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UNDERSTANDING IRAN

Ercan ÇITLIOĞLU

BAŞKENT UNIVERSITY

**UNDERSTANDING
IRAN**

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PRESENTATION

In order to analyze a country's national interests, policy and goals, one must first decipher the parameters defining its codes of conduct. This is because there are certain basic factors that determine the behavioral patterns of countries on both the state and national platform, how they react, or fail to react, to what kind of benefit, and their intrinsic and extrinsic dynamics. When these basic factors are analyzed according to the socio-political and the psycho-political dynamics of the countries within the historical process (process analysis), their strengths/weaknesses, quantitative and qualitative features of their threat perceptions, reflexes and reactions, prejudices and stereotypes, fears, goals, methods chosen to achieve these goals can be readily perceived and interpreted and built upon rational ground.

These factors, which may be defined as elements of national power, manifest themselves as a database that must be taken into account and regarded while analyzing a country in the context of variable and invariable elements, making a diagnosis and its adaptation to the future.

It isn't possible to understand a country at a particular point in time and make future projections by ignoring its history

and historical past that were experienced, therefore cannot be undone and that determine perceptions, reactions, prejudices and behaviors of individuals, societies and nations by feeding them with "select victories and traumas".

For, socio-psychological facts suggest that each reactive behavior and intended goals have an definite origin and that behavioral patterns can only be correctly understood and interpreted by analyzing the roots of this.

Countries' history and geography includes their natural resources, and its inevitable effects on nations, constitutes another principal factor in creating national interests, goals, national and overall strategies that allow them to achieve these goals.

Demographic structure and characteristics (population and population subgroups, level of education, intrinsic/extrinsic, involuntary/voluntary migration movements, fertility, religion, denominations, ethnicity, heterogeneous or homogeneous structure, etc.) are certainly other important factors in determining these countries' strengths/weaknesses, goals and capability of attaining these goals.

It is possible to analyze whether or not a national strategy created by a country and goals underlying this strategy are realistic in terms of attainability and identify the origin of its behavioral patterns by enriching these basic factors with other factors comprising the national power, such as "technology, military power, economic, moral and psychological factors, governance structure and system". It must be noted that a separate set of rules must be had in such studies that will allow a deterministic approach by being detached from dogmas and emotions to achieve objectivity.

These rules, briefly, are objectivity, versatility, taking care to avoid the misleading impact of retrospective perspectives and ideological blindness, getting to the root of the issue and seeking rationality, discerning between short-termed deceptive interests and long-termed real interests, analyzing the events based on their sub-structure instead of their superstructure, noting the internal-external dynamics and domestic-foreign policy affairs and cause/effect components, correctly understanding cause/effect relationships and paying attention to the presence of multiple causes at every event.

Developing an unbiased understanding of Iran, that has one of the most ancient people of its region along with a long established history and empire (state) tradition, is believed to be of crucial importance for the sake of regional balances of power, regional stability and sustainable regional and global peace.

Geographically Iran, which is twice the size of Turkey with a surface area of 1,648,000 square meters, has a border length of 936 km with Afghanistan, 25 km with Armenia, 432 km with Azerbaijan, 179 km with Nakhcivan, 1,458 km with Iraq, 909 km with Pakistan, 992 km with Turkmenistan and 499 km with Turkey. With a 740 km-long Caspian Sea shoreline, Iran, in terms of its geographical location, is geo-strategically the second most important country after Turkey, and even, according to some strategists, has similar or primary geo-strategic importance depending on conjunctural developments. Although Turkey is a pass-through thanks to its horizontal geographical location bridging the West and East, the horizontal and vertical location (pass-through and centrality) offered by its geography concurrently with Iran also adds value to the said country's geopolitics in terms of geo-strategy.

Adding Iran's central location in the middle of a region owning energy resources and transmission lines extending from the South Caucasia to the Middle East and Central Asia to its oil and natural gas resources² and considering its access to the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz, its impressive strategic and geo-political importance becomes much clearer.

Its individual ethnicity (Persian) versus the dominant Arab identity in its regional geography and, despite being a Muslim country, its Shi'a-intensive population (90%) differing from the dominant Sunni Islam in the same region are among the most important factors that determine Iran's socio-political and particularly psycho-political structuring.

Ethnic and denominational differences have made survival, safety concerns and reflexes dominant in Iran just as in Israel (Jewish and Hebrew) and approaches based on doubt and distrust prevail in international relations. When the said factors underlying the origin of threat perceptions are

² Iran owns 9.4 % of the world reserves with its 157 million barrels of oil reserves (second largest share in the world) and 18% of the world reserves with its 33.6 trillion m3 natural gas reserves (the largest share in the world)

considered together with the presence of “foreign opponents and enemies” required to consolidate and maintain the regime, it may be argued that Iran’s aggressive policies, defined as “hostile” by some actors, are actually a result of its need to be strong to survive.

However, although it purely results from maintaining security and surviving, desire to be powerful can transform in proportion to the power and be accompanied by the use of this power in different areas and for different purposes.

Having been observed many times in history, this paradox, in the name of rationality, is hopefully understood sufficiently by Iran that has a strong diplomatic background and experience in view of the lessons learned from its ancient history.

I would like to extend my thanks to Dr. Can Kasapođlu, and the doctoral students Efe Tokdemir (Binghamton University), Zekiye Nazlı Kansu (Marmara University) and my assistant Ayşe Okşan Okur.

Ercan Çitliođlu

PREAMBLE

Having one of the world's most established historical backgrounds and being actively located in very diverse horizontal and vertical axes, Iran must be examined in depth on regional and global platforms. The concept often called "historical process" in such studies, is believed to have a much broader meaning than many other study fields in international relations when Iran is concerned. Therefore, the point into which the said country and its people may evolve in the future shall be evaluated taking the special condition provided in the context of its interaction with the regional and global systems into account.

