

U.S-IRANIAN RELATIONS ON THE ROAD TO
THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

A Master's Thesis

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THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
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ABSTRACT

U.S-IRANIAN RELATIONS ON THE ROAD TO THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

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M.A. in International Relations

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This thesis aims to elaborate on the U.S.-Iranian relations on the road to the Islamic revolution with a special attention to the identity-security dynamics in these relations and in the impact on the dynamics of the foreign policies of the two countries. In addition, the societal security concerns are discussed in comparison to the threat perceptions of the Iranian state. It attempts to find an answer to the question how the U.S.-Iranian relations affected the internal and external dynamics that Iran found itself on the eve of the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Key Words: identity, Iran, revolution, security, society, United States

ÖZET

İSLAM DEVRİMİ YOLUNDA ABD-İRAN İLİŞKİLERİ

UZAKGİDER, GÜLŞAH

Yükseklisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler

Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Nur Bilge Criss

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Bu tez, İslam Devrimi öncesi ABD-İran ilişkilerini, kimlik-güvenlik dinamiklerine vurgu yaparak, bu dinamiklerin iki ülke arasındaki dış ilişkilere etkilerini incelemektedir. Buna ek olarak, İran devletinin tehdit algılamalarına karşılık İran toplumunun güvenlik endişelerini tartışmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, ABD-İran ilişkilerinin, İran'ın 1979 İslam Devrimi öncesi iç ve dış dinamiklerini nasıl etkilediği sorusu da yanıtlanmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, devrim, güvenlik, İran, kimlik, toplum

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Given its strategic position in the Middle East, Iran was at the core of great power interests, i.e. Britain, Russia and then the United States. For Britain, Iran was, first of all, a key area on the route to India, whereas Russia historically saw Iran as a part of its expansionist policy. Thus, it was long before the First World War that Iran became a battlefield for Anglo-Russian rivalry.

During the reign of the Qajar dynasty, which had become weak and corrupt towards its last years, both powers coerced Iran to give concessions. The great power rivalry in the region gained another dimension after the discovery of oil in Iran, in 1901. The first oil concession given to a British company constituted the beginning of a particular policy that Iran conducted until the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company, later named Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), was founded to operate on the Iranian oil fields. The majority of the shares of the AIOC belonged to Britain and London was in full control of the company including its taxes. Iranians were only workers in the company and the AIOC paid very little tax or duty to the Iranian state. Faced with such a concession, Russia also insisted on similar privileges in order not to lag behind Britain in Iran, for the two rivals did not want to allow each other to obtain superiority in Iran.

The First World War had considerably negative impacts on Iran. During the war, British forces were in occupation of most of the Middle East and it made a deal with Russia on the partition of Iran. Accordingly, Russia invaded the northern part of the country, whereas Britain was in control of the south. Despite the fact that the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 interrupted the Russian influence in Iran, it soon returned to the field with additional purposes, i.e. to expand its ideology.

In the interwar period, Iran was suffering from the post-war conditions both economically and politically. Discontentment with the Qajar dynasty was expanding among the people and finally in 1921, a Cossack Brigade commander, Reza Khan and a pro-British politician, Sayyed Zia Tabatabai, took the control by overthrowing the Prime Minister and the Shah. By 1926, Reza Khan acceded to the throne and inaugurated a new dynasty in Iran, the Pahlavis. Under his rule, Iran went through rigorous social and economic reforms, aiming to centralize the government, create a well-disciplined army and provide industrialization. Although Reza Shah aimed at the independence of Iran through a nationalistic policy, the external powers' influence in Iran continued. Looking for a third power to counterbalance Anglo-Soviet influence, Reza Shah decided to get closer with Germany, which disturbed the Allies.

When the Second World War broke out, Iran decided to remain neutral, which the Allies again did not appreciate. When the close relations of the Shah with Adolf Hitler became obvious, Britain and the Soviet Union invaded Iran and sent Reza Shah to exile, giving the throne to his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in 1941. The new shah followed his father's policies and he prioritized the independence of Iran through modernization and reform programs. So as to counterbalance the British and Soviet influence, the Shah encouraged the United States to get involved more in

Iranian affairs. Until the Anglo-Soviet invasion, the United States was not overtly interested in Iran. Nonetheless, the rivalry between London and Moscow and oil's taking place of coal and its increasing importance made the United States get involved in Iran. Through diplomatic means, it persuaded the invading powers to withdraw from the Iranian territories after the war. As it promised, Britain withdrew its forces when the war ended, whereas the Soviets needed to be persuaded by the Americans, UN, as well as Tehran's skillful diplomacy.

The vacuum left by the withdrawal of the British was filled by the United States. American presidents beginning from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Jimmy Carter had developed good relations with the Shah. As the discourses of the presidents until the hostage crisis of 1979 suggested, Iran and the United States defined themselves and defined each other. They shared the same principles and they had the same goal as regards to world politics. The presence of the United States was regarded as a guarantee of independence by Iranian decision makers. However, this view was not shared by the Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh, who was elected in 1951. Mossadegh, a nationalist politician in the parliament opted for the nationalization of Iranian oil and gained considerable support for his policies. Yet, the Shah did not agree with him on most issues. After the nationalization of oil, trade and economics of Iran was highly affected as well as the economies of the Western countries. Hence, collaborating with the CIA and the MI6, the Shah wanted the Prime Minister to be overthrown. As a result of the Operation Ajax, Dr. Mossadegh was arrested in 1953 and the incident constituted the first direct intervention of the United States in Iranian affairs.

After the 1953 coup, Mohammad Reza Shah changed his policies in order to gain power domestically, believing that it was the only road to gaining power in the

international realm. After establishing a secret police service, SAVAK, he consolidated his power with repressive political measures and socio-economic policies. The White Revolution, aiming at improvements on social, economic and political fields, brought land reform that developed agricultural activities, educational reforms that increased the literacy rate and educational level and health reforms that augmented the number of hospitals. However, the reforms did not suffice for full development. Furthermore, they did not service all parts of the society, which caused a societal insecurity among the Iranians. Another factor that created societal insecurity was the political reforms that gave rights to women, which the clergy did not appreciate. Finally, the external intervention constituted a source of insecurity perceived by the Iranian society against their identity, independence and rights.

The opposition groups united under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, who had been sent to exile by the Shah. Khomeini accused the Shah of being the puppet of the United States and denounced his policies as against Islamic rules.

One of the turning points of U.S.-Iranian relations was the hostage crisis between November 4, 1979 and January 20, 1981. The incident began as a kind of protest and then turned into an important attack, as a result of which sixty-six Americans were taken hostage by the Iranian university students. Soon after it was heard, hostage taking became almost a symbol of Iranian independence and many Iranians believed that Iranian people showed that they were capable of defeating the United State. As there was a transitional government in Iran, the United States did not have any respondent and it faced an unusual situation, unlike its normal way of diplomatic relations. The Shah had left the country and flew to Egypt. In the meantime, Khomeini returned to Iran and took up control of the government with the Revolutionary Council.

Beginning from the hostage crisis, the discourses of the United States and Iran changed radically and they began to define their self-identity and the Other as opposed to each other. The United States represented Iran as an “irresponsible militant”, while Iran accused the United States of being the “Great Satan” and “interventionist”. The foreign policies of the two countries were shaped in line with their discourses and came to the point of breakdown after the revolution.

Having come as an unexpected revolution, the Islamic Revolution of 1979 has been studied by many scholars of International Relations. This study contributes to the literature by approaching the relations from the perspective of post-structuralism and it examines the identity-security dynamics in US-Iranian relations. Moreover, an insight through the societal security perspective is presented. To this end, Chapter II provides a brief overview on the Cold War dynamics as this period of history had its special conjuncture, also framing the U.S.-Iranian relations. In Chapter III, U.S.-Iranian relations are discussed from a historical perspective and the key moments in the history of the relations are presented. Chapter IV provides a theoretical approach in order to examine the security-identity dynamics in the U.S.-Iranian relations and their mutual construction of self-identity and the “Other” is pointed out. In this part, a preliminary discourse analysis is provided to examine identity constructions and representations of Iran and the United States during three eras, i.e. the Shah era, the hostage crisis and the Khomeini era, building on Hansen’s work.¹ It is concluded that the United States and Iran constructed their representations of “Self” and “Other” as opposed to each other as well as their foreign policies. Finally, in Chapter V, the societal security theory is presented and domestic politics and foreign relations of Iran are explained in this framework.

¹ L. Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War New International Relations*, (New York: Routledge, 2008).

In conclusion, within the provided framework, it will be argued that the U.S.-Iranian relations on the road to the Islamic Revolution of 1979 might have had an impact on the internal dynamics of Iran, as these dynamics effected Iran's foreign relations.

CHAPTER II

THE COLD WAR DYNAMICS

This section of the study aims to provide an overview on the Cold War period, which constitutes an unprecedented period and context in world politics. Relations between the two superpowers drew a bigger picture of both their relations with other states and the relations between other states. Hence, having an understanding of it will doubtlessly provide a platform on which the analysis of the U.S.-Iranian relations will be discussed.

2.1. The Origins of the Cold War

The literature on the Cold War history varies as regards their approaches and methods of interpretation of the historical events and foreign policies of the states involved.² This section of the study will focus on the early interactions between the

² As Chasman and Gilbert point out, until the 1960s, most Americans assumed that it was the Soviet Union and the traditional Russian foreign policy that caused the Cold War. However, the new, revisionist interpretations of history put another dimension to the understanding of the Cold War history. Some authors, such as Williams and Kolko referred to the American economic system and government system as a root cause of the Cold War. Some other authors, e.g. Gaddis, May, sought the origins of the Cold War in the personalities of leaders or at the bureaucratic level. G. Cashman, A. Gilbert, "Some Analytical Approaches to the Cold War Debate", *The History Teacher*, Vol.10, No.2, (1977), 263-280. Also, by referring to the article of John Lewis Gaddis (J.L.Gaddis, "The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis on the Origins of the Cold War", *Diplomatic History* (1983), vii.) Dunnabin stated that commentators on the Cold War are categorized into three as "orthodox", "revisionist" and post-revisionist". Accordingly, the orthodox traditionalists regard the expansionist policies of the Soviet Union as the cause of the Cold War, while the revisionists contented that it was

United States and the Soviet Union and the evolution of their relations in line with the changing conjuncture, modified foreign policies and also various technological improvements, which will be beneficial for my purposes and the scope of this chapter.

The interaction between the United States and Tsarist Russia often remained at the lowest level for a long period of time, from the beginning of the 19th century to the end. They were distinct countries that did not constitute a threat to each others' interests. This distinctness was not only a result of their geographic positions and their cultural differences but also due to the lack of technological improvements. Parallel with the progress in transportation and communication fields, the interaction between these two states began to augment, particularly along with their new projects of amelioration of their navy and railroad. The U.S. was modernizing its navy while Russia was building the Trans-Siberian railway, both aiming to project influence towards Northeast Asia.³ Thus, the policy roads of the two rivals of the Cold War intersected at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, when the two states turned their attention to the same part of the world to project their influence. Another moment of clash of interest between the U.S. and Russia that was put forward by Gaddis was the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-1905, during which the United States aligned itself alongside Britain and supported Japan.⁴ Therefore, the Russo-Japanese War became the first "inimical" interaction between the U.S. and Russia as they virtually became the two sides of the war.

the United States which was expansionist and the post-revisionist see the Cold War as a result of the international system, namely the power dynamics between two powers in Europe. J.D.P. Dunnabin, *The Cold War*, (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2008), 5-7.

³ J.L Gaddis, *We Now Know*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.

⁴ Gaddis, 3.

On the other hand, Gaddis argued that the reason why the U.S.-Russian relations were friendly was the infrequency of their interactions.⁵ He argued that in spite of the fact that the interaction between the two states was not as frequent as during the Cold War, there were potential areas of conflict such as the challenge that the first parliamentary revolution posed to monarchism, the fishing areas in the Pacific Northwest or the possibility of Russian support for the European colonization in Latin America. And he questioned the reason why these potential conflict sources did not affect the relation between the United States and Russia. The principal answer that he provided to the question is “the mutual willingness to tolerate the coexistence of states with differing social systems.”⁶ According to Gaddis, at the time foreign policy was about pursuing the state’s own interests, not changing the systems of the others. Besides, the awareness of Russia of the balance of power system and the sensitiveness of Europe prevented Russia from taking steps that would trigger conflict in its relations with the United States.

In addition to the systemic conjuncture conditions, technological improvements facilitated emigration between the United States and Russia⁷, which contributed to the knowledge about each other and provided them with more awareness of their systems and governance. That is, the United States became aware of the repressive policies and activities of the tsarist government. Getting to know Russia more closely at a time when the number of democratic institutions was increasing, the American public opinion began questioning how a democracy could have normal relations with such a repressive government.⁸

⁵ J. L Gaddis, *The Long Peace*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 4.

⁶ Gaddis, 3.

⁷ Although the emigrations were mainly from Russia to the United States, there was a small number of people who emigrated to Russia from the U.S. See Gaddis (1998).

⁸ Gaddis (1998).

Although the United States and Russia took the same side during the First World War, after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, their relation gained another dimension, i.e. ideology. After the Russian Revolution in March, President Wilson began to perceive Russia as a potential democracy.⁹ Thus, the West was content that the tsar had abdicated and a representative government was established.¹⁰ However, with the return of Vladimir Ilyich Ulianov, namely Lenin, in April 1917 and Bolshevik's seizure of power, the United States found itself in a different position. While Wilson declared war in favor of democracy, Lenin denounced it as the inevitable result of capitalism. Thus, after the war and the Bolshevik Revolution, both the United States and the Soviet Union sought to spread their own ideologies. The United States adopted a policy based on self-determination, open markets and collective security principles as reflected in the Wilson principles, while the Soviet Union aimed to effuse the ideas of the revolution and denied the Wilsonian ideas categorically. Hence, the post-war projects of both states involved ideological frameworks and the confrontation between the two states was carried to the ideological platform, which made two universalist ideologies, Wilson's ideology and Lenin's ideology, affront each other.¹¹

2.2. Post-World War II Atmosphere and the Cold War

The Second World War added another aspect to the foreign policies of the U.S. and the Soviet Union and to the relations between them. Just before the Second World War the two countries began to develop a formal relation after the U.S. recognition of the Soviet Union on October 10, 1933 with an agreement signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov. Despite the

⁹ P. G. Boyle, *American-Soviet Relations*, (New York: Routledge, 1993), 2.

¹⁰ A. Cassel, *Ideology and International Relations in the World*, (New York: Routledge, 1996), 133.

¹¹ Gaddis (1998), 5.

fact that Japan and Germany's positions were not posing a threat to either country at that time, the sense of security that was decreasing with Hitler's coming to power in Germany and Japan's military preparation to conquer China urged the United States and the Soviet Union to leave their isolationist positions.¹² Nevertheless, as Powaski puts forth, as both sides were expecting different things from launching of diplomatic relations, they soon became disillusioned.¹³ For as much as the United States was not eager to go to war against Japan and Roosevelt was reassuring the American people that the United States would remain at peace, while the Soviet Union was expecting a material support against Japan and finally discovered that the support from the United States could only be a moral support.¹⁴ Thus, it may be fair to state that the United States and the Soviet Union took a step to approach each other after realizing that they needed each other, in spite of the fact that they expected different things from each other. The Soviet Union expected the United States to support it at the face of Japanese ambitions, while the United States sought to get out of its isolationist position as Germany was recovering from its defeat conditions and Japan was developing ambitious preparations against China.

By 1937, the sides of the Second World War began to be apparent. In Germany, Hitler violated international agreements by sending troops to the demilitarized Rhineland and by increasing the number of troops in the German army. Italy was demonstrating the signs of an aggressive policy under Mussolini and the lines of the new war was marked by the Axis Pact signed by the two dictators, who highly supported the another dictator-to-be, general Franco in the Spanish Civil War as opposed to the Soviet Union inadequately backing up the republicans. On the other hand, Japan was rising as an aggressor in the Far East, attacking the Soviet

¹² R.E. Powaski, *The Cold War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 35.

