Iran's independence, and was used by the Shah to Iran's advantage. Unable to build a military strong enough to compete with the British or Russian empires, the Shahs' worked to appease both powers through policy which had to be balanced with what they considered was best for Iran.

Not always successful at keeping the domestic groups satisfied, the Tobacco Movement and the Constitutional Revolution established the power of the masses to influence Shah's policy and demonstrated that the Shah needed to listen to the domestic groups within Iran to maintain his rule, as much as he needed outside influences. Through mass protest domestic groups were able to impose their will on the Shah and attempt to achieve domestic political change.

Through the First World War, Iran was occupied despite declaring neutrality, and in the inter-war years modernisation and Westernisation programmes were implemented by Reza Shah to develop Iran and consolidate the Shah's power. This involved the removal of as much power as possible from the domestic groups. The Second World War saw the abdication of Reza Shah and the occupation of Iran by foreign forces which prompted the Shah to turn to America for assistance against the domination of Britain and Russia.

After 1945 America was the main outside influence in Iran. American involvement assisted Iran in freedom from Soviet occupation and put the United States in a position to manipulate domestic politics for American strategic and economic advantage. Staging a coup with Britain to remove Mossadiq and retain the Shah's power sealed America's position in Iran. This changed the relationship with the Shah, and impacted on the Shah's

relations with the domestic populace. Determined not to lose control of domestic politics the Shah's approach to rule changed from weak and uncertain, to autocratic. The domestic programme to bring economic and social change through the White Revolution saw forced Westernisation, and increasing domestic repression. Backed by America the Shah was viewed as "America's Shah" and as domestic discontent grew so did the well established anti-foreign anti-colonialism attitude. With America having a strong influence over the Shah's rule, domestically attitudes specifically became anti-Western, anti-American, and anti-Shah. The Shah's vision of a modernised and Westernised Iran was not shared by the local power groups within society, and did not have enough positive impact on society to convince the populace this was a good way forward for Iran. It was too Western, too fast, and with the new autocratic approach came a repression that further isolated the population from the Shah. The Western influences did not extend to Western type political reform.

Repression of any domestic opposition was swiftly and often severely enforced. Absolute suppression of any groups opposing the Shah or his political decisions forced the movements to go underground, where they became strong and united through the religious network. The religious network established through the mosques saw the organised spread of information, anti-Shah propaganda, protest coordination and the promotion of nationalistic ideals within an Islamic framework. This made opposition

accessible to people, legitimised by the religious leadership and made anti-foreign and anti-American protests a religious duty. All previous occupations of Iran made the population ready for change and under a repressive autocratic Shah, they were able to unite. They found a leader in Ayatollah Khomeini and the revolution had a religious slant as the Mosques were the one place that the Shah and his forces could least influence. Fundamentalist Islam was seen as the opposite of the Westernisation that the populace took issue with and it gave the revolution an angle that could be accepted by many Iranians.

Declaring Iran an Islamic Republic in 1979 Ayatollah Khomeini set about establishing a new governmental structure which gave clerics the power, and saw domestic Iranian society become subject to strict standards of Islam. In rejecting everything Western, anti-American and anti-Western stance in domestic politics became legitimised in law through enforced Islamisation. The repression on the populace was thus transferred from the Westernisation enforced by the Shah to Islam enforced by the Ayatollahs. The revolution not only changed domestic Iran but also significantly changed Iran's place within the international community. The openly anti-American stance saw a break in diplomatic relations following the American hostage crisis immediately after the revolution. The invasion of Iran by Iraq, and the subsequent Iran-Iraq war shaped the international community's attitude toward Iran and significantly contributed to the new Republic's place in the

international community. The majority of nations took sides in support of Iraq once Iran became the aggressor in the conflict and international isolation led to the development of Iran's self defence programmes. When the Iran-Contra scandal became public, Iran's involvement in terrorism, and America's willingness to do double deals to achieve its goals stimulated further deterioration in Iranian attitudes toward the United States. It reinforced the status of America as a 'great Satan', and made Iranian leadership wary of making negotiations with America.