Understanding the dynamics forming Iran requires due attention to the historical process of this country, one of the world's oldest settlements, and especially the Shia Islam, the dominant faith in the country. For, although the Islamic Revolution is a movement that changed the monarchical regime, Iran is one of the political structures with a long historical continuity and deep roots. Therefore, although the regime changed with the 1979 Islamic Revolution, an established and radical change should not be expected in the socio-political dynamics because the lasting and established

remnants of the past are undeniably a powerful determinant over the Iranian people in terms of cultural anthropology and sociology.

The Shi'a faith is probably the most dominant of Iran's historical and active dynamics in respect of its influence and impositions on social life and governmental structure. For, socio-political and socio-economic relations of today's Iran and the new regime created by the Islamic Revolution are of crucial importance in the context that they possess the general characteristics of Shi'ism.

In the said framework, the present study aimed to "understand and describe Iran" will have a holistic point of view on the topic focusing on "everything" about Iran as much as is realistically possible. The last chapter will address future projections in the context of the deal reached between the P5+1 countries and Iran regarding nuclear studies, particularly including any possible change and breakdown that it may cause to Turkey's geopolitical and geo-strategic position.

Although the deal reached on the nuclear endeavors that will enter into force in stages will not help Iran's integration with the Western world in the near future, it will pave the way for its inclusion in the international system as an active actor, and such radical change in the existing paradigms will naturally accompany many concurrent favorable and unfavorable developments and lead to rivalry and interest-driven approaches and separations.

Such possible developments, with precursor signs and reflections have already been witnessed for some time, shall be reviewed separately in the final chapter.

CHAPTER –1–

MAJOR DYNAMICS SHAPING IRAN

SHI'A AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

SHI'ISM

Shi'ism (Shi'a Islam) is one of the largest denominations of Islam. Having principles of faith and worship rituals majorly differing from Sunnism, Islam's most widely recognized denomination; Shi'ism was not only adopted by significantly large masses in a pure demographic sense, but also widely spread over the Islamic geography.

While Iran recognizes Shi'ism as the official denomination (Iran's Constitution, article 21), the Shi'a are the demographic majority in Iraq, and there is also a significant Shi'a population in other countries, such as, Syria, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, and Azerbaijan (Congressional Research Report, 2006). Due to its primary significance in understanding Iran, Shi'ism shall be studied under three main headings.

- Historical process of the Shi'a denomination
- Principles of faith
- Political reflections

HISTORICAL PROCESS OF THE SHI'A DENOMINATION

First, it will be helpful to describe the etymological meaning of the term "Shi'a" to correct some wide-spread wrong perceptions and considerations. Used as "advocacy of Ali" in everyday language, Shi'ism is derived from the term Shi'atu. The term Shi'a means 'followers', 'adherents'² and those who believed that the caliph succeeding the Prophet Mohammad after his death was rightfully Ali were known as 'Shi'atu Ali' (Adherents of Ali), which was abbreviated and used as Shi'a over time. Today, the term Shi'a, in pure sense' is used in the meaning of 'of Shi'a', 'member of the Shi'a Denomination' and 'followers of Ali'³.

In this context, "Ahl Al Bayt", used frequently herein, means 'People of the House' and refers to the 'Family of Hz. Mohammad.' It is helpful to know in

2 www.osmanlicaturkce.com 'şia'

3 www.tdk.org.tr 'şii'

terms of its key and major role in the disagreement between Shi'ism and Sunnism that according to the Shi'a, the people of the house is comprised of Hz. Mohammad, Hz. Ali, Hz. Mohammad's daughter and Ali's wife Fati-mah and their sons Hasan and Husain.

Shi'ism, in terms of its origin, began to emerge with the dispute over who would be the Caliph after Hz. Mohammad's death. Those who believed that Ali should be the Caliph based on the hadith cited in Ibn Majah's Muqad-dimah 'Of whomsoever I had been master, Ali here is to be his Master' and based on the grounds that the caliph should be from the 'Ahl Al Bayt' first opposed Abu Bakr's becoming caliph and also continued their opposition later in the selection of Hz. Omar and Hz. Uthman as Caliph. According to some sources, in addition to the differences of faith related to the caliph authority, issues that arose in the division of the inheritance upon Hz. Mohammad's death in Abu Bakr's time, as mentioned by Buhari, played a major trigger role in the dissidence within Islam.

Hz. Ali's selection as caliph in the year 656 following the murder of Hz. Uthman⁴ led to a civil war among Muslims. Muawiyah, who blamed Hz. Ali for the murder of the caliph Hz. Uthman who was from the Umayyad clan and also his relative did not partake in the Battle of Camel between the follow-ers of Ali and Aisha, but continued his fight against Hz. Ali (Sarıçam,1997). In the Battle of Siffin between Ali and Muawiyah mentioned in the work of Ibn al-Athir⁵, Muawiyah proposed to refer to an arbitrator, and the process following Hz. Ali's approval ended with Hz. Ali's removal from caliphate and the proclamation of Muawiyah as caliph.

Externalists who had supported Hz. Ali since the early days of the dispute and difference, upon such decision, claimed that Hz. Ali blasphemed, and the events cumulating ended in Ali's murder. This incident led to the emer-gence of three groups in Islam; Muawiyah supporters, Externalists and the Shi'a. However, the murder of Hz. Ali's son Hz. Hussein, who was also Hz. Mohammad's grandson, and his family in Karbala in the year 680 further deepened the separation to create a strong group identity based on the unjust treatment that has continued to exist to this day.