¹³ Powaski, 37.

¹⁴ Powaski, 37.

forces and a U.S. gunboat.¹⁵ According to Powaski, the debt issue between the United States and the Soviet Union prevented them to fully cooperate as bargaining between them proved to be fruitless.

In the face of Axis aggression, the inability of the Western Allies and the Soviet Union paved the way for the Soviet- German non-aggression pact in 1940, which enabled Germany to attack Poland and help Stalin “to put more territory between Germany and the Soviet Heartland”¹⁶ and which created a reaction in the United States. Nonetheless, the Axis aggression convinced the American public opinion that the United States might give support to the Allies, which enabled Roosevelt to pursue his policy to get close with the Soviet Union to keep it in the war against Germany once Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in 1941 by offering aid.¹⁷ Hence, the mutual understanding that the two states needed each other during the war and the mutual threat perceptions and concerns resulted in their taking the same side in the war despite the pact signed between the Soviet Union and Germany, which was actually derived from the disquiet about the German aggression rather than a closeness to Germany.

Towards the end of the war, the post-war security was put on the agenda of both the United States and the Soviet Union. Leffler states that the steps taken by the U.S. demonstrates to which extent Washington was concerned about its post-war security, particularly after the Pearl Harbor experience the U.S. felt the need to develop an overseas base system for defense in depth and for projecting power against a potential adversary. Additionally, the belief that the U.S. could not allow any adversary to control Europe affected the post-war decisions of the United

¹⁵ Powaski, 40.

¹⁶ Powaski, 45.

¹⁷ Powaski, 48.

States.¹⁸ In this respect, the obvious rise of the Soviet power was seen as a potential threat despite the alliance in the war. By the end of the war, the American officials were worried about the possible Soviet control over Eastern Europe, which would strengthen the Soviet Union both economically and militarily.¹⁹ In spite of the fact that it was recognized that the Soviet Union was not willing to go to war again just after the Second World War, its efforts to spread communism through Europe and their results in France and Czechoslovakia created a concern among the U.S. officials as they were assessing the post-war plight in the region and the fragility of the situation.²⁰ Accordingly, in mid-1947, it was concluded by the CIA that “the greatest danger to the security of the United States is the possibility of economic collapse in Western Europe and the consequent accession to power of Communist elements”²¹

On the other hand, showing the other side of the coin, MccGwire analyzes the Soviet perceptions of threat and its assessment of defense requirements by stating that purely ideology or the Second World War experiences cannot fully explain the Soviet concerns at that time.²² According to MccGwire, the most important factor that shaped the Soviet foreign policy and threat perception was its experience through history and its grievances inherited from its defeats as a result of its underdevelopment. Thus, Russia could not “lag behind” again as Stalin said in 1931. In the face of the United States, which had the atomic bomb, the Soviet Union was lagging behind in terms of technology and science despite its growing military capacity during the war years. Hence, the policies of the Soviet Union was a blend of realpolitik and ideology, in the sense that it needed neighbors that were friendly to

¹⁸ M. Leffler, “National Security and US Foreign Policy”, in M. Leffler, D.S Painter, eds., *Origins Of The Cold War*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 18-23.

¹⁹ Leffler, 24.

²⁰ Leffler, 28.

²¹ Leffler, 29.

²² M. MccGwire, “National Security and Soviet Foreign Policy”, in M. Leffler, D.S. Painter, eds., *Origins Of The Cold War*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 54.

itself, i.e. with communist governments, and it did not want to lag behind in the rivalry between capitalism and communism in terms of technology, politics and economics.²³

2.3. The Atomic Bomb and Nuclear Deterrence

It was the atomic bomb, which was dropped on Nagasaki on October 9, 1945 that put an end to the Second World War and it was quite obvious that it would shape the post-war conditions and conjuncture. Sherwin, by attracting attention to the questions about the atomic bomb debate, demonstrates that there is no consensus among the researches.²⁴ Accordingly, the debate between those who argue that the United States could have ended the war without using atomic bombs and that it used the bomb because it wanted to impress the Soviet Union and traditionalists who contend that the United States could not know if Japan would surrender. Either way, the nuclear power and the atomic bomb constituted the core foreign policy issue and principal factor that shaped the relations between the two superpowers after World War II.

Sherwin continues his arguments by pointing out that once the United States had the atomic bomb, it did not know how to use it effectively. It was obvious that it would give the U.S. a kind of superiority against the Soviet Union in the post-war conditions. In this context, it cooperated with Britain in order to have an Anglo-American monopoly in the field.²⁵ Similarly, Sherwin questions Roosevelt's policy at that time and emphasizes the dilemma in the policy choice of the President. Accordingly, Roosevelt chose not to inform the Soviet Union about the intentions of

²³ MccGwire, 65.

²⁴ M.J. Sherwin, "The Atomic Bomb and The Origins of the Cold War", in M. Leffler, D.S. Painter, eds., *Origins Of The Cold War*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 79.

²⁵ Sherwin, 79.

the United States about the atomic bomb, which paved the way for an arms race. However, if he had sought for cooperation on the issue, he could not have achieved his objective, that is utilizing the atomic bomb for diplomatic efficiency. In that sense, both choices had risks.²⁶ When Truman assumed the presidency, he also inherited the atomic bomb policies of Roosevelt, which resulted in two atomic attacks on Japan and their persuasion to end the war.

The Soviet Union did not wait long to launch its own nuclear program, which, according to Holloway, was not obvious to the United States and it made its atomic bomb test on August 1949.²⁷ Holloway points out the relation between the nuclear weapon developments of the two states and argues that they stimulated each other.²⁸ However, what was obvious was that nuclear weapons were unique in the sense that they had absolute destruction capacity and that they cannot be used just like the other military weapons.²⁹ Although atomic bombs were thought to be effective in post-war relations with the Soviet Union by helping deterring it from expansion in the East Europe, the Soviet response to the U.S. nuclear development changed the thinking from “compelling” to “detering”.³⁰ In parallel with this shift, the MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) doctrine emerged so as to explain the situation in which the United States and the Soviet Union found themselves. Neither side could gain in the case of an attack. Also their deterrence capabilities prevented a possible attack.³¹ Nonetheless, the MAD rendered the arms race meaningless and it was not certain that the Soviet Union would take the threat seriously. Thus, a new, supplemental doctrine replaced the MAD in order to reinforce the deterrent capacity of the armed

²⁶ Sherwin, 84.

²⁷ D. Holloway, “The Soviet Union and The Origins of the Arms Race”, in M. Leffler, D.S. Painter, eds., *Origins Of The Cold War*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 97-103.

²⁸ Holloway, 104.

²⁹ Gaddis (1987), 106.

³⁰ Gaddis, 109.

³¹ O. Tunander, “The Logic of Deterrence”, *Journal of Peace Research*, 26:4, (1989), 353-365.

forces: Nuclear Use Theories (NUT's) and Flexible Response.³² The uncertainty marked with doctrines and the question whether a war would be possible or not was the foundation of deterrence. According to Tunander, deterrence has paradoxes in itself, in that it takes a nuclear war both possible and impossible and that it sees the system suitable for a war while this fact risks bring about the war.³³

Hence, the nuclear attacks on Japan that put an end to the Second World War brought about another war, in which no hot conflict was experienced. In spite of the fact that the debates about the question whether the atomic bomb attacks on Japan were used with the intention to end the war or impress the Soviet Union, it is a well-known fact that it caused an arms race between two superpowers. Nevertheless, the unusual destructive effect of the nuclear bomb prevented the two sides to attack each other, which actually constituted the logic of deterrence, even if it has paradoxes in itself, as neither side could gain anything from a possible nuclear attack.

2.4. Ideology and Spheres of Influence

The rivalry between two superpowers was not solely on military and nuclear dimensions. One of the most important aspects of this rivalry was based on ideology. As it is mentioned before, after the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution, two opposing ideologies faced each other, that is, Wilsonian ideology and Leninist ideology, i.e. capitalism vs. communism. Both ideologies claimed to be universalist and thus required to project influence beyond the borders and regions. During the Cold War, one of the areas where the “cold” conflict between the two superpowers gained a solid image was their rivalry in the periphery, i.e. in the so-called Third

³² Tunander, 354.

³³ Tunander, 354.

World. In this sense, this area of conflict constitutes an important aspect of the scope of this study in order that the issue will have a more concrete meaning in the context.

Towards the end of the Second World War, the Soviet Union and the United States became war allies against the common enemy, Germany, which, according to Boyle, evoked sympathy for the Soviet Union on the American side as it was Russians who took the load of the most important frontline in the war and resulted in some appeasement steps towards the Soviet Union.³⁴

The relations which reached their peak with the decision to open a second front in France, which the Soviet Union expected for a long time, in 1944 began to lose impetus after the war. The fact that the Soviet Union sought to go beyond its borders towards Eastern Europe and the belief among the U.S. policymakers that making concessions (particularly expanding Lend-Lease Aid for the Soviet Union, which Roosevelt was planning in order to show the goodwill to cooperate after the war) would make the U.S. appear weak affected the progress of the relations negatively.³⁵

On the other hand, according to Gaddis, the post-war period, both the United States and the Soviet Union was expecting economics to shape politics, although it turned out to be otherwise as the disagreements over Eastern Europe and the credits offered to the Soviet Union highly affected their economic policies. In the face of the reluctance of the United States to extend loans, the Soviet Union did not become a member of the Bretton Woods system. At this point, Gaddis arrives to the conclusion that what was done to integrate the Soviets actually caused it to be isolated.³⁶

After the Second World War, as Gaddis points out, the United States was aware of the fact that the Soviets were probably going to fill the power vacuum after

³⁴ Boyle (1993), 41.

³⁵ Boyle, 45.

³⁶ Gaddis (1998), 192-194.

the defeat of Russia despite the fact that it had not been its policy yet to project influence into Europe.³⁷ In order to prevent Russian influence in the region, the United States aimed to “establish and maintain independent democratic regimes within both spheres and within the neutral zone.”³⁸ Accordingly, the United States sought for assuring Moscow of its good intentions to persuade it not to look for a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, failure of which resulted in the conflictual incidents such as Iranian and Turkish Crises, Vietnam War, and the Cuban Missile Crisis.³⁹

The response of the United States to the expanding Soviet sphere of influence was the Marshall Doctrine, which aimed to create an economic balance in Europe by offering economic aid in Europe and to bring together the ideas of free trade and open markets within the framework of containment.⁴⁰ On the other hand, having adhered to the Leninist ideas, the Soviet Union regarded the capitalist order as the root of World War II, which is evaluated by Gaddis as the inability of the Soviets that derived from ideology to judge the realities objectively. Forasmuch as the establishment of NATO demonstrated that capitalist states could cooperate with each other, contrary to the Soviet belief, this was not a cooperation between equals.⁴¹

Thus, the ideological differences between two superpowers constituted a base for their conflictual relation during the Cold War. The capitalist ideology and communist ideology divided the world into two and opened a field for another aspect of the rivalry between them. Expanding Soviet sphere of influence faced with the efforts of the United States to increase the number of democracies in the reachable world by allocating loans for those countries.

³⁷ Gaddis (1987), 49.

³⁸ Gaddis, 50.

³⁹ Gaddis, 56.

⁴⁰ Gaddis (1998), 194.

⁴¹ Gaddis, 196-200.

This chapter aimed to introduce the context in which the U.S.-Iranian relations will be handled throughout the study and to give very brief information about the Cold War dynamics. It would be fair to state that immense literature on the Cold War exists in both International Relations and History fields and they deal with detailed debates about the other dynamics of the U.S.-Soviet relations. However, this part of the study presented an overview of only a small part of this literature. The relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, which started towards the end of the end of the 19th century was shaped with the awareness of each other's different cultures and systems. Nevertheless, the real separation of their roads dates back to the end of the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution, which marked the ideological differences along with the clashes of geopolitical interests. The Second World War, where the United States and the Soviet Union took the same side against mutual enemies, ended with a crucial technological development: the Atomic bomb. The two superpowers, then, became again adversaries in another field, which launched a war between them where the only hot conflicts occurred in the periphery by their indirect involvement with economic aids and efforts to expand their ideologies beyond their spheres of influences, which also affected the events in Iran as well as all over the Middle East.

CHAPTER III

THE U.S. –IRANIAN RELATIONS

This chapter aims to give an insight on the relations between the United States and Iran from the establishment towards the Cold War, which determined a particular framework. First, Iran's position and relations with the West before the Second World War is discussed and the encounter of the United States and Iran is handled with an analysis of the early relations between the two countries, established after the occupation of Iran by the British and Soviet forces. Then, the evolution of the relations during the Cold War, the importance of the Middle East and Iran in particular for the United States is explained and the foreign policy of the United States towards Iran and its effects on the internal dynamics of Iran are discussed. Finally, the importance of oil that constituted one of the core issues in the U.S. Iranian relations, the oil nationalization project of Iran and the U.S. response to this policy and the hostage crisis on the eve of the revolution is examined in the final parts of the chapter.

3.1. Iran before the Second World War

As the First World War ended, the position of Iran in the region was an unprecedented one and undoubtedly it brought devastation to the country, which

declared its neutrality after the war began.⁴² The Ottoman Empire, with which it had strong historical ties collapsed and the region began to be dominated by the Western powers, particularly Britain. British forces were in occupation of most of the Middle East, to which London attributed great importance for its connection with and dominance of its colonies.⁴³ Thus, Iran was in the heart of the British interest and the other powers as a “battlefield”.⁴⁴ It had been a focal point for Great Power rivalry. Russia’s expansionist policies and its goal to export and import from the Persian Gulf clashed with Britain’s need to preserve its contact with the Eastern Mediterranean.⁴⁵ Thus, it was Britain and Russia that particularly wanted to consolidate their influence in Iran. Russia invaded the northern part of the country, while British forces were in occupation of the south.

By 1917, almost all of Iran was occupied by the British and Russian forces until the March Revolution. Despite the fact that Russian forces withdrew, the areas previously occupied by Russia were taken over by Britain and the devastating effects of the post-war conditions continued to increase for Iran. Additionally, the new, Bolshevik government of Russia renounced the treaties signed by the Tsarist Russia and concessions taken from Iran.

Contrary to the relatively friendly relations with Soviet Russia, Iran had increasingly hostile relations with Britain, which sought to consolidate its influence with a treaty that gave the right to Britain to aid Iran financially, to send advisers and officers to Iran. As Lenczowski put forward, Britain’s active involvement in Iran, by having a strong impact on its internal politics, attracted the reaction of Iranian

⁴² N.R. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, (New York: Yale University Press, 1981), 79

⁴³ G. Lenczowski, *The Middle East in the World Affairs*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1953), 153.

⁴⁴ Keddie, 79.

⁴⁵ B.R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press), 130.

nationalists and democrats, which resulted in the refusal of the treaty signed by Prime Minister Mirza Hassan Vosuq ad-Dauleh, who was overthrown by a coup conducted by Reza Khan, a Cossack brigade commander and Sayyid Zia Tabatabai, a pro-British journalist.

3.1.1. The Rise of Reza Shah to the Throne

The coup by Reza Khan and Tabatabai in 1921 constituted a turning point in Iranian history. Under the conditions of de-centralized administration, Reza Khan and Tabatabai took over the government, appointing Tabatabai as the prime minister and Reza Khan as the minister of war. The new government primarily sought to rebuild centralization by defeating insurgents and improving their relations with the central government.⁴⁶ According to Keddie, in spite of the fact that government rendered Western interference “more indirect”, the main goal of Reza Khan was not conducting social reforms for the sake of the people but maintaining centralization through some measures, whereas Sayyed Zia, who abrogated the Anglo-Persian Treaty, which allowed Britain to directly interfere in Iranian affairs, promised a comprehensive social reform.⁴⁷ During the following years, Reza Khan continued to consolidate his power putting himself ahead of the prime minister with the support of both the military and civilian groups. As Abrahamian argued in his book, it was the civilian groups backing of Reza Khan that provided his way to the throne to be a peaceful one.⁴⁸ However, it is a fact that popular outbreaks took place within a year

⁴⁶ E. Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 119.

⁴⁷ Keddie, 87.