With the death of Khomeini there was some headway made in the relations with America, as successive Presidents Rafsanjani and Khatami were less doctrinal fundamentalists than Khomeini. The relationship was still tense and troubled, but the Iranian President's approaches were more open and the new supreme leader was less influential and autocratic than Khomeini. This gave the Iranian Presidents some opportunity to influence Iran's international relations. The first ten years of the Islamic Republic under Khomeini were the formative years in establishing the new state's position within the international community. There was a mutual distrust with former ally America, and economic sanctions and military intervention of American Navy ships in the Gulf were initiated to prevent any power from gaining control of the Gulf region. America's own goal to be allied with the state that could most influence the Gulf saw it supporting Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war, but working with Iran when it was seen to be of benefit to

America. The war introduced non-conventional weapons through chemical warfare in the region which, in conjunction with Iran's international isolation, gave reason for Iran to develop their own capability for self defence.

The collapse of the Soviet Union changed the regional environment for Iran, as did the 1991 Gulf War which saw two of Iran's enemies Iraq and America fighting each other. The new Iranian Supreme Leader Khomeini changed Iran's foreign policy little, but the new President Rafsanjani made moves to improve international relations through a foreign policy of living peacefully with neighbours based on national interest, rather than religious ideology. Iran's hostility to the Arab-Israeli peace process, anti-Israel sentiments, support for terrorism and nuclear goals saw Iran isolated through America's 'dual containment' policy in 1993 and the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act 1996. America applied a careful containment approach to managing Iran following the Soviet Union's demise, as the change in the balance of power provided an opportunity to gain influence in the region.

A newly elected President Khatami focused on improving Iran's role within the region working with the Gulf States, and developing relations with European nations. Small rapprochements were made with America as President Clinton worked well with Khatami. Efforts to improve the American-Iranian relations were late in the American President's term, and

limited by Khomeini's hard line obstruction of progress. Economic sanctions against Iran were renewed under new American President Bush in 2001, and Iran's international isolation increased as it was declared a member of the 'axis of evil' following the September 11 attacks in 2001. Iran remained neutral in America's invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan as Iranian and American regional interests converged with the overthrow of the Taliban. The Taliban threat to Iran was replaced by the overt presence of America in the region of which Iran was wary due to the dominance America had over the Shah, and the more recent overthrowing of governments in Baghdad and Kabul.

America's continued hostility toward Iran is based on the assumption that Iran is engaging in activities inimical to America's interests and regional stability. American President Bush was unwilling to cancel economic sanctions and would not reconsider policy toward Iran until Iran stopped supporting terrorism and producing weapons of mass destruction. There is no evidence that any sanctions or rhetoric from America have been successful in modifying the behaviour of the Iranian government on international affairs or domestic human rights policies. The economic sanctions have had a negative impact on some American businesses, particularly within the petroleum and aircraft industries. Japan and the European countries have absorbed the surplus of Iranian trade resulting from the US sanctions to the detriment of American businesses.

Anti-American sentiment continues within the Iranian leadership which feels justified in its approach given its history. The 1953 coup that toppled Iran's democratically elected government and saw the Shah reinstated for a period of dictatorship and repression is not forgotten. American condemnation of human rights abuses within the Islamic Republic has little weight as it is widely held that America supported violence and dictatorship under the Shah. America attacked the growth of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism in Iran after the revolution, whilst supporting Islamist attacks in Afghanistan against the Soviets. Inconsistent and unfounded mutual accusations have limited any headway into improving relations between the Islamic Republic and America.

The election of more moderate Presidents in Iran following the death of Khomeini saw some progress made toward Iran improving its stand within the international community. This progress ended with Bush's nomination of Iran as an 'axis of evil' state and the likelihood of any improved relations in the short term ended with the rule of President Ahmadinejad elected in 2005, and controversially re-elected in 2009. Ahmadinejad has maintained that Iran does not want to develop nuclear weapons, but only nuclear power whilst continuing the pursuit of nuclear technology. Disregarding the international pressures not to do so cast doubt on his intentions and for Iran,

the pursuit of nuclear technology is seen as a right and is a non-negotiable issue for any talks with international countries, particularly America.

Washington lists Iran's nuclear goals as one of the five factors that prevent resumed relations between the two countries. The others are Iran's sponsorship of international terrorism, opposition to the Arab-Israeli peace process, threats to its Gulf neighbours and violations of domestic human rights. The sponsorship of terrorist groups Hizbollah and Hamas is a major obstacle to any progress in improved relations between Iran and the West. The use of terrorism to achieve political goals has been used by the Islamic Republic as a means to spread its message, and attack its enemies. Its terrorist activities are aligned with its anti-Western stance and pose a risk to the stability of the Gulf region for which the West has no effective means of modifying its behaviour. America lacks any means to influence the Iranian government, given America's previous interference. The manifestation of anti-Americanism and anti-Westernisation is not solely the result of America's post the Second World War intervention, but the long established pattern of foreign intervention in Iran.