4 The third of the fourth caliphs and Hz. Mohammad's Son in law and companion Hz. Uthman was murdered by Saba's followers in his house in June 17, 656. (tr.wikipedia.org accessed on June 30, 2015)

5 Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh

PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

In principle, the Shi'a has held that, according to the Quran⁶, the caliph should be elected from the Ahl Al Bayt starting from Hz. Ali and even received support also from some Sunni Ulama ,such as, Ibn Hajar. Contrary to the popular belief, Shi'ism does not define Ali as the one and only leader/prophet and holds that Hz. Mohammad was the messenger and prophet of Allah as the Sunni denomination does; however recognizes that Hz. Ali was the first caliph⁷. In this context, the Shi'a denomination, differently from Sunnism, is suggested to have a love for Ahl al Bayt focused on Hz. Ali. The fundamental views and beliefs of the Shi'a denomination are as follows; Hz. Ali is the most virtuous of all after Hz. Mohammad. The Caliphate is not a public duty, but a religious duty. Hz. Mohammad nominated Hz. Ali to be his successor. The caliphate should pass down to Hz. Ali's sons and grandchildren after Hz. Ali. The elected Imams (caliphs) are protected and free from all sins. All caliphs, except Hz. Ali and the imams descending from him inflicted persecution and injustice on Hz. Ali's followers.

The most significant differences between the Shi'a and Sunni in respect of worship rituals and principles of faith are about namaz. While the Shi'a combine namaz times and pray three times a day, Sunnis perform namaz five times a day. Other formal practices separating the Shi'ism and Sunnism are the hours of Friday prayer and inclusion of additional words in the call to prayer. Although there are some other variance and differences between Shi'ism and Sunnism in holy places (Najaf-Karbala), mourning fasting, religion and state relations and so on, the present study will content itself with the summary provided above.

Shi'ism contains the imams (the Imamah). A person must descend from Hz. Ali and his wife Fatimah (Ahl Al Bayt) to be considered and recognized as a true Imam (Lewis, 2007:106). Although there exists a separation based on different beliefs in Shi'ism, there is a consensus in the existence of Twelve Imams.

They are, respectively,

1- Ali Ibn Abu Talib

6 The Quran 42:23

7 Ayatollah Mar'iy Mutaharri Murtada, Islam and Iran: A Historical Study of Mutual Services, Al- Tawhid

- 2- Hasan ibn Ali
- 3- Husain ibn Ali
- 4- Ali Ibn Al-Husain
- 5- Muhammad al-Baqir Ali Ibn Husain Zayn Al-Abidin
- 6- Ja'far Al-Sadiq Muhammed
- 7- Musa al-Kazim Jafar
- 8- Ali Al-Ridha Musa
- 9- Muhammad al-Taqi Ali
- 10- Ali Al-Naqi Mohammad
- 11- Hasan al-Askari Ali en-Naki
- 12- Mohammad al-Mahdi Hasan al-Askari.

The only Imam over whom the Shi'a denomination has no dispute and who is unquestionably recognized by different branches is Hz. Ali listed above as Ali Ibn Abu Talib. Those of the Shi'a branches that have continued to exist among large masses to this day are Imamate (Imamah), Jafarism and Ismailism, the last two being the largest ones, and Zaidism and Alevism, which is also prevalent across and around Sivas and Tunceli in Central Anatolia in Turkey, and Nusayriyyah, which is prevalent in Hatay-Adana-Mersin triangle and continues to maintain its hold in Syria despite the civil war (Önder, 2005: 114).

Being the official denomination of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Shi'a branch Imamah (the Constitution of Iran: Article 12) is the largest and the most moderate branch of the Shi'a denomination after Zaidism. While the Shi'a sources define it as a branch that follows the sixth Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq and is rid of and abstains from radical views, the Sunni sources refer it as those who have turned their back on Zayd bin Ali. According to Imamah, All Imams (i.e., the Caliph as the authority of Imamah), particularly Hz. Mohammad in the first instance, has the responsibility, authority and right to appoint his successor. According to Shi'ism, it is beyond doubt that Hz. Mohammad appointed Hz. Ali, who was of the Ahl Al Bayt as his successor. According to this belief, the Quran also decrees that Allah protects Imams from sins, and that an Imam, being purified, is fully authorized to make laws as a leader⁸. In other words, Imam's decree is Allah's decree that must be peremptorily obeyed, and is an indispensable part and precept of Sharia. The reason for such authorization, on the other hand, is the belief that Allah has given Hz. Mohammad and the Imams following him

8 The Quran 21:73

certain powers to protect the Shi'a until judgment day. Therefore, Imamah may be suggested to consider the guiding Imams as a semi-divine in some way.

Although there is no disagreement about the first six Imams in Imamah, discussions about who to succeed as Imam starting from the seventh Imam led to a separation in Imamah into two main groups. According to this, those who believed that from the sons of the sixth Imam Ja'far al Sadiq, Ismail was the seventh Imam are called Ismaili (Sevensers), and those who believed that his son Musa al-Kazim was the seventh Imam are called Ithnā'ashariyyah (Twelvers) (the most common is Ja'farism.). Adherents of the Twelve-Imams belief hold that the last Imam (Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Askari) went into occultation and will appear closer to judgment day (Mahdi) to lead and protect the Shi'a. The above order of the imams is based on the Twelvers Ithnā'ashariyyah view.

POLITICAL REFLECTIONS

As seen, politically based divisions occurred in the Shi'a as in Islam's other denominations and Sunnism. In this context, although there are certain variances in worship rituals and principles of faith, what essentially has made the Shia 'adherents' is that they politically supported Hz. Ali.