⁴⁸ Abrahamian, 120.

after the government change. These outbreaks were suppressed by the armed forces, which were restructured by Reza Khan.⁴⁹

On the civilian side, the Revival Party, which was the majority party in the Fifth Parliament, was in contact with Reza Khan and they were mutually helping each other. This party's program called for:

separation of religion from politics, creation of a well-disciplined army and a well administered bureaucracy, an end to economic capitulations, industrialization, replacement of foreign capital by native capital, transformation of nomads into farmers, a progressive income tax, expansion of educational facilities for all, including women, careers open to talent and replacement of minority languages throughout Iran by Persian.⁵⁰

With the help of journals and newspapers they bought off they sought to spread the idea of getting rid of the "royal dictatorship" while supporting the need of a "revolutionary dictatorship".⁵¹ Nonetheless, Reza Khan's election as prime minister was during a coalition government between the Revival Party and the Socialist Party. Even though, at this period, the actions of the government particularly on the economy found support among the people, some political actions were criticized as attacks on the monarchy and the holy shari'a by the *mударres*.⁵² However, in the year 1925, Reza Khan managed to create a serious public opinion supporting him to the throne instead of Ahmad Shah of the Qajar dynasty, about whom rumors were spreading out about his life in Paris at that time. Eventually, Reza Khan found enough support to assume the throne in 1926.

⁴⁹ Keddie, 89.

⁵⁰ Abrahamian, 121.

⁵¹ Abrahamian, 124.

⁵² Abrahamian, 133.

3.1.2. Foreign and Domestic Politics under Reza Shah

As Ghods argued, Reza Khan's turning into the Shah of Iran was a result of the revival of nationalism during the political chaos after the First World War.⁵³ In this period, Iran had become a disintegrated country, the minorities of which, particularly Azerbaijan, were seeking to separate themselves from Tehran. Furthermore, as a result of foreign interference, it was under a great pressure economically, which also caused resentment among Iranians.

In this context, the political parties with which Reza Khan cooperated on his road to the throne knew to attract support from the people by promising a more centralized government, both a culturally and economically stronger Iran and took the support of the majority. And Reza Khan took over the throne in 1926 through the path opened by the government while he was the prime minister.

According to Zirinsky, the instability in the country was fueled by the presence of the external forces.⁵⁴ After World War I, with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Germany and Russia, Britain immediately occupied Iran and it interfered on each domain of the Iranian affairs. In this respect, Zirinsky distinguished four ways in which Iranian leaders responded to British domination: a pro-British policy, a pro-Russian policy, a third-power policy and isolation.⁵⁵ In spite of the fact that Sayyed Zia was formerly pro-British, Zirinsky argued that Britain had no direct and intended effect on the 1921 coup and Reza Khan's becoming the Shah. Similarly, Keddie suggested that there is not any written evidence confirming British

⁵³ M.R. Ghods, "Iranian Nationalism and Reza Shah", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27:1 (1991), 35-45.

⁵⁴ M.P. Zirinsky, "Imperial Power and Dictatorship: Britain and the Rise of Reza Shah, 1921-1926", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 24: 4, (November 1992), 639-663.

⁵⁵ Zirinsky, 640.

involvement in the coup, but she also added that some British politicians had individually affected the progress.⁵⁶

On the other hand, in his book, Cottam attributed more importance to British influence in the 1921 coup. In this respect, Cottam argued that Britain wanted “a stable regime able to resist popular agitation, entirely friendly to Great Britain, protective of British interests, and able and willing to resist Russian threat”.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, Cottam also added that despite the British support in his rise to power, Reza Khan did not become the administrator that Britain hoped for and he did not look out for British interests in his actions. In 1921, for instance, the Anglo-Persian Agreement was nullified by Sayyid Zia and a treaty of friendship was signed with the Soviet Union. However, although Britain lost control inside Iran after Reza Shah’s rise to power, the eventual results of the policies of Reza Shah were in favor of the interests of Britain until a critical preference of Reza Shah in the late 1930s to consider Adolf Hitler as a third power to collaborate against Britain and Russia. Increasing trade with, technical assistance and diplomatic support of Germany became a balancing act until Germany’s cooperation with Russia in 1941.⁵⁸

Besides, as it is noted before, although the Bolshevik Revolution interrupted Russian intervention, Soviet Russia continued its existence in Iran soon after its military withdrawal because of economic reasons and ideological concerns. The First World War and Bolshevism in Russia brought rivalry in to Anglo-Russian relations, which Iran could have used for its own benefit. Nevertheless, Soviet expansionism, both with its ideological and geopolitical aspects became a more obvious danger. The north of Iran was occupied by the Soviets and a puppet regime that had ties with

⁵⁶ Keddie, 87.

⁵⁷ R. W. Cottam, *Iran & The United States: A Cold War Case Study*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg Press, 1988), 40.

⁵⁸ Cottam, 47

Moscow was constituted there. Thus, Moscow seemed to be a more important threat to the independence of Iran.⁵⁹

However, according to Cottam, despite the fact Reza Shah was considered to be a “product” of a coup sponsored by Britain, the Soviets did not want to damage relations with Iran and preferred to conduct its ideological influence on political life and through economic relations.⁶⁰

On the other hand, as it is mentioned before, Iran saw the United States as a counterbalance against Britain and Russia. Not interested in Iran until British and Russian interventions, the United States had policies with ideological and economic goals. Nevertheless, for Iran, the United States was seen as the primary power to help Iran have its own say in its own country. This “idealized” view was mainly supported by the American advisers aiming to assist Iran to establish its own institutions.⁶¹

On the domestic realm, Reza Shah managed to form a strong autocratic government with constitutional rules. As the Iranians considered that Reza Shah aptly stood against the external pressures, he was given extraordinary powers as well.⁶²

Hence, when the foreign policy of Reza Shah is taken into consideration, it can be stated that despite his nationalistic aspirations, he established balance with external powers, i.e. Britain, Russia, the United States and also Germany, so as to both maintain a stable independence and to obtain well-established institutions as well, particularly with the help of advisers sent by the United States, some of whom Iran had trusted very much and some of whom it had not good relations. In this

⁵⁹ W.E. Griffith, “Iran’s Foreign Policy in the Pahlavi Era”, in G. Lenczowski, ed., *Iran Under the Pahlavis*, (California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 368.

⁶⁰ Cottam, 50.

⁶¹ Cottam, 54.

⁶² A.F. Westwood, “Politics of Distrust in Iran”, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. 358, (March 1965), 123-135.

context, Griffith describes the foreign policy of Reza Shah as nationalistic and he argues that the foreign policy framework was taken over by his son, Mohammad Reza Shah. This framework linked internal strength with independence and thereby attributed great importance to the modernization of the army and infrastructure. In addition, diminishing the influence of Moscow and London was another goal of this foreign policy framework. To this end, Iran's quest for a counterbalancing third force caused Iran to get close to first the United States and Germany.⁶³ Nonetheless, as the Second World War was approaching, the rapprochement between Reza Shah and Hitler, in terms of economic and political relations engendered disturbance on the British and Russian side, which led the way to another change in the throne, replacing Reza Shah with his son, Mohammad Reza Shah in 1941, when World War II was going on.

3.2. U.S. and Iranian Relations: World War II and Cold War Period

3.2.1. Iran during World War II and the Cold War

When the Second World War broke out, Iran preferred to remain neutral and this policy of neutrality highly disturbed the Allies.⁶⁴ However, it was Reza Shah's quest for a third power to guarantee the independence of Iran and his relations with Germany, which led to an invasion by Great Britain and the Soviet Union and Reza Shah's being sent to exile.⁶⁵ Just before his exile, Reza Shah left his place to his son Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi on September 14, 1941. The new shah was following in his father's footsteps in that his primary goal was the independence of Iran from

⁶³ Griffith, 370.

⁶⁴ Cottam, 55.

⁶⁵ J.A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 18.

external forces. During the Second World War, the main purpose of Mohammad Reza Shah was to minimize the Anglo-Soviet influence that was augmented with the occupation. As his father did, the Shah sought the support of a third power that would counterbalance the two occupying countries. The alternative to Germany was considered to be the United States. Iran encouraged Washington to intervene in the situation in Iran on many occasions. On the U.S. side, the foreign policy makers were becoming more interested in Iran for both economic and political reasons that will be discussed in the following sections. One of the results of these efforts to make the U.S. involved in Iran and the decisions to get more interested in Iran was a tripartite treaty. With the initiative of the United States, the Shah signed a Tripartite Treaty with the Soviet Union and Britain on January 29, 1942. This treaty guaranteed the territorial sovereignty and political independence of Iran, required the withdrawal of the Allied forces not later than six months after the end of the war and also promised economic aid so as to compensate for the wartime deprivations. Furthermore, it constituted the beginning of a change in Iranian wartime foreign policy.⁶⁶ According to Ramazani, after the treaty, the neutrality of Iran was increasingly attacked by Britain and Russia. Besides, the interests of the United States and Britain became more definite as Russian influence and domination began to intensify. As Bill put forward in his book, this treaty of guarantee did not alleviate the fears of the Shah and Iranian statesmen who opted for the presence of a third power influence in Iran. Thus, Iran was willing to render the treaty a four-party treaty, with the inclusion of the United States. However, Tehran did not succeed in doing so. Nevertheless, instead of being a party to the treaty, the United States preferred to further its bilateral relations with Iran. With the treaties of trade and its advisory teams sent to

⁶⁶ R.K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-1973*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975), 45.

Iran to assist in establishing effective institutions and infrastructure consolidated the American involvement in Iran.

When World War II ended, the Iranian foreign policy primarily aimed ending Soviet and British presence in Iran. Britain agreed to withdraw from Iranian territories that it occupied, whereas the Soviet Union managed to postpone the withdrawal of its troops in defiance of the treaty. The most important support for Iran to persuade the Soviets to withdraw came from the United States, which also consolidated the U.S. presence in Iran as a guarantee of independence in the eyes of the Iranian decision makers.

Independence was the supreme goal of all Iranian people and the Iranian decision makers as well. Nevertheless, the means to achieve it was a question of debate among the Iranian politicians. The clearest confrontation on the issue was between the Shah and Dr. Mohammad Mossaddegh, who was elected prime minister in 1951. Dr. Mossaddegh was a popular parliamentarian in the Iranian *majlis* when the foundations of the constitutional monarchy were being laid in 1949.⁶⁷ The prime ministers nominated by the Shah were not considered to be effective particularly in oil politics. Thus, a passionate nationalist and orator, Dr. Mohammad Mossaddegh found great popular support by favoring nationalization of the Iranian economy, particularly the oil resources of the country, which were mainly under the control of Britain through the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) founded in 1909. Furthermore, Dr. Mossaddegh supported the idea that both Britain and Russia were the enemies of Iran; hence the most convenient foreign policy strategy for Iran was neutralism. Thus, he also opposed the idea that Iran needed a third foreign power in order to gain its independence. On the other hand, for the Shah and his entourage, the

⁶⁷ M.R. Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1980), 83.

real opponent of Iran was Soviet Russia, in terms of both politics and economy, the United States was the real ally that would back up Iran against Russia.

In his memoirs, where he wrote about his policies, Mohammad Reza Shah commented also on the premiership of Mossadegh.⁶⁸ The Shah criticized Mossadegh of not being cautious and of reversing the “positive balance” strategy of Iran into a “negative balance” by ruling out concessions to any foreign power, which caused Iranian oil trade to end.⁶⁹ In this respect, Griffith finds the policy of the Shah “more realistic and more in accord with Iranian national interests”, because Mossadegh neglected his country’s and Britain’s post-war weaknesses.⁷⁰ Although Mossadegh resigned after the Shah refused to appoint him as the minister of war, the popular riots against the nomination of Ahmad Ghavam again forced the Shah to appoint Mossadegh as the prime minister and minister of war in 1952. Nevertheless, the decline in the support for the Prime Minister and the revival of the Tudeh Party and anxiety about communism prepared the decline of Mossadegh. The difference between the Shah and Mossaddegh was not only about policies, but also about the whole political system of Iran.⁷¹ Moreover, Mossadegh was not in favor of the modernization program like the Shah was. Cooperating with CIA and the U.S. ambassador in Tehran, Loy W. Henderson, the Shah accelerated the period during which anti-Mossadegh demonstrations took place.⁷² Britain was willing to stop Mossadegh to reverse the nationalization of the AIOC and to prevent Soviet influence that was increasing in Iran through the Tudeh Party. Fazlollah Zahedi succeeded Mossadegh as the new prime minister and Mossadegh stood trial.

⁶⁸ Pahlavi, 79-92.

⁶⁹ Pahlavi, 85.

⁷⁰ Griffith, 372.

⁷¹ Griffith, 373.

⁷² Pahlavi, 90.

Besides, the Shah referred to the foreign relations of Iran with other countries and he particularly mentioned the aid that Iran received from the United States. The Truman doctrine, which aimed to consolidate the American presence in the Middle East, included Iran in its area of influence as well. With this doctrine, in 1948, Iran began to receive military aid from the United States. The military aid included “light armaments with a view to put Iran’s threatened security”.⁷³ The economic assistance from the United States had its roots back in the beginning of the 18th century and was conducted by American missions sent to Iran.⁷⁴

Furthermore, the Cold War foreign policy strategy of the Shah required alignment with the United States. The newly-founded pro-Soviet regime in Iraq after the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958 and the pan-Arabist and pro-Soviet policies of the Egyptian President Gamal Abdelnasser posed threats to the Shah’s position. Thus, one of the reasons for Iran to be aligned with the United States was this danger perceived by the Shah.⁷⁵

When the détente period began between the Soviet Union and the United States in the late 1960s, the Shah perceived the development as both a danger and opportunity in that the two hegemonies might decide the fate of Iran regardless of the Shah’s opinions and the Soviet threat, according to which Iran’s preference for one party might be to no avail.⁷⁶ Hence, in spite of the fact that Iran preserved its position in the Western camp, it did not need the immediate financial and military assistance of the United States any more. In addition, it began to normalize its relations with the Soviet Union and China. Another dimension that affected the Shah’s foreign policy was Iran’s leadership in the Persian Gulf, after Britain withdrew from Persian Gulf

⁷³ Pahlavi, 81.

⁷⁴ Ramazani, 76.

⁷⁵ Griffith, 374.

⁷⁶ Griffith, 376.

sheikhdoms, which made Iranian oil the base of rising Iranian prosperity and power.⁷⁷ When it came to the year 1973, Iran quadrupled its oil prices. As Griffith put forward, the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the decrease in the Arab oil production encouraged Iran to make the move, which resulted in an increase in national development in Iran.

3.2.2. The United States in Iran

The first relations between Iran and the United States began with Protestant missionary activities and for many years Iran remained unknown to many Americans.⁷⁸ The missionary activities that aimed mainly at conversion through the educational, health and similar social services began in 1830s and in 1883 Iran and the United States exchanged diplomatic representatives.⁷⁹ In 1856, formal relations were inaugurated with a treaty of friendship and commerce⁸⁰ In spite of the fact that soon after the breakout of the First World War and beginning of the rivalry between Russia and Britain attracted some attention, U.S. influence and interest in the region remained at a minimum level until the Second World War, when the United States began to make its presence felt. Additionally, the role of petroleum was understood to be crucial for great powers and Iran, under the intervention of Russia and Britain was actively encouraging the United States to be involved in Iran as a counterbalance.

From the side of the United States, it was also appropriate to get involved more in Iranian affairs as far as its interests were concerned.⁸¹ At the Tehran Conference in 1943, the United States under the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt,

⁷⁷ Griffith, 378.

⁷⁸ G.Sick, *All Fall Down: America's Faithful Encounter with Iran*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1985), 5.

⁷⁹ Bill, 15.

⁸⁰ L.L. Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Pres, 1992), 108.