Ahmadinejad's hard line and fundamentalist approach presents a challenge to the West, and a significant roadblock to progress in the relationship. America seems to have met its match in a ruler that is not willing to compromise on his principles, and who is unaffected by threats, or actual

isolation within the international environment. The discontent of the populace and the fundamental principles upon which the revolutionary goals were based has remained unchanged in the thirty years of the Islamic Republic. The anti-Western stance is an area that is unlikely to change in the near future as the goals of the West and of Iran oppose each other. There is currently no middle ground, and the current repressive Iranian regime has not been toppled yet, despite domestic upheavals in Iran.

The future of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its place in the international community must be considered in the light of Iran's history, its leaders' goals, international leaders' approaches and strategic goals, and implications decisions have on international security. Rapprochement with America, and her allies in the West seems unlikely although there has been some headway made in this relationship since the Islamic Revolution. The current Iranian leadership, both Ayatollah Khomeini and President Ahmadinejad hold a hard line approach. It seems unlikely in the near future that they would be willing to concede any ground on the nuclear issue, anti-Israel rhetoric, the Israeli-Arab peace process, or their support for terrorist organisations. As these areas are the fundamental non-negotiable issues for Iran, they are also the non-negotiable issues for America. The position each country holds on this issue prevents discussion to progress or resolve the conflict. With the Obama administration in America there has already been some advances in the relationship, as Obama has indicated that he is willing to talk to Iran.

The controversial re-election of Ahmadinejad and the domestic protests that followed were addressed by Obama and America's allies in expressions of disapproval at the treatment of Iranian protestors, but it was noted that it is not US policy to involve itself in other states internal affairs. Whilst this should be reassuring for Iran, it is still a long way from diplomatic progress in regards to improved relations between the two countries. A rapid change in improving international relations is not likely unless there is a major change in the current Iranian leadership or changes on key issues.

Particularly under the current leadership, it does not seem likely that Ahmadinejad will make any movement on his belief Iran has an inherent right to nuclear technology. He seems determined to pursue this despite international pressures not to do so. It must be remembered that the real decisions on foreign policy, and on the nuclear issue lies with the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini and it is noted Ahmadinejad would not be able to have rhetoric that was against Khomeini's views. Despite the fact Iran maintains it is working for nuclear power, not nuclear weapons, the fear of the West is that Iran becoming a nuclear armed state will allow it the ability to quickly breakout nuclear weapons from the nuclear technology. The West fears this will result in nuclear armed terrorists given Iran's ties to terrorist organisations and anti-Western stance. It is unlikely that this diplomatic conflict will develop into the use of non-conventional weapons to enforce either side's conviction in the near future, however, it seems

equally unlikely that this issue will be resolved in the short term, and there is a long diplomatic road ahead to any resolution. As the West applies pressure on Iran to stop nuclear development, stop its anti-Israel rhetoric and stop its support for terrorist groups these attitudes, and the sanctions imposed to try to enforce them, reinforce to the Islamic Republic that the West wants to dominate Iran. Contemporary Western leaders are confronted with the consequences of their predecessors' involvement with Iran just as Iranian leaders are continuing the legacy of their predecessors' attitudes.

The complexity of Iran's place in the international community is not a new event, and has not arisen out of the Islamic Revolution. The revolution was a result of the long standing pattern of international influence, and a manifestation of the impact that constant outside pressures and domestic pressures had on the political system. The autocratic and repressive nature of the last Shah was one of the key aspects that led to his overthrow and through religion, and united religious leaders Khomeini was able to unite the populace in a common cause, and remove one of the oldest monarchies from power. Just as the international influences affected the foreign and domestic policy of Iran, the strong attitude against any future international influence has led Iran to its current place within the international community. The revolution has had a lasting impact on the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic and the West is now wearing the consequences of its longstanding involvement to dominate Iran. On the other hand, the Iranian government is

now heading into the waters that caused the last Shah to lose power – ignoring pressure for change domestically in Iranian society.

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