The first major Shi'a state in history was the Fatimids. The said state ruled during the period 909-1171 for 262 years and adhered to the Ismaili branch. After founded in Tunisia, they not only ruled over the Muslim populated lands such as Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Egypt and Lebanon, but also over Christian populated locations such as Malta, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica, and had well established trade relations with the Christian communities in the North Africa and Sicily, the contact points between Islam and Christianity (Lewis, 2007:109).

Following the Fatimid State, first the Safavids and later the Qajars were the major representatives of the Shi'a Islam in the geography of Iran. These states, contrary to the Fatimids adhering to the Ismaili branch, adopted another branch of the Twelve-Imams belief, namely Jafarism.

Particularly, it may provide insight into the relations between Turkey and Iran exclusively and between Sunnism and Shi'ism generally from both historical and present day perspective to review the relations of Iran with

the Ottomans that followed the Hanafi school of Sunnism during the Safavid dynasty period.

The Ottoman-Safavid relations were characterized by a constant struggle starting from the date when the Safavid dynasty was founded by Shah Ismail in 1501. Especially, the Safavid showed interest to in Anatolia due to the Alevi population living in the region and made a particular interest in the region and made various attempts to create a sphere of influence due to the Alevi population in Anatolia. During Bayezid II's reign, the Crown Prince Selim (Yavuz) deployed in Trabzon Sanjak had an active struggle with the Safavids and Shi'ism during this period. With the Crown Prince's accession to the throne, the relations that were mostly 'tense' between the two states turned into a close combat with the Battle of Chaldiran. After this battle that ended with Shah Ismail's defeat, (Yavuz) Sultan Selim removed the threat of Shi'ism from the Ottoman territory, but, according to some sources, caused the slaughter of 40,000 Alevis living in Anatolia. However, disabling the Safavid efforts to win over territory added a new perception to the perception of the Alevis living in Anatolia of victimization that has survived to present day and dates back to Hz Ali.

Today, the Shi'a denomination is only represented by the Islamic Republic of Iran at the state level. As described, Iran has adopted the Jafari doctrine that has Twelve Imams (the Constitution of Iran: Article 12). The religious leader of Iran with a 90% of its population being Shi'a is the representative of 'Velayat-e Faqih' authority (Khomeini, 2002). The concept of Velayat-e Faqih in theoretical concept means guardianship of 'legislative' power; in other words, turns Iran's religious leader (Imam) into a living Sharia enforcer that has the jurisprudence power requiring absolute obedience (fatwa).

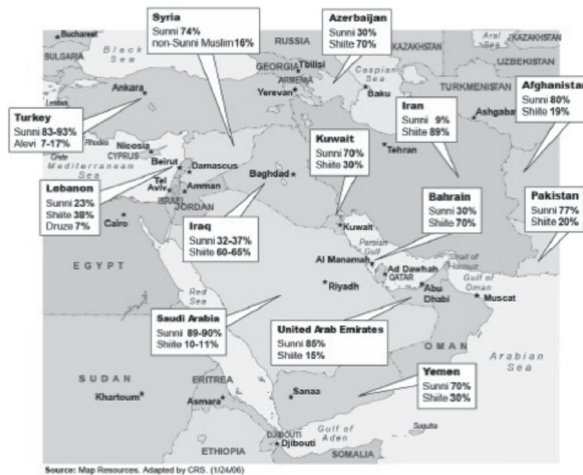
At this point, it is helpful to further elucidate the concept and theory of 'religious leadership' in the Shi'a faith to understand Iran's socio-political and governmental structure. Regarded as 'Allah's deputy', Iran's religious leader also possesses the highest rank of Ayatollah (Grand Ayatollah and marja taqlidi). The theory of Marja Taqlidi mandates the members of Shi'a Islam to imitate (follow, obey) the conduct and acts of the person possessing this title in ordinances that are not unequivocal in the religion (Keskin, 2007: 89). To attain this authority (Marja Taqlidi), one's religious knowledge and piety must be approved by the Ulama and their pupils and his su-

perior expertise in Shi'a fiqh must be recognized (Fiğlali, 2007:210). The candidate needs to undergo challenging and lengthy stages until he attains the authority. Arabic, logic, eloquence, Islamic sciences and Jafari fiqh must be mastered. Those who are believed to be competent learn Shi'a hadiths, tafsir and fiqh in detail. Those who manage to reason from Quran and Sunnat rise to the authority of 'mujtahid'. In case the said stages are successfully completed, they attain the titles of 'Hujjat al-Islam' followed by 'Ayatollah' and finally 'Grand Ayatollah' (Ayatollah Uzma) respectively, based on the attraction of supporters and students. (Fiğlali, 2007: 215)

In difference to Sunnism, Shi'ism has some kind of hierarchical structure of clergy where transition from the lowest rank of Mullah (Melle) to Mujtahid with jurisprudence entitlement and power requires a religious education of about twenty years. There are assumed to be 20,000 Mullahs and around a 1000 Ayatollahs in Iran.

The total Shi'a population is assumed to make approximately 10-15% of the Muslim demographic structure (Congressional Research Report, 2006) in the world, which corresponds to about 130/195 million of the 1.3 billion Muslim population (Keskin 2007: 95)⁹. The distribution of the Shi'a across the world is as follows, according to the Congressional Research Service's report of January 24, 2006:

Demographic Distribution Estimates



⁹ According to this data, the Shi'a population living outside of Iran is assumed to be around fifty-one hundred and fifteen million. The countries that have mainly Shi'a population are Iran, Azerbaijan, Lebanon, Iraq and Bahrain.