⁸¹ See Bill, 19.

assured Tehran that it would support the independence of Iran after the war. As a matter of fact, it was to make sure that British and Russian forces withdrew from Iranian territories that had been occupied.⁸² As Moens put forward, while the Shah was using American influence in maintaining a balance against Britain and Russia, the United States had its own interests in getting involved in Iran. First of all, Iran constituted a buffer against the Soviet Union. Secondly, Iran was an important link for the U.S. to oilfields of the Gulf region. Furthermore, later on Iran played a key role with its location in intelligence of the U.S. on Soviet missile testing in Central Asia.⁸³ Thus, the United States shaped its foreign policy towards Iran within these parameters. On March 10, 1942, one of the first steps revealing the orientation of U.S. foreign policy was Iran's being declared as eligible for lend-lease aid, which provided the Allies with war materials.⁸⁴

Moreover, as of 1942, the United States began to send advisers to Iran upon the request of the Shah, who had confidence in the United States in that it would provide a secure base for the independence of Iran, like other Iranian statesmen. The first of the advisory teams sent to Iran was a diplomatic group headed by Louis Dreyfus, Jr. The legation of Dreyfus was a center of coordination of American presence and it was directly linked to the Department of State. Between 1942 and 1947, another mission, this time a military one, was sent to Iran under the command of Gen. Clarence Ridley, which was followed by another military mission, the Persian Gulf Service Command (PGSC), headed by Gen. Donald Connolly. The PGSC consisted of thirty thousand non-combatant troops and helped USSR get wartime supplies through Iran. In addition to these, a third military mission to Iran

⁸² A. Moens, "President Carter's Advisers and the Fall of the Shah", *Political Science Quarterly*, 106:2 (Summer 1991), 211-237.

⁸³ Moens, 214.

⁸⁴ Fawcett, 111.

was led by Col. H. Norman Schwarzkopf and aimed to assist the gendarmerie forces of Iran. In 1943, Arthur C. Millspaugh came to Iran again for a financial advisory mission, which was not welcomed by a wide range of Iranians and Soviet opposition because of his reform plans for Iranian financial organization. Furthermore, apart from these official missions, there was also individual and informal American influence as well, among which the advisory works of Gen. Patrick Hurley may be counted.⁸⁵ Despite the lack of coordination and agreement among the teams, particularly because of the tension between Millspaugh and Connolly, these missions served to increase support for more American influence and also caused some resentment among two Iranian groups, first the wealthy class due to the financial reforms were found damaging to their interest and secondly the nationalists because of the excessive power and authorization given to the American missions. As Ramazani argued, the missions also posed problems in that the status of missions was ambiguous.⁸⁶ The missions were the employee of the Iranian state and they were also serving American interests at the same time and their ambiguity as well as their excessive authority caused them to be an issue of opposition.

As it was mentioned before, the United States did not pay much attention to Iran until the Second World War and began to be interested due the reasons given above. One of the first acts proving the interest of the United States was the Tehran Conference, as a result of which the three powers, i.e. the United States, Britain and Soviet Union, declared that they supported the independence and territorial integrity of Iran when the war ended. The goal of the conference for the United States was to prevent Moscow from remaining there as a permanent political hegemon.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, the Soviets did not comply with the declaration and exceeded the

⁸⁵ Bill, 20.

⁸⁶ Ramazani, 81.

⁸⁷ Sick, 5.

withdrawal deadline. Thus, the most powerful support for Iran on Soviet withdrawal came from the United States and Moscow was persuaded to withdraw from the territories it occupied in mid-1946.

As Ganji aptly put it, the U.S. relations with Iran in the Cold War period was based on the rivalry with the Soviet Union, which was broadly discussed in Chapter 2 and the oil resources of the Middle East.⁸⁸ Until the end of the Second World War, Britain and the Soviet Union dominated the region and particularly Iran. As a result of the counterbalancing strategy of Iran, the United States was involved more and more in the Iranian affairs and filled the vacuum left by the withdrawal of Britain at the end of World War II. The Soviet Union withdrew in consequence of the persuasion of the United States and the United Nations. One should not overlook, however, the fine-tuned diplomacy that Iran conducted vis-à-vis the Soviet Union in that period. Ahmad Qavam, the prime minister of Iran at that time, had promised the Soviet Union establishment of an Irano-Soviet Oil Company, entrance of at least three members of Tudeh Party to the parliament and privileges to Azerbaijani separatists in order to persuade Moscow to withdraw its troops. However, when the Iranian parliament objected to such a company in 1947 as Qavam was sure it would, it was too late for the Soviet Union to launch another war for oil as it was victorious but devastated after the Second World War.⁸⁹

In the post-war period, the arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States and the ideological confrontation between the two superpowers carried over to the Middle East as well. The Truman Doctrine, the Eisenhower Doctrine and lastly the Nixon Doctrine were formed to increase the influence of the United States

⁸⁸ B. Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: The Foreign Policy of the USA and Revolutionary Iran*, (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006), 11.

⁸⁹N.B. Criss, Preface to *Türkiye'nin Batı ile İttifaka Yönelişi*. by Melih Esenbel, (Istanbul: Isis, 2000), 14-15.

in the Middle East. As a Middle Eastern country with vast oil reserves and a fragile political atmosphere, Iran received economic and military aids through these doctrines in order to consolidate its military and infrastructure against the Soviet threat. Thus, the primary goals and concerns of the United States and Iran overlapped in the Cold War period. For the Shah, the most important danger towards Iran was the communist threat and for the United States, it was also communist ideology that posed the main threat to its position in the Middle East.

In the post-war period, the Shah aligned himself with the United States. Nevertheless, according to Ganji he knew to benefit from the rivalry between Washington and Moscow.⁹⁰ In 1959, Iran launched a policy of détente with the Soviet Union and it pressured the Eisenhower administration to sell more military equipment to Iran. Iran's increasing power in the Gulf region during the Vietnam War and Britain's withdrawal from the region was considered to be worrying to the Johnson administration. However, when Iran became a power in the region, the United States wanted Iran to be built up as a regional power.⁹¹

The Nixon administration was in favor of supporting the Shah and President Richard Nixon agreed to sell all kinds of weaponry to Iran, except nuclear weapons. Moreover, Nixon and Henry Kissinger also supported Iran in its high oil price policy considering that would subdue the other rivals in financial terms, i.e. West Germany and Japan.

The patron-client relationship between Iran and the United States was initiated by the Eisenhower administration's New Look strategy, which was set forth in 1953. The goal of the New Look was to regain the initiative against the Soviet

⁹⁰ Ganji, 12.

⁹¹ Ganji, 12.

Union and to reduce the defense expenditures of the United States.⁹² To this end, it also required to strengthen pro-Western countries in the periphery of Soviet sphere of influence. Accordingly, the economic and military aid granted to the Middle Eastern countries increased to a large extent. One of these countries was Iran, with its fragile political and economic atmosphere and strategic importance in the region. As Gasiorowski argued, the strategy had initially defensive aims, yet after the overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh, it planned on to transform Iran an anti-Communist state rather than a “neutral” one. The view was followed by the Kennedy administration as well with some changes. The soft side of the strategy known as “flexible response”⁹³ gave more importance to the conventional forces, economic aid and cultural programs.⁹⁴ While the Johnson administration was overly occupied with the Vietnam War and Arab-Israeli Conflict, the interaction with Iran, economic aid and military aid was reduced in mid-1960s, which also decreased the ability of the U.S. to control the policies of the Shah.

The Nixon administration, with the guidance of Henry Kissinger, put forward the Nixon Doctrine. This doctrine required to avoid getting involved in proxy wars with the Soviet Union and heavily arming its clients in the Third World.⁹⁵ Iran became the main focus of the Nixon Doctrine due to its position in the region. Hence,

⁹² M.J.Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State in Iran*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), 93.

⁹³ Flexible Response is a concept that originally formulated by the U.S. as a result of the dissatisfaction with the strategy of New Look, which placed more importance on strategic weapons to deter the Soviet Union. The policy was pursued by the Democrats that came to the power in 1961 and it was adopted by NATO in 1967. The purpose of the strategy was to meet the need for a “survivable strategic retaliatory capability” and compromise between conventional resistance, nuclear response and massive strategic retaliation. For more details see F.C. Zagare, D.M. Kilgour, “Assessing Competing Defense Postures: The Strategic Implications of “Flexible Response”, *World Politics*, 47:3, (1995), 373-417. and J.M. Legge, *Theater Nuclear Weapons and the NATO Strategy of Flexible Response*, (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1983)

⁹⁴ Gasiorowski, 98.

⁹⁵ Gasiorowski, 100.

under the Nixon Doctrine, the United States sold considerable amounts of weaponry to Iran and encouraged Iran to become a powerful state in the region.

Gaining military power in the region, Iran assumed that it was increasingly more equal to the United States but for Washington it was not easy to control Tehran by the time Jimmy Carter took office. Before a consistent policy towards Iran was shaped, the signs of revolution appeared in Iran and beginning with the hostage crisis in 1979, triggered with sixty six Americans' being taken hostage, the relations between the United State and Iran deteriorated.

3.2.3. Oil

The importance of oil was recognized with the end of the First World War by the states that wanted to be powerful. Thus, the oil reserves of the Middle East attracted attention of the Western countries, particularly that of Britain.

The first oil resource in Iran was found in 1908 in the province of Khuzestan and the first oil concession was granted to William Knox D'Arcy, who was a British millionaire. Iran was the first non-Western country where oil was found and used for commercial purposes. In the 1920s the Western companies began to seek concessions in Iran. Standard Oil Company (today's Exxon), Sinclair Oil, Seaboard Oil Company and Standard-Vacuum Oil (today's Mobil) were the first companies that demonstrated interest in Iranian oil.⁹⁶

Since its discovery, oil played a crucial role in the Iranian political life, both in the domestic and international realm. When the first oil was found, the first concession was given to a British Company and Britain bought most of the shares of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. At that time, the British fleet was converting from

⁹⁶ Bill, 27.

coal to oil. Hence, the core of the British concerns in Iran was about oil and its strategic importance.⁹⁷ According to the Iranian people, the coup of 1921 took place with the intervention of Britain so as to preserve its interest in the AIOC.⁹⁸ Most of the shares of the AIOC belonged to Britain and the company paid minimum taxes and duties to the Iranian state, whereas it paid income taxes and import duties to Britain. Moreover, the directorship of the company was at the hands of Britain. The company accounts were checked by the British officials. In Rubin's words, "AIOC became a state within the state, controlling Persia's main resource and intervening in Persian politics."⁹⁹ The British domination in the oil production and politics of Iran caused it to approach the United States in order to lessen the British monopoly. However, the United States had little interest in the region because it did not want to challenge Britain's primacy in the region and secondly, it found Iran too peripheral in which to be interested. It was not until 1944 that the United States decided that it had to send representatives of oil companies to Iran.

Similarly, the Soviet Union was also concerned about the oil resources particularly of northern Iran. Almost at the same time with the negotiations with the United States, the Soviet ambassador Sergey Ivanovich Kavtaradze asked for exclusive rights over the petroleum exploration in the north of Iran. This initiative resulted in suspension of all oil concessions negotiations until the end of the war and further deterioration in Russo-Iranian relations.¹⁰⁰ The opposition to the oil concessions was represented by the politician in the Iranian parliament such as Prime Minister Mohammad Sa'id, who had to resign from the Tudeh Party as the

⁹⁷ N.R. Keddie, *Iran: Religion, Politics and Society: Collected Essays*, (Oxon: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1980), 207.

⁹⁸ R.K. Ramazani, *Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 200.

⁹⁹ B. Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 12.

¹⁰⁰ Ramazani (1975), 98.

consequence of the suppression, Sayyid Zia, who was a pro-British politician and lastly Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh, who later played a crucial role in the nationalization of oil sources of Iran.¹⁰¹ On December 2, 1944, Mossadegh took a step further from the suspension of the negotiations and suggested that Iranian oil should be explored by Iranians themselves. On the same day, the bill passed in the *majlis* and prohibited discussing and signing oil concession agreements by any government.

The nationalization process in the so-called Third World began in the early 1940s. Venezuela demanded higher shares for its oil resource and Saudi Arabia launched similar negotiations that resulted in a fifty-fifty agreement in 1950. Likewise, in Iran demonstrations were held and strikes were organized in the oil fields. Referring to a document prepared by the government in 1948, Bill listed the dissatisfaction of Iran in six items:

- (1) the amount of revenues accruing to the government of Iran;
- (2) the supplying of the British Royal Admiralty and Royal Air Force with Iranian oil at an advantageous price;
- (3) the demand that Iran receive its share of the profits from the company's operations outside of Iran;
- (4) the need to have access to the accounts and ledgers of the company since these figures affected Iran;
- (5) the improvement of the status of the Iranian employees of the company; and
- (6) the revision of the length of the concession.¹⁰²

In mid-1950, a commission under the leadership of Mossadegh rejected the fifty-fifty offer of the AIOC. Despite the opposition of the Prime Minister Haj Ali Razmara, who was assassinated during the negotiations, the Iranian *majlis* passed the bill to nationalize the oil industry of Iran on March 15, 1951 and Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh became prime minister on April 29.¹⁰³ The nationalization policy brought Britain to the edge of attacking Iran. Nevertheless, the United States wanted to

¹⁰¹ Ramazani, 103.

¹⁰² Bill, 61.

¹⁰³ Bill, 65.

persuade Britain to compromise in a fear of Soviet involvement. The United States, yet it did not manage to “bridge the gap between Britain and Iran.”¹⁰⁴ As Heiss argued, the dispute became irresolvable as the two sides saw it through their own history and neither wanted to take a step back as opposed to the other one.¹⁰⁵

The American position in Iran was also in danger in that the other oil producing countries may follow Iran and take the same approach towards the American companies. As the oil crisis continued, the United States changed its position as well. The concern about the status of American companies and about a possible Soviet expansion in the oil fields caused Washington to decide to be on the same side with Britain and before Eisenhower took office, the overthrow of Mossadegh began to be discussed.¹⁰⁶

3.2.4. Overthrowing Mossadegh

In 1953, CIA and Britain planned to overthrow Mossadegh through a coup and to replace him with the Shah, who left the country as part of the plan.¹⁰⁷ Both Rubin¹⁰⁸ and Bill¹⁰⁹ emphasize that the American intervention of 1953 marked a turning point in the U.S.-Iranian relations in that it created such resentment that Iranians used the event to justify their seizure of the American Embassy in 1979.

The coup organized in cooperation between Britain and the United States began in February 1953. Ruehsen points to three actors in the United States who

¹⁰⁴ Undersecretary of State George McGhee’s words referred to in Bill, 77.

¹⁰⁵ M.A. Heiss, “Real Men Don’t Wear Pajamas: Anglo-American Cultural Perceptions of Mohammed Mossadegh and the Iranian Oil Nationalization Dispute”, in P.L. Hahn and M.A. Heiss, Eds., *Empire and Revolution: The United States and the Third World since 1945*, (Ohio State University Press, 2001), 179.

¹⁰⁶ Bill, 79.

¹⁰⁷ Pahlavi, 79-92.

¹⁰⁸ Rubin, 55.

¹⁰⁹ Bill, 86.

were interested in the problem.¹¹⁰ President Eisenhower, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and the head of the CIA Allan Dulles. All of the three figures were concerned about the spread of communism and they did not want Iran to go bankrupt as it would render the Middle East more open to the dangers. As Rubin states in his book, CIA under Allen Dulles was closer to the White House and it was more enthusiastic about foreign coups and the overthrow of Mossadegh was one of the first operations of that kind.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, despite the fact that the coordination of the coup plan was assumed by the United States, British intelligence also played an important role. The United States preferred to get involved in the coup under the conditions of the Cold War. The Soviet expansionism was still the primary threat for the United States in the region and in Europe. Thus, it needed to have good relations with France and Britain. Furthermore, it should be noted that some authors also argue that the United States collaborated with Britain in order to end its dominance over the Iranian oil and to have a share.¹¹²

The negotiations between Iran and Britain broke down and the belief in the necessity of the coup was increasing. Neither Mossadegh, who did not want to give up so easily as it would be a “political suicide” nor did Britain want to compromise unless their own solution was accepted.¹¹³ Nonetheless, proposals prepared by the United States and Britain were presented to Mossadegh. A final proposal suggested that

Iran would retain control of the country’s oil industry provided that fair and adequate compensation be paid to AIOC and the Americans would provide immediate loans which could be repaid with oil.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ M. M. Ruehsen, “Operation 'Ajax' Revisited: Iran, 1953”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 29:3, (1993), 467-486.