Although a 10-15% Shi'a demography in the Islamic world denotes a minority at a first glance, the main geopolitical advantage it may offer to Iran is that it is distributed widely over almost everywhere across the Islamic geography. In the Middle East, in particular, the panic atmosphere created in the Gulf governments by the process called the "Shi'a Revival" and depending on Iran's increased military and political power is believed to have arisen from the said cause. For, the process called the Shi'a Revival is considered to be a factor creating a quick domino effect based on the geopolitical and socio-political regional dynamics and the deputy elements used successfully by Iran (for example, Hezbollah) amplify such concerns.

Therefore, Iran's perception and utilization of the Shi'a demography especially in the Middle East and Gulf countries as a foreign policy advantage, intervention platform and instrument seem inevitable in the context of national interests and concerns. Particularly, the conflicts in the aftermath of the 2003 Iraq intervention and today's Syria indicate a transitional time evidencing that the definitions of identity and belonging underlying the "Arab ethnicity" may give way to denominational differences. In this context, the "Shi'a" identity may turn into a political phenomenon and a symbol of resistance against the status quo in many countries. When the successful examples of the known performance of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and its elite Quds Force in both organization and implementation of paramilitary activities outside the country are added to this situation, the source of the threat is not reduced into a pure rhetoric scope, but transforms into an actual reality.

This chapter in this study will focus on the historical dynamics of Iran and seek to investigate effects of their cultural, anthropological and sociological residues on today.

Iran that has furthered the denominational affiliation and belonging over other ethnic belonging and identities, thus transforming Shi'ism adhered to by 90% of the country's population into a common superordinate identity does not only repress ethnic differences, but also imposes an identity of leverage in a sense on the Shi'a population living in the countries of the region against the containment policy targeting Iran.

Although the domination over the Shi'a population in the region by Iran that has seemed to have achieved a significant dominance and sphere of

influence over the deputy Shi'a elements in Lebanon and lastly in Syria and Iraq causes some concerns as well as disturbance in some countries, Saudi Arabia in particular, if we look at the problem solely from Tehran's perspective, it is not unfair to say that Iran has been following a valid and consistent strategy from the standpoint of its subjective national security and interests.

Besides, people speaking the same language are classified as the members of the same ethnic group in Iran. According to the Persian Chauvinism or Pan-Iranist theory, everyone living in Iran is of Persian origin. A section of the population was Turkified (Azeris), Arabized and Kurdified over time. Pursuant to the official ideology of the nation state intended during the Reza Shah Pehlevi era influenced by the nationalist movements in Europe, some kind of assimilation policy was followed by banning languages other than Farsi, and a common, and the shared superordinate identity of Shi'ism also facilitated such implementations in a sense.

Using the principles of brotherhood and equality as a slogan, Iran's Islamic Revolution toned down the said practices and regulated the language slogan, the Islamic Revolution of Iran softened such practices and defined them under specific principles in the Constitution.

According to article 15 of the Constitution of Iran, "The official language and script of Iran, the lingua franca of its people, is Persian. Official documents, correspondence, and texts, as well as text-books, must be in this language and script. However, the use of regional and tribal languages in the press and mass media, as well as for teaching of their literature in schools, is allowed in addition to Persian."

The Shi'a Azeris, the second largest community in Iran after the Farsi and their strong unity under the Shi'a belonging and the homage culture have, despite their ethnic differences and with the exception of some minor disturbances, prevented emergence of ethnic problems to the extent that may shake or destroy the system, despite all known attempts and constructions.

IRAN'S HISTORICAL PROCESS

If Iran is reviewed through analyses lacking the historical perspective, many overt and covert activities, from the paramilitary support to Leba-

non's Hezbollah and Hamas or the fight against Taliban and ISIS to the political interest in the Shi'a Hazara Community in Afghanistan and the Houthis in Yemen may be explained by Tehran's revisionist stance. Whereas, almost the entire area where Iran carries out covert operations, power projection and proxy wars is the geography witnessing Iran's history itself.

In other words, today's Iran's geopolitical influence axis and the phenomenon called "Iran's History" are integral parts of a whole. For, temporal and physical boundaries of the period called Iran's History constitutes today's Iran's Lebensraum.

"Iran's History" encompasses the events in an area extending from the River Euphrates in the west to the River Indus and River Seyhun and from Caucasus, Caspian Sea and Aral Sea in the north and the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea in the south (Encyclopedia Iranica). Today, this area is bordered by Iran, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, east of Turkey, Iraq and some parts of Pakistan. With ups and downs in the control, but within this geography in the course of time, Iran's History can be reviewed under six main periods:

- Early Period (3200 B.C. - 625 B.C.)
- Pre-Islam Period (625 B.C. - 651 A.D.)
- Iran During the Middle Ages (651-1501)
- Early Modern Period (1501-1925)
- Late Modern Period (1921-1925)
- Islamic Republic of Iran (1979 - ...).

EARLY PERIOD

Many ruins in the Iranian Plateau contain evidence of previous civilizations before the immigration of Iranian tribes. However, the first important Iranian civilization is the Elamites that emerged in the east of Mesopotamia around 3000 B.C. (Iran Daily, Panorama; March 03, 2007). The Aryan tribes, who are the father of today's Iran arrived in the Iranian Plateau from the east of today's Ukraine and the south of Russia in the 9th-10th centuries B.C. Research show that the Medes, Persians, Bactrias and Parthians who were in this region in the last millennium before Christ constituted a large portion of the demographic structure.

PRE-ISLAMIC PERIOD

With the Assyrians ending the Elamite hegemony in the region in 646 B.C., the Assyrian domination began to last about thirty years. In 612 B.C., the Medes prevailed over the Assyrians and reinforced their dominance, and by 550 B.C., Cyrus the Great who owns the first known human rights declaration led foundation of an empire comprising the Achaemenids, Medes and Persians and reigned over the region for about three centuries.

Especially, with the invasion of Lydia and Babylon during the period of Cyrus the Great, the acquisitions in Egypt carried the empire to an important place in the History of Iran. In 5th century B.C., with the reign of Darius the Great, the Persian Empire became the largest empire in history. During the time of Darius, two great roads called 'Shahi', one from Susa to Mesopotamia and the other from Babylon to India were built for military and commercial purposes, thus connecting 'Satraps'¹⁰ to each other ¹¹.

During this century, defeats incurred in two major wars with the Greeks and the failures in Egypt in the 4th century B.C. led the Persian Empire into an era of collapse.

As a result of the defeat of the Persian Empire by Alexander the Great in Gaugamela in 331 B.C., the Hellenistic period began in the Iranian geography. Upon Alexander's death, some of the territories shared between his commanders were united by the Parthians and came into the possession of a community of Iranian origin in the 3rd century B.C. again. The reign of the Parthian Empire lasted five hundred centuries and was ended in 224 A.D. by the Sassanid's, a group being the subject of the said empire.

The Sasanian reign lasted during a time in the late ancient period that witnessed very important progress for the Iranian civilization. During this period, they entered into major and long-termed struggles with their neighbors the Romans and the Byzantines, which were caused by the attempt to dominate over Mesopotamia, Armenia and the Levant (now Lebanon). However, the war-weary empire could not hold long against the raid of the rising Islamic forces in the south that started around 630 and collapsed in 651. The region became susceptible to spread of Islam upon the victory

¹⁰ Name of small states that Darius created by dividing the empire into about 20 parts and were administered by powerful administrators appointed by Darius.

¹¹ www.iran.ir

of the Islamic forces in the Battle of al-Qādisiyyah in 632, thus leading to Iran's association with Islam that has lasted to the present day.

IRAN DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

Invasions of Islamic origin broke a fundamental tradition in Iran: (The foundation of the Iranian culture and the then most widespread religion of the region; Zoroastrianism)¹². However, the Umayyads that reigned in the Iranian geography were influenced by the Iranian civilization, and thereby did not cause a complete collapse of the Iranian (Persian) culture, but led to a joint culture by the amalgamation of the Iranian culture and the Arab culture in administrative matters and financial affairs.

However, Arab nationalism known to be the prevailing paradigm during the Umayyad period caused a discontent among the Iranian people. For, although the Iranians were also Muslims, they were regarded as 'Mawali' and second-class citizens like all other non-Arab people by the Umayyads. Additionally, the "anti-Shi'ism" during the Umayyad period also had an adverse impact on some groups in Iran.

Upon the death of the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik in 743, the Iranian geography, just like the entire Muslim geography, entered into an era of civil war. In 747, the revolt that began under the leadership of a freed Persian slave Abu Muslim Khorasani against the Umayyads gradually spread and the Abbasid reign replaced the Umayyad Dynasty in 750 with the proclamation of the sect leader Abul al-Abbas as caliph by the military in Qufa in 749 (Lewis, Middle East; 2007, 96). The first change brought by the Abbasids was to move the capital from Damascus into within the borders of Iraq, and this region was virtually affected by the Persian culture and history for years.

The Abbasid era is one of the main periods during which Islam's inspiration from the Iranian culture peaked, which was caused by both the change of the capital and the Persian bureaucracy's replacing the Arab aristocracy. With the decline of the power and influence of the Abbasid caliph over time, many different centers of power emerged in the region defined as the Iranian geography.

12 It was founded by Zoroaster about 3,500 years ago in Iran . It was the official religion of the Persian Empire between 600 B.C. and 650 A.D. It is known as the religion of the Iranian people before Islam. Zoroastrianism teaches the faith of Ahura Mazda who is the sole god. Its most important feature is that it is accepted as the oldest monotheistic religion. Today, the number of adherents of Zoroastrianism are estimated to be around 250,000. Zoroastrians, contrary to the general belief in western cultures, do not worship fire. Zoroastrians believe that the elements existing in the world are pure and that the fire is God's light or wisdom.

Starting from the 9th century the Tahirids became influential in Khorasan, the Saffarids in Sistan and the Samanis in Bukhara. This period accompanied a process in which freedom movements began in Iran. Although the Abbasids continued to exist in name only and until the Mongol invasion in 1258, the region was primarily influenced by the Seljuks and Gaznians. During this period, Iranian bureaucrats assumed important duties in the dominant countries of the region. The Sasanian texts were translated into Arabic in these countries, and the Sasanian court protocol and administrative structuring were adapted (Lewis, Middle East; 2007, 100-101).

From the perspective of the denominations adhered to by the masses, almost up to 90% of the then Iran, unlike today's Iran was Sunni ¹³. This phenomenon would continue until the Safavids, which will be reviewed in the 'Early Modern Period'. However, the Shi'ism is seen to have risen in the Iranian geography with the accession of the Safavids into power. Iranian geography during the period until the Safavids is considered to have not been under an absolute domination of a particular single power, but to have led a politically unstable time. The domination over the region was primarily held by states of Mongol and Turkish origin, and Tamerlane, the Karakoyunlu and the Akkoyunlu reigned in the region during this period.

EARLY MODERN PERIOD

From the perspective of many historians, the Safavid Dynasty is considered as the first step for Iran's transition into a modern state. The Safavid order founded by one of the members of the Safavid dynasty in Turkish-speaking region of Azerbaijan spread over to Anatolia and Syria, and the sheikh of the order led expeditions against the Caucasian Christians.