¹¹¹ Rubin, 56.

¹¹² Heiss, 207, Bill, 82.

¹¹³ Ruehsen, 469.

¹¹⁴ Ruehsen, 472.

Mossadegh rejected the proposal and tried to persuade the United States that Britain wanted to get Americans out of the Middle East and used the Communist threat to persuade the U.S. to be on his side.¹¹⁵ In Iran, the Shah was protesting Mossadegh by threatening to go to exile and the rumors were causing pro-Shah demonstrations subsidized by Col. Norman Schwarzkopf. However, the majority of the Iranian people continued to support Mossadegh and his government was not likely to fall.¹¹⁶ On the other hand, Mossadegh knew that the military was still loyal to the Shah, which made him ask for the full control of the army. This move caused him to lose some support of the parliamentarians. Secondly, when many deputies resigned, he threatened to dissolve the parliament and he lost his base of power in the parliament, which increased Tudeh support for him. Meanwhile, anti-American and anti-British demonstrations were increasing in number as well.

Hence, an alternative solution to the negotiations had to be found. Referring to his book *Countercoup*, Cottam asserts that Kermit Roosevelt, an intelligence officer who was charged with the duty of conducting the coup, claimed the overthrow of Mossadegh as his main responsibility.¹¹⁷ Accordingly, Kermit Roosevelt had an important role in organizing the operation. He was called to London and proposed to cooperate during the operation, which was called “Operation Ajax”, as an extension of the “Operation Boot” planned by MI6, the British intelligence service. As a part of the plan, the Shah issued two royal decrees that dismissed Mossadegh and appointed General Fazlollah Zahedi in his place. At first the plan seemed to have failed and the Shah left the country in mid-August.

¹¹⁵ Ruehsen, 472.

¹¹⁶ Rubin, 78.

¹¹⁷ Cottam, 103.

However, the operation was completed successfully and Mossadegh was arrested. The Shah returned and was restored to the throne.¹¹⁸

3.2.5. Post-1953 Iran

As Ferrier argued, the 1953 crisis was not beneficial to Iran in that as Iranian oil was not essential in the world market, Iran was deprived of the revenues of AIOC, which was approximately \$200,000,000 a year.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, the event constituted a turning point in Iran's foreign and domestic politics. First of all, the intervention by American and British intelligence services caused irritation among the Iranians. As it is stated before, it became the base for the other crises between the Western countries and Iran. Secondly, as of 1953, the policies of the Shah proved to be both more dependent on the United States and more independent at the same time. It was more dependent because he needed the United States for his immediate survival and the economic and military aid from the United States was necessary for his development programs.¹²⁰ On the other hand, it was more independent due to his new system of ruling and modernizing the country through the White Revolution and an organization called SAVAK. Translated as Secret Security Organization, SAVAK was set up by the Shah as a system of spying and policing soon after regaining the throne, in 1957. The organization was founded by the assistance of the United States and Israel also contributed to its operations.¹²¹ In the domestic realm, SAVAK was considered to be a police-state instrument for its operations became ruthless and extreme.

¹¹⁸ A. Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*, (New Jersey: The Princeton University Press, 1980), 44.

¹¹⁹ R. W. Ferrier, "The Anglo-Iranian Oil Dispute: A Triangular Relationship", in J.A. Bill, WM. R. Louis, eds., *Musaddiq, Iranian Nationalism and Oil*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1988), 189.

¹²⁰ Saikal, 46.

¹²¹ Bill, 98.

Through the effective means he had, the Shah almost destroyed the Tudeh Party and the National Front. The *majlis* formed as a result of a new election after the overthrow of Mossadegh was not representative in nature and there was a clear political discontent at home. On the international realm, Iran returned to the oil market with new arrangements made with the British and American governments. According to these arrangements, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) was recognized by all parties. The British companies began to buy crude oil from the NIOC and sell it in the world market, half of the revenue of which was paid to NIOC. Thus, Iran obtained the control of its oil reserves and industry, whereas foreign companies continued their operations in Iran.¹²² Nonetheless, the arrangements were criticized by some nationalists and there is no consensus among the scholars on the interpretations of the arrangements.

The United States was clearly content with the results of the negotiations and arrangements. The Eisenhower administration continued to grant financial aid to Tehran. Between the years 1953 and 1960, the economic aid from the United States was \$567 million and the military aid reached \$450 million.¹²³ By 1961, Iran became the recipient of one of the largest amounts of American economic aid. Moreover, many official advisors, experts, technical organizations and individual investors came to Iran to provide assistance in economic planning.¹²⁴

Political pressure and resentment due to the close relationship between the Shah and the United States made Iranian people dissatisfied with the regime, which failed to improve the economic and social conditions of the people. Finally, in 1963, the Shah decided to launch a series of reform programs, which he called the “White Revolution” aiming to develop the socio-economic situation in the country.

¹²² Bill, 108.

¹²³ Bill, 114.

¹²⁴ Saikal, 56.

Nevertheless, the revolution did not receive any support from the rural areas that were under the control of the feudal landlords and neither from the urban areas that were politically suppressed.¹²⁵ The largest opposition to the White Revolution, however, came from the clergy. Land reforms created discomfort among the landlords who were generally the most important patrons of the mullahs. In addition, some of them disliked the Shah because of his father's policies and some of them were discontent about the close relations with the United States.¹²⁶ Among those who opposed the reforms was Ayatollah Khomeini. Khomeini declared the reforms as a violation of Islamic law and he issued pamphlets announcing that the reform was contrary to Islamic principles. Under his leadership, theological students gathered for demonstrations in Qum, which has been a very religious city of Iran. SAVAK meddled in the demonstrations and occupied mosques, shrines and religious schools. On June 4, 1963, Khomeini was arrested, as a result of which crowds gathered to protest in Tehran. Although the figures change according to the authors, many people died during the demonstrations and many of them got injured.¹²⁷ Not being able to find support from the people, the White Revolution lost its impetus. Although it was not a total failure, it could not fulfill its promises.¹²⁸

3.3. Iran before the Islamic Revolution

The White Revolution lasted fourteen years and it ameliorated the social situation in Iran to some extent. The literacy rate, particularly among the women and the education level was augmented fivefold and threefold respectively. The agricultural techniques were improved and the living standard of many families

¹²⁵ Saikal, 72.

¹²⁶ K.M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America*, (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2004), 88.

¹²⁷ M. Laing, *The Shah*, (London: Sidgwick&Jackson, 1977), 168.

¹²⁸ Pollack, 97.

increased. However, Iran was one of the countries that had the worst social conditions in the Middle East.¹²⁹ The accelerated modernization, development programs and urbanization also increased the number of shanty towns, pollution and poverty. The lower classes of the society were not able to benefit from the social welfare programs. Infrastructure of the capital was not adequate. In brief, poverty was not overcome but just modernized and the gap between the social classes and inequalities enlarged, which also brought forth discontentment and opposition.

The Tudeh Party and the National Front were weakened after the 1953 coup through the operations of SAVAK. The social changes in Iran caused the target audience of the Tudeh Party decrease in numbers. The National Front reactivated itself after 1960, when the police controls were relaxed. However, when it began gaining support, its leaders were arrested again. Despite its collapse, the divisions of the party continued opposition, some of them through radicalized means.¹³⁰

The most effective and powerful opposition group to the regime was the clergy. Abrahamian categorizes the clergy into three groups, the first of which consisted of apolitical ulama who wanted the clergy to remain out of politics.¹³¹ The second group was a moderate opposition group who particularly objected to the rights given to women but that was open to communication with the Shah. The last group was a militant opposition group headed by Ayatollah Khomeini, who was in exile in Iraq but had a network in Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini and his students had been imprisoned for a period of time and Khomeini lived in exile and had no communication with the regime. They aimed at an Islamic form of government and

¹²⁹ Abrahamian, 447.

¹³⁰ Abrahamian, 457-472.

¹³¹ Abrahamian, 473-376.

denounced the Shah by comparing him to Yazid, who killed Hussein¹³². Unlike the second group, they were in favor of active involvement by the clergy in politics. Ayatollah Khomeini declared his theories and policies during his lectures and he criticized the West of being imperialist and the Shah of being their puppet.

Apart from the opposition groups, the social groups were also disturbed by the increasing inequalities and the negative results of rapid development and modernization. The middle class, highly influenced by the increased inflation rates, also suffered the operations of SAVAK.¹³³ In 1977, a group of lawyers wrote a letter to the Shah calling for abolishment of despotism and the single party system. Later in the same year, poets, novelists and intellectuals wrote letters to the authorities denouncing the regime for violating human rights. The opposition of the middle class grew larger and more vocal. Street protests took place in Tehran and the other cities of Iran. Likewise, the working class was discontented because of economic recessions. In 1978, strikes and upheavals of the middle and working class became widespread and they were generally suppressed through violent methods by SAVAK, particularly after the declaration of martial law in Tehran and eleven other cities.¹³⁴ On September 8, the worst clashes occurred in Tehran, as a result of which more than 4,000 people were killed, which caused the day be called “Black Friday”. The Black Friday completely ended the possibility of a compromise between the Shah and the people.

¹³² After the death of the Prophet Mohammad in AD 632, three caliphs assumed the leadership of the Muslims. Yet, not all of them were agreed on who was to be the second leader. Thus, some Muslims did not recognize the elected caliphs and instead regarded the Prophet Mohammad’s son-in-law Ali ibn Abu Talib as their leader. In 656, after the death of the third caliph Ali took the caliphate. When he was assassinated by a Sunni leader, Muawiyah, his son Hussein succeeded his father as the leader of the Shias. The rivalry between Sunnis and the Shias continued existing between Hussein and Yazid, the son of Muawiyah. In a battle between the forces of the two leaders, Hussein was murdered by Yazid in Kerbala. This incident became a symbol of the battle between good and evil for the Shias and every year Shia pilgrims gather in Kerbala to commemorate the martyrdom of Hussein. For details see C. Atkins, “The Shrine of Islam's Tragic Divisions”, *History Today*, 53:11, (2003), 6.

¹³³ Abrahamian, 499.

¹³⁴ Abrahamian, 515.

By 1978, opposition gathered around the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, who had been exiled for over a decade. His students established a network to spread his ideas in Iran. Khomeini demanded a total Islamic revolution contrary to the other opposition groups. Yet, those various groups believed that they could overthrow the old cleric once the Shah was gone. The opposition became so powerful that the new cabinet appointed by the Shah did not suffice to secure the regime and the Shah had to flee Iran, as a result of which Khomeini's forces took power in February 1979 and the ayatollah returned to Tehran.¹³⁵

3.4. The Hostage Crisis

The hostage crisis that lasted from November 4, 1979 until January 20, 1981 constituted another turning point in the relations between the United States and Iran. The militants attacked the American Embassy in Tehran and captured sixty six Americans and kept them hostage for four hundred and forty four days. The incident created a shock among the Americans and as Farber so aptly put it, "the nation, itself, was held hostage by the crisis".¹³⁶ On the Iranian side, it became a symbol of independence and of the Iranians' power against the West, i.e. imperialism.

Political Islam in the region was thought to be unknown by the Americans. It was considered that the Carter administration was primarily concerned about the Soviet expansion in the region and the Cold War rivalry going on with the Soviets. However, it is now known that the United States had its politics over the political Islam burgeoning in the region, particularly with the guidance of National Security

¹³⁵ B. Rubin, *Cauldron of Turmoil: America in the Middle East*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), 66.

¹³⁶ D. Farber, *Taken Hostage: The Iran Hostage Crisis and America's First Encounter with Radical Islam*, (New Jersey: The Princeton University Press, 2005), 2.

Council Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski.¹³⁷ The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan made this policy a long-term project that required supporting political Islam in the region. It is known that prioritizing the Cold War dynamics, the United States sold armaments to Islamic fundamentalists aiming to empower them against the Soviets. These militants were fed through Pakistan. Nevertheless, the support caused a blowback against the United States, when the Islamic groups eventually turned against the United States. However, in Iran, anti-Americanism had deep-seated roots. The rapid and rigorous modernization and secularization program of the Shah was immediately objected to by the clergy, especially by that headed by the Ayatollah Khomeini, who was in exile at that time. Along with the other opposing groups, the group that consisted of the students and supporters of Khomeini was in the streets, protesting the Shah and his pro-American and modernizing policies. Although Khomeini was not in Iran, his lectures and the pamphlets that he published called Iranians to struggle against the impious regime of the Shah. The demonstrations caused real bloodshed and casualties and finally the Shah had to leave Iran, still hoping to return as he had done in 1953.

The Shah left the country and flew first to Egypt and then to Morocco, while Khomeini returned to Iran in the meantime. Ayatollah Khomeini found strong support from the Iranians and he was seen as a means to overthrow the Shah by many opposition groups. These opposition groups were created as a result of a long history of experiences. The policies of Reza Shah and his son Mohammad Reza Shah had caused resentment among many groups either due to their economic consequences or their religious or social influences. Moreover, the Anglo-Russian occupation that continued for years, the experience of having been an occupied

¹³⁷ Farber, 4.

country, the direct intervention of the U.S. in the 1953 crisis and also the close relations with the United States despite this sensitivity made the people discontented with the regime. The oppressive policies of the last years were the final straw before the Shah went to the United States. The anti-Americanism and the increasing anti-Shah feelings gathered all the opposition groups together. Thus, when the United States hosted the Shah, it became a reason to trigger the open conflict.

After an initial attack on February 14, the American Embassy in Tehran was taken over by a group of militant fundamentalists as a response to the Shah's reception by the United States and sixty six Americans were captured. The embassy takeover was planned to be a short one and its goal was to prove the capability of the Iranians to stand against the United States and to encourage the Iranian people on the road to the revolution.¹³⁸ Despite the fact that Washington knew that the anti-Americanism in Iran was expanding, hostage-taking was an unexpected incident from the American side. President Carter was at Camp David and he considered the crisis as propaganda to be soon resolved as well. Nevertheless, there was no official authority to negotiate except from a transitional government in Iran, which was in a totally chaotic atmosphere and the usual means of negotiation, persuasion and pressure were not usable under the chaotic conditions. The students who took over the embassy declared that the hostages were not going to be released unless the deposed Shah was returned to Iran.

The American response to the hostage-taking was first an attempt to negotiate with Khomeini, who was the de facto leader of the militants. Khomeini was not officially declared as a leader, however, statements made by Khomeini and his son

¹³⁸ Farber, 139.

made clear that he was not opposing the hostage taking, but endorsing it.¹³⁹ Despite the personal request of President Carter, Khomeini refused to negotiate, which resulted in deportation of the Iranian official representatives in the United States as the Revolutionary Council took up the government in Iran.¹⁴⁰

The role of the media in the crisis had been an issue that attracted attention of many scholars. The principal newspapers and television channels had a crucial role in shaping the Iranian image in the minds of the Americans and in creating heartfelt outrage for the hostage-taking. As Scott argued in her study, the captivity narratives were useful in shaping and defining the relations between the two countries. The myths and symbols utilized by the media tended to represent Iranians as “devilish savages” and these kinds of representations not only justified the U.S. foreign policy but also formed public opinion and provided unity.¹⁴¹ Thus, the criticized president also gained support of the people for the time being until they preferred to change the leadership with the election of Ronald Reagan.

By June 1980, some of the hostages were released but instability in Iran continued for domestic reasons. There were clashes between the leftists and Islamic fundamentalists and on September 22, 1980, the Iran-Iraq War broke out after the invasion of Iran’s Khuzestan province by Iraq. In the meantime, the health of Shah was getting terminal and he had to leave the U.S. and go to Egypt upon the invitation of President Anwar Sadat and he rested there until his death on July 27.

The hostages were freed on January 20, 1981 due to the fact that the Khomeini government decided that they would no longer be of use. The hostage-

¹³⁹ H.H. Saunders, “Diplomacy and Pressure, November 1979-May 1980”, in W. Christopher et al., eds., *American Hostages in Iran: The Conduct of a Crisis*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 73.