During this period, 'Alevism', one of the principles of faith that would be the foundation of today's Iranian geography and Shi'ism, starting from the 17th century become widespread, and also, the foundation of the road to a modern nation state was laid. This dynasty of Turkish origin, which was founded by Shah Ismail and enjoyed its most powerful time during Shah Abbas who was in the throne between 1587 and 1629 ironically entered into fight with another Turkish empire, the Ottomans (Önder, 2005: 113). Especially, the possibility of their provoking the Alevis in Anatolia was considered a real threat by the Ottomans. Therefore, during the time of Selim I, these countries faced off against each other several times. The most

13 Ayatollah Murtaza Motaharri

known of all is the Battle of Chaldiran that ended in the Ottoman victory. The Qasr-e Shirin Treaty that drew the border with the Ottomans accompanied by Turkey who are the western neighbor of today's Iran was signed in 1639. The border was drawn in final in 1937 during the time of Shah Reza Pehlevi, which will be dealt with in the chapter 'Late Modern Period' (Oran [ed]; 2001, 363).

The struggle during the Safavid period, particularly in Afghanistan, is important because it shows that today's dynamics related to the region are not new. The Safavid Army failed in the rebellion that broke out in Kandahar in the early 18th century, and the Afghans advanced as far as Isfahan and overthrew the Safavid Dynasty. In 1735, Nadir Shah acquired control of Iran and repelled the Afghans, and thus, Afsharid Dynasty ascended the throne. The Afshar did not reign long and was followed by the Zend Dynasty that remained on the throne for about 40 years until 1794.

During the Qajar Dynasty (1794-1925) Tehran was used as the capital and still holds the same position today. During this period, The Qajars lost close to half the country's territory as a result of the Treaties of Gulistan and Turkmenchay signed with Russia and England due to the Russia-Iran Wars. The then Iran can be seen as a country that was caught between the ambitions of Great Britain and Russia while trying to survive. During the 19th and 20th centuries, Iran stepped into a new era in which it underwent constitutional debates. No matter how long the Qajar Dynasty tried to hold out, a new era based on constitutional monarchy began in 1906 in which the Dynasty continued to reign, and the first parliament was opened.

In 1908, the oil reserves in the Khuzestan region increased Great Britain's interest in the region, and Iran's fate was left to the treaty also called the 'Great Game' and signed with Russia and England in 1907. Although Iran tried to remain neutral during World War I, it was invaded by Russia and Great Britain. It would be inaccurate to suggest that Iran completely came under the control of foreign states during this period because, although the country was under the occupation, Ahmad Shah continued to reign in his palace in Tehran. It is an interesting point to note that the two neighboring countries shared ties during close periods because Sultan Vahdettin also continued to hold the titles of Sultan and Caliph in his Yildiz Palace in Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire occupied by the Allied forces after World War I, and a government, though

questionable, existed. Another similarity between Iran and the Ottomans is that both countries moved into constitutional monarchy two years apart. (Iran, 1906-1911, II. Ottoman Constitutionalism (1908-1922). Upon the Russians' withdrawal from the war as a result of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk signed due to the internal dynamics of the Russians (1917 October Revolution), England took Iran under their patronage; however, it didn't last long and failed. The Qajar Dynasty gradually lost its power due the constitutional movements and was ended by Reza Han in 1925, the son of a Farsi peasant family who served as an officer in the Caucasus Brigade and was actively involved in the movement and gained power during the era of coups (Oran[ed] 2001).

Reza Han first became influential on the parliament and the Iranian government and forced the Iranian Shah to appoint the young civil reformer Seyyed Zia'eddin Tabatabaee as prime minister and assumed the duty of military command himself in 1921. Reza Han, who also undertook the office of the prime ministry in 1923, assumed the title of Shah as a king in 1925 and began to be referred as Reza Shah Pehlevi.

LATE MODERN PERIOD

Reza Shah Pehlevi remained in power between 1925 and 1941. During this period, he adopted a nationalist, anti-communist, reformist and secular government style. The name 'Pehlevi' given by him to his dynasty is the name of one of the old Persian tribes. This is considered as one of the most explicit indicators of the Shah's nationalist stance. During the time he remained in power he not only tried to establish good relations with Turkey under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, but also took Kemalist Turkey as a model in the construction of a nation state. In this context, Shah made his first visit abroad to Turkey in 1934, and in the same year, he withdrew from their candidacy for the United Nations Council in favor of Turkey and proclaimed mourning for a month upon Ataturk's death (Oran [ed], 2001: 357- 359).

During the time of Reza Shah, the 'Treaty of Friendship and Security' was signed between Turkey and Iran in 1923, and the 'Sadabad Pact', a neutrality and non-aggression treaty, was signed with the other regional powers, Iraq and Afghanistan (Oran [ed], 2001: 360-368). With the overthrow of the Shah in the middle of World War II, his son Muhammad Reza Shah Pehlevi ascended the throne ¹⁴.

14 www.iran.ir

World War II witnessed the occupation of Iran by the Russians (USSR) and the English, just as in World War I. The allied discourse and belief that Reza Shah was pro-German caused Iran's occupation once more with the goal of protecting oil, vitally important for the outcome of the war. The Shah was dethroned and exiled to South Africa, and replaced by his son Muhammad Reza Shah Pehlevi who was known to be pro-English. At the Tehran Conference that took place in 1943, the allied countries secured Iran's independence with the Tehran Declaration; however, the Soviets not only landed in the northeast of Iran, but also reinforced its influence by causing two autonomous republics having a socialist identity to be established. The USSR acquired concessions about operation of oil fields from Iran in 1946 and ended the occupation. However, upon the U.S.' overt pro-Iran stance, these concessions did not enter into force.

The era of Muhammad Reza Pehlevi was one of the periods when Iran was more open to the West. During this period, getting closer to the U.S., Iran entered into a competition with Turkey in the regional leadership that has survived until today, but is not openly voiced. During this period, the control also changed hands several times in Iran. The prime minister was changed six times until 1951, and in that year, Musaddiq who became prime minister nationalized the Iran oil with the support of the communist Tudeh Party and the Shi'a ulama, which led to a serious crisis.