¹⁴⁰ Farber, 144.

¹⁴¹ C.V. Scott, “Bound for Glory: The Hostage Crisis as Captivity Narrative in Iran”, *International Studies Quarterly*, 44, (2000), 177-188.

taking reached its goal and humiliated the United States and President Carter, who had supported the Shah. The prestige of the United States was damaged and it was demonstrated to the world that the United States was not able to protect its citizens. Additionally, the U.S. government stated in an agreement that it would not attempt to overthrow the revolutionary Iranian government or intercede in internal affairs of Iran.¹⁴²

As it is stated before, the hostage crisis left its marks on memories of both Iranians and the Americans. For the Iranians, the crisis was obviously not the beginning of the problem. The fact that their prime minister, Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh was overthrown as a result of a coup organized by the intelligence services of Britain and the United States had already humiliated the Iranian people. The opposition gained voice after the intervention and it expanded during the White Revolution that was launched by the Shah and further deteriorated the socio-economic imbalances of the country. The anti-Shah perspectives united all kinds of opposition groups. However, Ayatollah Khomeini, the doyen of the clergy, emerged as the leader of the revolution. Khomeini was seen as the leader that would help Iranian people make the Shah abdicate the throne, but an Islamic Revolution per se was not anticipated by all of these groups. Nevertheless, with the hostage-taking operation of Islamist students, the Islamist group gained more power. The lectures of Khomeini declaring the Shah and the United States “evil” and “satan” called people to revolution. The hostage crisis united both the Iranians and the Americans albeit in opposing camps. Iran “proved” to the world that it was capable of defeating the United States. The American people defined themselves just as opposed to Iran, which was successfully represented as “irresponsible savages” by the media. Thus,

¹⁴² Farber, 182.

the incident was clearly a turning point in the U.S.-Iranian relations due to its effects on their identities and foreign policies, which is discussed in Chapter IV.

In conclusion, aside the outrage that hostage taking created in the United States and elsewhere was a fundamental rule regarding diplomatic immunity. Iran had violated that rule and opened the venue to being labeled a rogue state at the end of the day. No matter how justified Iran's outrage against the regime of its Shah and perceived exploitation, dogmatic religious worldviews took over to the exclusion of the country from the family of nations.

CHAPTER IV

U.S.-IRANIAN RELATIONS ON THE ROAD TO THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

Up until this part, the thesis discussed the foreign policies of the West, particularly of the United States, and the external and internal dynamics of Iran since the First World War. Acceding to the throne in 1921, Reza Shah developed close relations with the West and conducted a stiff modernization program, particularly in the military field. During the Second World War, British and Soviet forces occupied Iran because, first, although Iran declared neutrality during World War II, neither the Soviets nor the British were convinced. Secondly, perhaps more importantly, Iran had a railroad that linked the Caspian to the Persian Gulf. This railroad was used to deliver aid to the Soviets during the war. As a result of the Anglo-Soviet occupation, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, son of Reza Shah, came to the throne and continued his father's modernization program with a more comprehensive scope and in a similar rigorous manner. During the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, the interest of the U.S. in the region and in Iran was at a peak. The U.S. was the primary external actor, particularly during the Cold War, when the Islamic Revolution took place removing Mohammad Reza Shah from throne and settling a new regime.

This part of the thesis will take a look at the relations between the two countries, this time with a more theory-informed approach and it will discuss the threat-identity dynamics in the U.S-Iranian Relations on the road to the Islamic Revolution. It will also examine the constitutive relationship between identity and foreign policy through discourse and threat perceptions and security concerns of Iran and the United States in line with this relation in a deeper way, using a post-structuralist approach. First, a review of the literature on the identity-foreign policy relationship will be provided and then after a summary of the historical background of the U.S.-Iranian relations, the case of U.S.-Iranian relations will be analyzed in light of theory.

4.1. Identity and Foreign Policy: A Constitutive Relationship

Identity came into the IR literature with a deeper research agenda particularly after the Cold War, after which various conflicts that have been regarded as being about identity differences broke out.¹⁴³ One of the approaches that take up the identity factor within a comprehensive framework is post-structuralism, which argues that identities are continuously reproduced through foreign policy discourse and practices. Accordingly, it refuses the existence of pre-given identities that are independent of foreign policies.¹⁴⁴ In this context, Hansen clearly puts forward the main assumption of post-structuralism as “that representations and policy are mutually constitutive and discursively linked”, whereas a causal relationship is the only way of knowledge generation for rationalist approaches. Thus, policy and

¹⁴³ P. Bilgin, “Identity/Security”, in J.P. Burgess, ed, *The Routledge Handbook of New Security Studies*, (London: Routledge, 2010), 82.

¹⁴⁴ L. Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War New International Relations*, (New York: Routledge, 2008) , 26.

identity are inseparable concepts for post-structuralism.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, for Hansen, foreign policies need a story of the issues they address. That is, for instance, in order to have a development policy; a definition of what is developed and underdeveloped must be provided. Nevertheless, quoting Campbell, Hansen also emphasizes that identities are not solely constructed as opposed to a totally different other.¹⁴⁶ On the contrary there can be different degrees of otherness and when it comes to the foreign policy decision makers, according to Hansen, they belong to “a larger political and public sphere” and their representations are shaped by a larger group of representations.¹⁴⁷

Campbell asserts that there are different ways of reading history and that there are alternative choices to be made. He sees foreign policy as a “boundary-producing” practice by which states produce and reproduce themselves and thereby continue to exist.¹⁴⁸ Campbell, in this context, opposes the conventional understanding that interstate conflicts derive from pre-given identities and contends that it is not the “foreignness” that constitutes threats but the dominant subjective interpretations by giving some domestic examples such as feminism and homosexuality which are also seen as threats too.¹⁴⁹ Likewise, he sees describing the Other as the only way to construct a nation’s identity. Thus, the boundaries are not sharply drawn by constant or consistent identities.

Based on the above-mentioned framework, the post-structuralist approach attributes a performative role to language. This role is explained by Hansen as unique played by the construction of meanings and identities. Accordingly, Hansen

¹⁴⁵ Hansen, 28.

¹⁴⁶ Hansen, 6.

¹⁴⁷ Hansen, 7.

¹⁴⁸ D. Campbell, *Writing security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 62.

¹⁴⁹ Campbell, 63.

categorizes the role of language in two dimensions, as social and political. Language is social because it does not belong to an individual but has a collective value. It is also political as it has a role in the production and reproduction of identities and in inclusion of some subjectivity into them and exclusion of some others.¹⁵⁰ For Derrida, language is a system through which meanings come into being not because of the essence of the thing but as a result of juxtapositions.¹⁵¹ In her article, which compares different approaches to identity, Doty highlights “discursive practices approach” among the other approaches as a better way to analyze foreign policy.¹⁵² This approach, according to the argument of the author, emphasizes the “linguistic construction of reality”, that is the productive role of language. According to Doty, discursive practices cannot be “traced” in a constant manner as they continuously change and that is why the notion of intertextuality, meaning texts’ referring to other texts, is important.

Discursive epistemology of the approach uses primarily discourse analysis as its methodology. Doty defines discourse as “a system of statements in which each individual statement makes sense”.¹⁵³ And Hansen, referring to Fairclough, maintains that even though most discourse analysis use written or spoken language, language does not have to be verbal.¹⁵⁴ For individuals, body language is a type of non-verbal language, whereas steps taken by states may also be regarded as non-verbal language use.

¹⁵⁰ Hansen, 19.

¹⁵¹ J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976), as quoted in Hansen, p.19.

¹⁵² R.L.Doty, “Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-positivist Analysis of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No.3 (Sep.1993), pp. 297-320.

¹⁵³ Doty, 302.

¹⁵⁴ Hansen, 23.

In this section, a discourse analyses will be used and some key speeches and declarations of the main actors before the Revolution, during the Revolution and afterwards, to analyze how they saw their “Self” and how they saw each “Other”.

4.2. Historical Background

When the First World War ended, the position of Iran in the region was an unprecedented one, although Iran was not a party to the war. The war brought devastation to the country and Iran declared its neutrality soon after the war began.¹⁵⁵ British forces had occupied most of Iran, to which it attributed great importance for its connection with and dominance in its colonies.¹⁵⁶ Iran was in the heart of the interest of Britain and the other powers as a “battlefield”.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, it was Britain and Russia that particularly wanted to consolidate their respective influence in Iran.

The coup by Reza Khan and Sayyid Zia Tabatabai in 1921 is a turning point in Iranian history. During their reign, Reza Khan continued to consolidate his power putting himself ahead of the Prime Minister Tabatabai with the support of both military and civilian groups. After acceding to the throne, taking the title “Shah”, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi went on conducting strict modernization policies, such as separation of religion from politics, creation of a disciplined army and consolidation of the national economy.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the people of Iran were not fully unified and at peace during this period of transition. According to Zirinsky, instability in the

¹⁵⁵ N.R. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, (New York: Yale University Press, 1981), 79.

¹⁵⁶ G. Lenczowski, *The Middle East in the World Affairs*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1953), 153.

¹⁵⁷ Keddie, 79.

¹⁵⁸ E. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 121.

country was fueled by the presence of foreign forces.¹⁵⁹ The influence of external forces always existed and became only indirect under the rule of Reza Shah.

When the Second World War broke out, the interest of the United States increased in Iran, particularly after the abdication of Reza Shah and of course the importance of oil in the region was understood. The new shah, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi took up the modernization program of his father, even more rigorously.¹⁶⁰

When the war ended and Britain left its place in the region to the United States and the super power rivalry of the Cold War also influenced Iran. The Shah considered the United States as a close ally and he welcomed American advisors who were sent to help Iran to construct its economy and well-established administration. However, the modernization program and the economic and political aid from the United States created resentment among the Iranian people, like it did after the First World War. Political repression by the Shah's regime, censure, prison and torture did not help either. Ayatollah Khomeini, who was sent to exile by the Shah, was welcomed back with great excitement. The demonstrations against the Shah increased both in number and violence. The followers of Khomeini believed that being in a clear conflict with the United States was more beneficial to Iran than a "friendly and dangerous" relationship.¹⁶¹ The hostage crisis, during which American diplomats were captured in Iran, was a way of triggering an open conflict and it shortly became the symbol of Iranian independence. In the meantime, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi had to leave the throne and his country on February 11, 1978 and

¹⁵⁹ M.P. Zirinsky, "Imperial Power and Dictatorship: Britain and the Rise of Reza Shah, 1921-1926", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.24, No.4 (November 1992), 639-663.

¹⁶⁰ Abrahamian, 18.

¹⁶¹ B. Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 304.

Ayatollah Khomeini, declared to be the Supreme Leader and the Revolutionary Council took over control of the country.

4.3. Case: Iran and the United States

This section will apply the theoretical approach to the case of Iran and the United States and through discourse analysis, it will evaluate the discursive practice through which they constitute Self and Other and it will answer the question how identity production and the threat-identity dynamics affected their relationship on the road to the Islamic Revolution.

As it is explained before, post-structuralist approach attributes a constitutive role to language. It should be noted that actors do not always openly and certainly juxtapose the Self with the Other. Hence, there may not be an obvious articulation.¹⁶² Hansen gives the construction of Saddam Hussein as evil by President George W. Bush as an example. In his speeches, Bush did not explicitly say that he himself was not evil or that American people were free as opposed to the “oppressed” people of Afghanistan. Furthermore, the speeches of President Bush had been almost totally accepted by the international community, which helped the U.S. to gain support for its policies on the issue. So, it can be concluded that apart from articulation of an Other and Self, it is also important for the articulation to be internalized and become a part of a larger picture.

Following Hansen, who holds that it is key moments and change periods that more radical Otherness becomes obvious, this research will take into account official statements made by the main actors during key times in the relations.¹⁶³ Thus, three separate time periods will be provided: The Shah period, the revolutionary period

¹⁶² Hansen, 23.

¹⁶³ Hansen, 44.

and the Khomeini period. And different from most of the discourse analysis studies, it will take a look at both sides of the case, how they separately constructed their identities and foreign policies. To this end, The American Presidency Project is used as a comprehensive source of official speeches, conferences and statements of the U.S. presidents.¹⁶⁴ The database also covers the statements made by Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in response to the ones made by the U.S. presidents during their mutual visits. In addition, some documentary pieces of the interviews made with the Shah are also used.

But first, a brief look at the Western representations of Middle East, of which Iran was an important part, will be provided as it is important in demonstrating the constructedness of the images of the region and its implications for the identity construction of the West.

4.3.1. Representations of the Middle East

As it is stated above, from a post-structuralist perspective, identities and foreign policies mutually constitute each other in a continuous way. The performative role of language is also emphasized by post-structuralist scholars. In a similar way, we can also talk about the representations of a part of the world within this framework. Highlighting the “constructedness” of the Middle East as a regional other, Bilgin discusses the changes in what is understood by “Middle East”.¹⁶⁵ Accordingly, the concept of Middle East, known to be invented by a U.S. officer Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan in 1902, was firstly about being on the road to India. With the end of the Second World War and increasing U.S. interest in the region, the

¹⁶⁴John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project (online). Santa Barbara, CA. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php>. Last access: 28/05/2010.

¹⁶⁵P. Bilgin, *Regional Security in the Middle East*, (London: Routledge, 2005), 68.

concept began to be debated again and oil, instead of trade routes tended to shape the Middle East image. Nevertheless, it was British war time definition that was adopted in the Cold War period.¹⁶⁶ In this context, Bilgin also draw attention to the effects of this ambiguity on policies, that is, it gives a choice to policy makers to change the meaning according to policy purposes.¹⁶⁷ Hence, it should be noted that like all other identities, the name of the region, creating an Other, has also some various implications behind and it is not a pre-given concept and all the attributions to the region are a product of a process.

4.3.2. Representations during the Shah Era

When statements made by the U.S. presidents between the years 1969 and 1979¹⁶⁸ are examined, it is seen that from Richard Nixon to Jimmy Carter (until his last presidency years), the discourse shows a continuity. As far as the relations between the United States and Iran are concerned, they follow a similar pattern of identification of themselves and the other. On the other hand, the discourse of Reza Shah also resembles that of the presidents of the United States. While one of the speeches made by Nixon during a visit of the Shah on October, 21 1969 emphasized the “*pro-American*” character of Iran as opposed to a “*pro-communist*” one, the Shah’s representation of the United States was oriented to the “unselfish and generous attitudes” of the U.S. towards Iran and the discourse put forward the “*problem solving*” role of the U.S.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Bilgin, 75

¹⁶⁷ Bilgin, 69

¹⁶⁸ The reason why the analysis is limited to these ten years is simply practical as there is not any effective change before the year 1969, during the reign of Reza Shah.

¹⁶⁹ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project (online). Santa Barbara, CA. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=2272>. Last access: 28/05/2010.

Likewise, particularly during the presidency of Carter, mutual speeches during visits the United States defined Iran as a “*partner*” and “*friend*” who should be proud of progress it made. On the other hand, the discourse of Reza Shah emphasized the “*same principles and same ideals*” shared with the U.S. and again defined the United States as “*unselfish*”. In another visit, additionally, Iran defined itself as a “*good and trusted friend*” of the United States.¹⁷⁰

On the other hand, during interviews made with him by British and American journalists, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi did not hesitate to say: “We are not the toys of any country including the United States.”¹⁷¹ As part of the same interview, he put forward that Iran wanted to be a “*model state*” and gave more evidence about how Iran saw itself.

Table 1: Representations of Iran and the U.S. during the Shah Era

<i>Representations of</i>	Iran	United States
Other	-problem solving	-pro-American (<i>not pro-communist</i>)
	-unselfish and generous	-partner
	-sharing the same principles and ideals	-friend
	-friend	-should be proud of its history
		-progressive
Self	-independent	
	-a model state	-aiming at peace and stability in the world
	-modern	
	-good and trusted friend of U.S.	

¹⁷⁰ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project (online). Santa Barbara, CA. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=4918>. Last access: 28/05/2010

¹⁷¹ Mike Wallace, *20th Century with Mike Wallace: Crisis in Iran*, (History Channel, 1996)

On this issue, Table 1, show the various identifications made by the United States and Iran about themselves and each other. Likewise, when we take a look at the bilateral relations between the United States and Iran during this period, we see that the discursive practice summarized above is in a mutually constitutive relationship with foreign policy. Recognizing the importance of Iran, the United States defined Iran as a close partner, which was marked by frequent visits of Reza Shah to the United States. Nevertheless, it is a known fact that despite the mutual contentment between the two leaders, the close relationship between the Shah and the United States created resentment among the Iranian people and there was a duality of representations in the domestic realm, with Khomeini who represented the Shah as an enemy of Iran, equally as the U.S. However, when we look at the discursive practices of the main actors, there is not any radical difference between the representations.

4.3.3. Representations during the Revolutionary Era: The Hostage Crisis

The hostage crisis constituted a concrete turning point in the relations of revolutionary Iran and the United States. The crisis, which lasted from November 4, 1979, until January 20, 1981 was triggered by sixty-six Americans' being taken hostage by militant anti-Americans in Iran.¹⁷² During this period, the United States began to refer to its self identity in a different way and it began to draw borders making the difference between Self and Other more obvious.

In this context, Table 2 demonstrates the changing definitions of self-identities and description of the other party both on the Iranian and American side. As of this crisis, the American discourse on Iran also changed. President Carter,

¹⁷² David Farber, *Taken Hostage*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), p.5

calling the Iranians who committed the incident “terrorists”, “militants” and “radicals”, reminded of the American “resolution” and “courage” and presented the crisis as “a test of the strength of American people and their determination.” Carter ended his statement by saying: “We, Americans shall not fail.”¹⁷³ In the following statements, Iranians who held demonstrations in the United States and in Iran were accused of being in a highly “emotional state and “irresponsible”¹⁷⁴, while Carter represented the United States as “controlled” and “firm”. Moreover, Carter explained the situation as being “... [H]eavy burden of world responsibility that our blessings and power had brought.”¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, it should be noted that by the time this crisis took place there was only a transitional government in Iran to be a respondent. However, Khomeini was seen as the responsible party for not attempting to solve the crisis.

Beginning with the crisis, the threat perceptions of the United States and Iran also showed a changing pattern parallel with the discourse. Iran, identifying itself as anti-American and anti-interventionist, ceased to be an ally of the United States against the Soviet threat. On the other hand, the United States defined its self-identity against what it thought Iran to be, i.e. radical, terrorist, irresponsible and emotional and presented itself as opposed to these identities, which it considered to be threat, as the “responsible” one.

¹⁷³ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project (online). Santa Barbara, CA. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=31674>. Last access: 28/05/2010

¹⁷⁴ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project (online). Santa Barbara, CA. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=31697>. Last access: 28/05/2010

¹⁷⁵ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project (online). Santa Barbara, CA. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=31707>. Last access: 28/05/2010

Table 2: Representations of Iran and the U.S. during the Hostage Crisis

<i>Representations of</i>	Iran	United States
Other	-interventionist	-radical
		-terrorist
		-irresponsible
		-emotional
Self	-anti-interventionist	-controlled
		-responsible
		-courageous
		-resolved

4.3.4. Representations of the Khomeini Era

When Khomeini and the Revolutionary Council took over the government in Iran on April 1, 1979, the hostage crisis was not over. Despite the fact that militants accepted to turn over the hostages to the Government of Iran, Khomeini and the Council did not accept to take them.¹⁷⁶ This attitude immediately caused the United States to blame Khomeini of “hiding behind the militants”. In his statement, President Carter announced that all Iranian diplomats were declared persona non grata, and that the United States broke all diplomatic relations with Iran and that economic relations also ceased.

On the other hand, Ayatollah Khomeini, having returned from exile with great popular support, continued his anti-American/anti-West statements as well as anti-Shah ones. Khomeini, calling the Shah the “biggest traitor” accused him of

¹⁷⁶ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project (online). Santa Barbara, CA. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=33233>. Last access: 28/05/2010

cooperating with the West, who was the interventionist and invader in the history of Iran.¹⁷⁷ Often referring to the Qur'an, Khomeini talked about the popular support he received in his speeches and statements. Furthermore, in these declarations, he attacked the United States and the West in general and blamed them of rendering Iran corrupt and dependent.¹⁷⁸ In one of his addresses, on November 12, 1979, Khomeini clearly asked the Iranian people to call Carter to account for the Shah regime and imputed him with committing crimes, pursuing his own personal interests.¹⁷⁹

Table 3 demonstrates the radically opposing representations of Iran and the United States about themselves and each other:

Table 3: Representations of Iran and the U.S. during the Khomeini Era

<i>Representations of</i>	Iran	United States
Other	-interventionist	-radical
	-self-interested	-terrorist
	-criminal	-irresponsible
	- Great Satan	-human rights/law violator
Self	-anti-American	-controlled
	-anti-West	-responsible
	-independent	-courageous
	-Muslim	-resolved

4.4. Evaluation

Both the United States and Iran reproduced their identities through their policy discourses and they constructed radically different Selves after the Islamic

¹⁷⁷ H. Algar, *Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981)

¹⁷⁸ Algar, 276.

¹⁷⁹ Algar, 281.

Revolution of 1979. Beginning with the Hostage Crisis and the transitory period, they alienated each other by attributing threats and differences. During the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, in spite of the fact that Iran still had security concerns as regards its independence, a possible intervention and the Soviet threat, and despite the way Iran saw itself, Reza Shah had very close relations with most of the U.S. presidents at that time as it can be understood from their declarations and statements. Furthermore, the common threat perception of the two countries provided the relationship to be based on the “same ideals and principles”. In this respect, a possible Soviet intervention constituted a common threat for the U.S. and Iran. Talking about the Indian-U.S. relations, Muppidi contends that the United States implicitly made the Soviet Union “the Other” while it talked about “shared principles”.¹⁸⁰ Thus, foreign policy and discursive practice constituted each other and the threat-security dynamics of the two sides, which gained different dimensions after the Islamic Revolution. The United States, whose discourse did not openly emphasize its self-identity, began to draw visible lines between the Other and the Self. While it was accusing the militants of being “irrational”, it was producing its “controlled” and “rational” characteristic. So, it is worth noting that the overlapping threat perception gave place to a different understanding of threat. Revolutionary Iran began to identify its security concerns as opposed to the interventionist West. On the other hand, the U.S. was exposed to a direct threat with its diplomats’ being taken hostage.

In the Khomeini period, when Iran began to identify itself totally against the U.S. and construct an anti-American identity, it also identified its security concerns and threat perception accordingly. Regarding the U.S. as the primary potential threat,

¹⁸⁰ H. Muppidi, “Post-Coloniality and the Production of Insecurity”, in J. Weldes et al., eds., *Cultures of Insecurity*, (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 134.

Iran shaped its identity and its relationship with the U.S. parallel with this identification.

4.5. Conclusion

The post-structuralist approach regards identities and foreign policies as mutually constitutive. Thus, its main assumption is that there are no pre-given and constant identities. While emphasizing the interaction between identity and foreign policy, it attributes language a performative role, through which things gain identity and meaning.

This chapter looked at the identity and foreign policy relation from a post-structuralist perspective. Following a theoretical framework and a brief historical background on Iran, it applied discourse analysis to the U.S.-Iranian case so as to analyze the relations between the two countries before and just after the revolution and it sought to show the identity and foreign policy constructions of the actors and their threat-security concerns on the road to the Islamic Revolution.

As a result, identity, constituted with foreign policy becomes only possible with a description of “foreign” in order to define itself. Both Iran and the United States redefined their identity and foreign policy in line with their threat perceptions and security policies during three key phases in their relationship. The discourses of the U.S. presidents, Shah and Khomeini, clearly demonstrate that although the U.S. and Iran previously had overlapping security interests in identifying the Soviets as a common threat, after the abdication of the Shah, Iran took a radical step beginning with the hostage crisis, and with the loss the common threat perceptions, both sides began to present its own identity in juxtaposition to each other. At last, as their

discourses suggested, both the U.S. and Iran began to construct their self identities and their security concerns radically different during the Khomeini period.

In conclusion, the threat-identity dynamics in the U.S.-Iranian relations might play a role on the road to the Islamic Revolution and this dynamics is constituted by the relationship between foreign policy discourses and declared identities of the two countries.

CHAPTER V

THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION FROM THE SOCIETAL SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

As the previous chapters demonstrated, although Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi had considerably good relations with the United States, the opposition groups in Iran played a core role on the road to the Islamic Revolution. Headed by the Ayatollah Khomeini and his students through anti-American feelings, this perception of threat on the side of the Iranian society united all genres of opposition groups against the regime. Thus, Iran, as a state, was an ally of the United States, whereas Iranian society had a different perception of the United States. This chapter will discuss the developments that led to the Islamic Revolution of 1979 from a societal security perspective, in order to examine the relation between the state security and societal security in Iran before the revolution.

To this end, first, the theoretical framework will be provided on the concept of societal security. Then, the social movements and the perspectives of the social groups in Iran and the Iranian society as a whole will be examined in parallel with the theoretical framework.

5.1. Societal Security

The terms “society” and “social” have been defined many times by sociologists. On the definition of the term “society”, German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies introduced the distinction between society and community, in German terms between “Gemeinschaft” and “Gesellschaft”. According to this distinction, the community is a natural unit that is not consciously articulated, while society is constructed on a “contract-like” base.¹⁸¹ Nevertheless, considering society as a consequence of a rational contract renders individuals as the basic units. Referring to the definitions of Durkheim, Wæver concludes that society is more than the sum of its parts and can not be reduced to individuals. At this point, social identity consists not only of the common characteristics of a group but also of a feeling of being an entity together. Thus, this entity can change in terms of size, intensity of feeling and also a sense of being together, ranging from a small group to a nation.

A second distinction that is made by Wæver is between social groups and society. In a society there can be various social groups that have different identities and security concerns. For instance, farmers in a society constitute a social group and have their own security concerns that do not belong to the whole society. Societies differ from social groups in that they show continuity through generations and have an infrastructure of norms, values and institutions. Security of social groups has importance in that their insecurity can easily grow and expand to the whole society.

A third point that should be noted is the distinction between societal security and state security. In spite of the fact that states are established by societies, the security of a society can not be linked to state security. In fact, Immanuel Wallerstein

¹⁸¹ O. Wæver, “Societal Security: The Concept”, in Ole Wæver et al, eds., *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, (London: Pinter Publishers, 1993), 18.

describes society as “the other” of the state.¹⁸² In this respect, society is not only the final source of legitimacy for the state but also an alternative place.

Buzan, in his book entitled *People, States and Fear*, categorizes the sectors of state security into five as political, economic, environmental, societal and military sectors. Accordingly, the societal sector makes of a part of the state security, rather than presenting an alternative referent for security. Nevertheless, Jones argues that in order to rethink security in the post-Cold War era, a study on security should go beyond the traditional approach that takes state as the center of focus.¹⁸³ Likewise, Bilgin also points out the fact that the concept of security has traditionally been state-centered since the seventeenth century, when the state system began to emerge and argues that this approach began changing particularly after the Cold War and insecurities of non-state actors have taken their places in the studies of various scholars, in which questions of referent, concepts of human and societal security and agents of security are discussed.¹⁸⁴

Accepting that methodological individualism is not an appropriate starting point to study collective identity and security, McSweeney criticizes Buzan and Wæver because of ignoring “individual consciousness” and rejecting subjectivism.¹⁸⁵ According to McSweeney, collectivism does not exist independently from the individuals who comprise it. Thus, he emphasizes the need for deconstructing collective concepts and argues that exposing human units does not prevent collectivities from being taken as actors. In their response to the criticism of McSweeney, Buzan and Wæver assert that the security of societies could be seen as

¹⁸² Wæver, 19.

¹⁸³ R. W. Jones, “Travel Without Maps: Thinking about Security after the Cold War”, in M.J. Davis, ed., *Security Issues in the Post-Cold War World*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1996), 197.

¹⁸⁴ P. Bilgin, “Individual and Societal dimensions of Security”, *International Studies Review*, 5:2, (2003), 203-222.

¹⁸⁵ B. McSweeney, “Durkheim and the Copenhagen School: A Response to Buzan and Wæver”, *Review of International Studies*, 24, (1998), 137-140.

the referent object and that there are existential threats both for state and society. For states, sovereignty defines the existential threat, whereas for society the loss of identity is the existential threat. If a state loses its sovereignty, it is no longer a state, and in a society identity is the core of existential threats because it defines whether “we” are still us.¹⁸⁶

Buzan, discussing the threats to societal security, emphasizes that societal identities are not static and not all kinds of changes are seen as threats. Moreover, in line with their identities, societies may decide what is a threat inside themselves, and they each show different characteristics of openness to change. Some societies are more conservative in terms of accepting change, whereas some of them are more liberal.¹⁸⁷ According to Buzan, a societal identity may be threatened in various ways. Forbidding the use of language, names and dress, closure of places of education or worship may pose threats to societal identity. Furthermore, it should be noted that a threat may not always damage identities; sometimes it strengthens them through reinforcement. For example, Palestinian and Jewish identities were intensified in line with the threats they encounter.¹⁸⁸

In addition to the changes in identity, another source of threat to societal identities is competitive identities. In this respect, identities may be mutually exclusive, e.g. Muslim and Christian, or may have a hierarchical relationship, e.g. Canadian and Quebecois. Likewise, in other levels of intensity, the interaction of ideas can produce politically significant societal and cultural threats.¹⁸⁹ For instance, Islamic fundamentalists are sensitive to the expansion of Western ideas and

¹⁸⁶ B. Buzan, Ole Wæver, “Slippery? Contradictory? Sociologically Untenable? The Copenhagen Scholl Replies”, *Review of International Studies*, 23, (1997), 241-250.

¹⁸⁷ B. Buzan, “State Security and Internationalization”, Ole Wæver et al, eds., *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, (London: Pinter Publishers, 1993), 42.

¹⁸⁸ Buzan, 43.

¹⁸⁹ Buzan, 44.

practices, whereas Europeans are generally sensitive about Muslim migrants. In this context, economic and technological developments may also be seen as threats as they can undermine one identity and enforce a competing one, one example of which is Third World's complaints about Westernization.¹⁹⁰

Hence, it may also be possible that state security and societal security clash because governments are not always representative of societies and they may even threaten societies. In a sense, it is possible that state security may dominate societal security and find its security in the insecurity of the other.

5.2. Iran and Societal Security

In this section, two aspects of the societal security during the pre-revolution era in Iran will be discussed. First, the relations between the United States and Iran will be examined from the perspective of Iranian society. Second, the repressive rule of the Shah, beginning from the first years of his rule and reaching its peak with the White Revolution will be addressed. It will be argued that the two dimensions of Iranian politics may have caused a societal insecurity perceived by the Iranian society at that time, which eventually led to the social unrests paving the path to the Islamic Revolution.

The reasons of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 have been explained by scholars in various ways. Some emphasized the disequilibrium between the political developments and the socio-economic situation, while some others gave more importance to the ideological and cultural dimension of the unrest.¹⁹¹ For the purposes of this section, both approaches will be discussed to explain the societal insecurity of the Iranians.

¹⁹⁰ Buzan 45.

¹⁹¹ M. Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution*, (London: Rutgers University Press), 8.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran doubtlessly had its roots back in the history beginning from the First World War, during and after which Iran became the focus of interest of foreign powers, particularly Britain and Russia. The Anglo-Russian invasion during the Second World War constituted a trauma in Iran, both politically and socially. Its oil resources were managed by the AIOC, which served the British; and its domestic politics and foreign relations were shaped by the fact of invasion. As Cottam so aptly put it, Iran was not independent due to its inhabitants; it was its geography where British and Russian interests met.¹⁹²

Before World War I, the West had recognized the importance of the raw materials coming from the Middle East. Thus, the Middle Eastern countries, including Iran, became exporter of various materials, and they were also influenced in political and economical terms through interaction with the West. In the domestic realm, Iran had a weak government and dynasty. The Qajar dynasty was not able to impose power on tribes effectively. Corruption in the bureaucracy was high. The army was considerably disorganized, except for the Cossack Brigade, the duty of which was to protect the shah and his court.¹⁹³ Under these conditions, the *ulama* were an effective group and they were extracting religious taxes and duties. Schools, hospitals and law courts were the responsibility of the *ulama*.

Another factor that influenced the fragile atmosphere was the external forces. Since the Napoleonic Wars, Britain and Russia had strong political and economic interests in Iran. Britain was concerned to maintain control of the Persian Gulf, whereas Russia wanted to make north of Iran an area of influence, which caused a rivalry between Russia and Britain as neither of them wanted to allow the other to

¹⁹² R. W. Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press), 158.

¹⁹³ N.R. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, (Binghamton: Yale University Press), 30.

consolidate its power.¹⁹⁴ In 1909, after oil was found in Iran, the Anglo-Persian Company (later named Anglo-Iranian Company) took control of the Iranian oil reserves and it was fully at the hands of the British. The AIOC was managed by the British officials and it paid little tax to the Iranian state. In the face of such a concession given to Britain, Russia also demanded concessions to be equal with the British and it obtained some economic privileges as well. Hence, Iran under the Qajar dynasty had limited independence.

The heavy influence exerted by the Russians and the British brought economic and political dislocations. As a result of the unrest due to the concessions given to foreign countries, a revolutionary movement was on the rise. In 1905, the constitutional revolution succeeded and in 1906 the first *majlis* was opened and it was subdued by bombing in 1908 by the Cossack Brigade.¹⁹⁵ At the roots of the constitutional revolution was also the popular discontent derived from excessive foreign intervention, which continued to exist after the revolution until a total breakdown of the relations with the West in 1979.

As it was stated in the previous chapters, the First World War aggravated the situation in Iran. External intervention continued to augment. Britain and Russia divided Iran into spheres of influence and Iranian people were not content with the governments that allowed external powers to increase their influence in Iran. In 1921, the dissatisfaction of some civilians and some soldiers turned into a coup. Reza Khan and Sayyed Zia took control of the country as a result of a coup in 1921 and formed a new government that tried to preserve Iranian independence. Nevertheless, foreign intervention continued to exist, in other forms. In the interwar period, Iran began receiving aid from the United States in terms of advisors who assisted Tehran

¹⁹⁴ Keddie, 37.

¹⁹⁵ Keddie, 73.

to establish its infrastructure. Secondly, during the Second World War, Iran was occupied once again by the Anglo-Russian forces in 1941, which ended with the intervention of a third external power: the United States. Furthermore, the invasion had changed the Shah, acceding Mohammad Reza Shah to the throne.

The new Shah had close relations with the United States, making it a counterbalance against Britain and Russia and under his rule, Iran became one of the largest aid-receiving countries in the Middle East. Thus, the Shah was highly criticized of being pro-American and being a client of the United States. Particularly after the coup against Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh organized by the CIA and the MI6, reactions to the regime and the Shah became more obvious. With the coup, the nationalization of Iranian oil reserves, which was considerably supported by the Iranian people, was interrupted. As the most direct foreign intervention, the coup attracted reactions from the Iranian society, which demonstrated the resentment felt by the people.

The fact that the Shah was supported by the United States was the primary focus of critics coming from the Khomeini's opposition. Khomeini believed that the Shah remained in power due to the American support and aid.¹⁹⁶ Various opposition groups united around this idea under the leadership Khomeini, although they did not all want an Islamic regime.

When the domestic situation in Iran and its foreign relations are examined, it is worth noting that external intervention was perceived as a threat to the Iranian identity within the Iranian society. Despite the fact that the foreign policy of the Shah was shaped to protect the interests and security of the Iranian state, the insecurities of the Iranian people were somehow different from what the Shah perceived.

¹⁹⁶ B. Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 111.

Counterbalancing policy was not seen to be different from Anglo-Russian invasion and close relations with the United States created resentment among the people against the Shah, who had come to the throne as a result of a coup during this invasion. From this perspective, the Western, first Anglo-Russian and then American influence was not only a direct threat to the independence of Iran and its people but also had a negative impact on the Iranian culture and identity.

The second aspect of the societal insecurity of the Iranian people derived from the domestic policies of Mohammad Reza Shah, again in relation to foreign relations at that time. In effect the socio-economic and political imbalances in Iran were not new to the Shah's era. Since the Qajar dynasty, inequalities among the classes and social groups had disturbed the disadvantaged people. The weak, inefficient and corrupt Qajar dynasty granted concessions, monopolies to foreign powers, it failed in the military field and also it failed to preserve commerce and industry.¹⁹⁷

After Reza Shah started the Pahlavi dynasty, Iran managed to launch a rapid capital accumulation and industrialization. A national bank was established and foundations of an infrastructure that Iran lacked were laid. Nevertheless, it benefitted only the upper class of the society and the working class paid heavy costs. The capital of the national bank came from the taxes of the poor and the system served large landowners and the rich. Smaller bazaaris, artisans and working-class were not able to benefit from reasonable credit rates. In addition, peasants were generally ignored in these steps.¹⁹⁸ The economic policies were in favor of industrial owners, bureaucratic bourgeoisie and big merchants and the gap between the groups were deepening.

¹⁹⁷ Parsa, 32.

¹⁹⁸ Parsa, 34.

Furthermore, the policies of Reza Shah also reduced the political power of the clergy, which caused disturbance and led to opposition. The fact that women were given more rights particularly created complaint among the clergy and they always made use of their opposition to the rights given to women while propagating against the Shah and his son.

Taking up the throne, Mohammad Reza Shah assumed his father's policies, even more rigorously. The Second World War had affected Iranian economy negatively and American advisors sent to Iran had to resign due to the opposition. Military expenditures were growing larger and scarcity was beginning to appear.¹⁹⁹ As it was the case during the reign of Reza Shah, it was the urban middle-class people who gained from the policies of the Shah. Peasants were highly affected by scarcity and famine; tribes were also on the side of those who suffered from the economic inequalities. Despite the fact that these economic disruptions paved the way to the politicization of social groups, peasants and tribes were the last two that asked for their rights. Among the urban groups, people began to develop awareness.

The White Revolution of 1963 that was initiated by the Shah so as to gather power in his hands after the overthrow of Mossadegh deepened the socio-economic problems from which some groups in the Iranian society suffered, despite the improvements in some sectors such as health, education and agriculture. Using the increasing oil revenues, education rates were improved tenfold, considerable growth in industrialization was achieved, the number of hospitals augmented. Moreover, the Revolution brought radical land reforms in the rural areas. Although some achievements were obtained, the Revolution failed to gain popular support. Abrahamian puts the reasons for this failure as the overthrow of Mossadegh whom

¹⁹⁹ Keddie, 116.

the middle class had particularly supported and policies being more beneficial to the upper class, but not to the middle and lower classes.²⁰⁰ The middle class was important in that its members were bazaaris who controlled the trade, besides artisans and intelligentsia who wanted more political rights. Especially after the establishment of SAVAK, people were politically repressed and opposition was not tolerated. The attempt to control the bazaar failed. Considering that the bazaaris had family relations with the clergy through inter-marriage, they formed a formidable block of opposition. The intended changes highly damaged the interests of bazaaris. Bazaaris were among the principal actors of the constitutional movement of 1905 and they played an important role during the nationalization of oil in the 1950s. From 1977 to 1979, they were at the core of the opposition movements against the Shah.²⁰¹ Thus, this group had a great capability of mobilization and collective action.

Similarly, the interests of the clergy were also disrupted through the land reforms and political changes. Many religious institutions had enjoyed relative prosperity until the White Revolution.²⁰² In some areas, the clergy were large landholders and land reforms prevented them to benefit from the taxes they collected. Furthermore, one of the Shah's decisions especially disturbed the clergy. This decision was to give voting rights to women. Although most of the clerical groups were not active in opposition, some groups took the opposite position against the Shah. Accordingly, Ayatollah Khomeini and his students protested the Shah's policies and denounced them as contrary to the interests of the Iranian nation.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ E. Abrahamian, "Structural Causes of the Iranian Revolution", *MERIP Reports*, No. 87, Iran's Revolution: The Rural Dimension (May, 1980), 21-26.

²⁰¹ Parsa, 92.

²⁰² S.C. Poulson, *Social Movements in Twentieth Century Iran: Culture, Ideology and Mobilizing Frameworks*, (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2005), 186.

²⁰³ Parsa, 199.

Hence, the policies of the Shah that required rigorous reforms in the areas of economics, agriculture and politics created disturbance among some groups of the Iranian society as well as among the whole society. The middle and lower classes were discontented about the economic reforms as it was only the upper class that benefitted from the financial renovations. As an effective group, bazaaris were forced to support the regime and some parts of their businesses were damaged through new regulations. The changes were seen as threats to their way of life by bazaaris. Furthermore, the repressive political life prevented the middle class to participate in politics, which also caused insecurity concerns within this group.

The clergy had been in an oppositional position since the first interaction with the West. As it is stated before, trade between the West and Iran brought changes to the way of life in Iran. The products of the industrialized West were not welcomed by the Islamists because they perceived these changes as threats to the Iranian identity and to their religion as well. Thus, the modernization program of Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah made them frustrated with the regime. The regulations conducted in the field of religion, e.g. the fact that women were prohibited to cover their heads, closure of some mosques, were direct threats to the clergy. The White Revolution, which brought more fundamental changes in Iranian political, economic and social life constituted the final straw.

In conclusion, if the society is defined as “the other” of the state, their perceptions of threat and insecurity may sometimes clash and they may even threaten each other’s security. One of the duties of the state is to protect the society. However, in doing so, the state may limit the security of the society as well. At such times, the level of societal insecurity increases and it may lead to open conflict between society and state, as it is the case for some revolutions. This part of the thesis linked the

social movements and oppositions leading to the Islamic Revolution to the theories of societal security and it took a look at the societal insecurities of the Iranian people as opposed to state policies.

The societal insecurities of Iran took their roots from past experiences. The weakness of the Qajar dynasty and the devastation brought by the First World War had already created inequalities among the social groups. The Anglo-Russian occupation of the country under the Pahlavi dynasty caused the reactions and disturbances to augment. The direct intervention of these foreign powers created resentment among the people and it induced the feeling that the state was not capable of protecting the society. This view was consolidated when the intelligence services of two Western powers, the CIA and the MI6 organized a coup to overthrow Prime Minister Mossadegh in cooperation with the Shah. In addition, the social, economic and political changes due to the reform programs did not satisfy all social groups. The middle and lower classes of the society were not secure as their interests were not taken into consideration by the state and furthermore they were suffering from the consequences of the reform policies let alone benefitting from them.

Thus, Ayatollah Khomeini, who headed the Islamic Revolution, managed to gather people together around these insecurities. Among the groups that supported Khomeini were the leftists, nationalists, the intelligentsia, women, working class and lastly peasants. In spite of the fact that they were not aiming at an Islamic Revolution, they were united, though some of them joined in the later phases of the revolution, as opposed to the regime and under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, who promised to provide security for the Iranian society.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This thesis pointed out the interaction between foreign policies of Iran and the United States and the internal dynamics of Iran on the path leading to the Islamic Revolution of 1979. First, the Cold War dynamics was explained so as to form the basis for creating an understanding about the foreign policy of the United States and the particular position in which Iran found itself after the First World War. Then, in this context, the evolution of the U.S.-Iranian relations was discussed from World War I to the Cold War period. Besides, identity-security dynamics in this relation, the constitutive relationship between identity construction of the two countries and the implications of these dynamics on Iran's and the U.S. foreign policy was examined. Lastly, the pre-revolution period in Iran was narrated from the perspective of societal security approach. In this framework, it was argued that the resentments of the Iranian society caused an imbalance between state's perceptions and those of the society.

Iran had been the focus of great power interests since the beginning of the 20th century. Britain was willing to control Iran because it did not want any other power to interrupt its contact with the Eastern Mediterranean. On the other hand, Iran

was important for Russia as it was situated on a strategic position for its great power policies and its plan to access the Persian Gulf. After 1909, the oil reserves in Iran added another dimension to the great power rivalry. The first concessions given to a British company and establishment of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company aggravated the Russian demands as well.

The First World War made Iran actively get involved in the competition between the external powers. Qajar dynasty, which was too weak to control the country, was ended by a coup made by Reza Khan and Sayyed Zia Tabatabai in 1921. In 1926, having consolidated power, Reza Khan became the new shah of Iran and appointed Tabatabai as prime minister. The domestic and foreign policies of the Shah achieved many developments in the economic and social situation of the country. Nevertheless, the rigorous development policies, particularly attempts at secularization created opposition as well. Moreover, willing to counterbalance Anglo-Russian influence, the Shah preferred to get close with Germany in the interwar period, which was not appreciated by the Allies. After invasion of the country by Britain and the Soviet Union, Reza Shah was overthrown by a coup.

Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi followed in his father's footsteps and continued his father's balancing foreign policy. Yet, he chose a rapprochement with the United States and he encouraged the United States to get involved more in Iranian affairs. The advisory missions were sent from the U.S., military and economic aid was granted to Iran during that period and the United States decided that oil reserves of Iran were too important to be left to the other powers. Furthermore, Iran was on the Soviet border and it was important for Washington to keep Iran on its side against Soviet expansionism. During this period, the Shah and presidents of the United States, from Eisenhower to Carter always emphasized the

common and shared principals of the two countries. In this respect, both the U.S. and Iran defined their identities similarly and together, but not against each other.

In 1953, the coup overthrowing Prime Minister Mossadegh, who nationalized the oil reserves of Iran, attracted great reaction from the Iranians, most of whom supported the Prime Minister. The coup, organized by the CIA and the MI6, constituted a turning point both in U.S.-Iranian relations and in the domestic dynamics of Iran. First, the Shah launched his “White Revolution” reforms so as to improve the social, political and economic conditions of his country and increase its independence. Nonetheless, the revolution was set up through the help of the United States and with the Eisenhower and Nixon Doctrines; Iran was still an important receiver of the U.S. military and economic aid.

All these turning points where the external forces intervened in Iran, i.e. British control over the oil fields, Anglo-Russian invasion, overthrow of Reza Shah and Dr. Mossadegh, the excessive aid coming from the United States, the authorities given to the American advisory missions, created resentment among the Iranians. Furthermore, within the White Revolution radical economic and social reforms were conducted by the Shah and these reforms challenged the interests of some social groups, i.e. clergy and landowners. But they were not beneficial to the middle and lower classes. The strikes, demonstrations and riots were suppressed violently by SAVAK, which only caused dissatisfaction with the regime to grow. The various opposition groups, i.e. leftists, national front, and the clergy, supported Ayatollah Khomeini to overthrow the Shah. Khomeini demanded an Islamic revolution, yet the supporting groups just wanted the Shah to go and they believed that they could outmaneuver the ayatollah. However, when the opposition grew and the Shah had to

leave Iran, Khomeini returned to Tehran, his students had already taken control of the country.

The discourses that defined the identities of Iran and the United States changed particularly after the hostage crisis. When sixty six American diplomats were taken hostage, the U.S. accused the Iranians of being “irresponsible” and Khomeini and his students represented Washington as “evil” and “interventionist”. After the revolution, the representations of the Self and the Other of the two countries became even more radically different.

In conclusion, when the changes in discourses of Iran and the United States and the flow of the relations between them is examined, one can make an implication that there was a discrepancy between the Shah’s construction of the identity of Iranian state and the identity construction of the state. In this context, it can be argued that the threat perceptions of the Iranian state and society did not overlap, which led to strong opposition of the regime.

The construction of “Self” and “Other” in the Iranian identity and foreign policy constituted a key role in the historical course of U.S.-Iranian relations and in domestic dynamics of Iran as well. Beginning from the hostage crisis, which created a trauma in the U.S.-Iranian relations, Iran started to define itself radically different from the U.S. On the side of the United States, self-identity construction was equally important within the conditions of the Cold War in terms of shaping its foreign policy in the region and also in the whole world. A possible future research agenda may touch upon the importance of the construction of “Self” and “Other” for the United States and also upon the duality of representations inside Iran during the Shah era, when Khomeini represented the Shah as opposed to Iranian identity.

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