Following some unsuccessful coup attempts, the pro-Shah and retired General Fazlollah Zahedi overthrew Musaddiq and seized power with the "Operation Ajax" fictionalized by CIA with the support of MI6. Starting from this period until the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran remained under the absolute control of the Shah. Showing that it came closer to the West by signing the Baghdad Pact and thereafter the CENTO, a continuation of the Pact, Iran witnessed Shah's economic, social and administrative reforms in 1962, the most disputed of which was the land reform called the 'White Revolution'. With the "White Revolution", confiscation of the glebe owned by the Shi'a Ulama (clergy) (Bonyad) and encouragement of foreign capital investments to thwart the influence of medium and small-sized artisans-tradesmen called "Market/Bazara" in the economic domain caused the reforms to fail in general, and the Westernist policies followed caused the opposition of the people and the Shi'a Ulama to increase. In June 1963, several revolts occurred under the leadership of the Grand Ayatollah Khomeini who was sentenced to death for his statements target-

ing the Shah, especially stating that his end would not be any different than that of his father. However, he remained in prison to be executed for 18 months with the resistance of the Ulama and was exiled initially to Turkey (Bursa), Iraq (Baghdad) and finally to France (Paris).

Upon arrival of the Azeri Ayatollah Shariatmadari of Tabrizin Tehran with four hundred mujtahids to prevent Khomeini's execution and his stating that he would issue a fatwa that Shah Muhammad Reza Pehlevi was "committing blasphemy", Khomeini was sent to exile, which, in a sense, can be considered the beginning of the road to the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Despite his absolute power and the loyalty of the army, the Shah of Iran was not able to resist against the Shi'a Ulama and stepped back, which proved that the clergy was an undeniable actor in the existing balance of powers in Iran, and revealed the influence power of the phenomenon of religion (Shi'a faith) on the Iranian people.

In fact, few years that passed since that event would have it result in the Islamic Revolution and a new era, which is described as the second incident by the social scientists that affected the world the most after the 1917 October Revolution, would start.

Non-realization of the intended economic development and the low level of welfare of the people increased the reactions directed to the Shah in the internal politics with each passing day. As for the foreign policy, revenues increased by the rising oil prices in the 1970s enabled to fund modernization of the Iranian army and led to Iran's standing out as a power also backed by the U.S. in the region, especially in the Persian Gulf. The international treaties signed during this period reveal that Iran appeared as a dominant power in the region and that it relatively bettered its relations with its neighbors (Oran [red], 2001:802-803).

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

The seeds of the developments leading to the Islamic Revolution were laid with the large public demonstrations in 1978. When strikes and demonstrations gradually increased and paralyzed the economy, the Shah was inactive and fled the country in January 1978. The Grand Ayatollah Khomeini, who arrived in Tehran on February 1, 1979 from Paris, where he had been in exile was accepted not only as a political leader, but also as a

religious leader (imam). The struggle between the supporters of the Shah and the revolutionists didn't last long and the supporters of the revolution ended their struggle with victory on February 11th. On April 1st, the Islamic Republic of Iran was proclaimed, and thus, the Pehlevi Dynasty was recorded in history as the last monarch in Iran. In December 1979, Khomeini was elected as the religious leader of the country, which started a new era in Iran.

When the internal dynamics of the revolution are reviewed, the causes can be listed as the economic underdevelopment, reactions of the Ulama to the Westernist reforms, the opposition of the Market/Bazara against the monarchy and joint stance against the autocracy.

Although the rising oil prices in the 1970s turned out to be an important economic advantage for Iran to increase its oil revenues, failure to distribute the riches across large masses, an increasingly deepening of gap of income between the rich and the poor, and the consumption of a considerable portion of the oil revenues for the military modernization and unsuccessful reforms (for example, the White Revolution) caused reactions against the Shah which, as a result, led to large scale labor strikes casting the economy into a vicious circle.

The most important role played by Khomeini, on the other hand, was to consolidate the opposition to create a single front opposing the Shah and direct the criticism with great skill. After the Revolution, fractions other than Khomeini's supporters, particularly Tudeh Party, were purged although they had supported the Revolution. On the religious wing, the Islamic groups that were against an Islamic republic and had concerns that an administrative structure shouldn't be established without the arrival of the Mahdi were disabled with Khomeini's fatwas (jurisprudence), and the leftist organizations and groups claiming social rights did not find what they had expected.

The arrest of the Baha'is and the closure of the communist Tudeh Party are the examples of what is said above. In August 1979, the Revolutionary Guards Corps founded by the clerics within the Islamic Republic Party played an active role during this transition period, and the said party-member clerics acquired the majority in the parliament and were effective in the adoption of the Islamic Constitution with 99% of the public vote and the assumption of the control by Khomeini.

Two factors may be suggested to have played a key role in maintaining the revolution thereafter. The first is the Iran-Iraq war; and the other is Iran's method of repositioning itself against the western powers.

The on-going border-related conflicts between Iran and Iraq since the Shah period were moved to a different dimension with the assumption of the power by the Shi'a leader Khomeini after the Iran Islamic Revolution. Then, it was no longer a mere border dispute inherited from World War I, and the reservations that the Islamic Revolution might provoke the Shi'a majority in Iraq, Iran's increased concentration on the internal politics, and Iran's deprivation of the U.S. Support due to the revolution's dynamics (for example the occupation of U.S. Embassy) provoked or led to provocation of Iraq's Head of State Saddam to attack Khuzestan that was considered to be Arab territory.

Also of note is a separate fact that on the backstage of Iraq's attack on Iran was the Western dominant actors' intention to prevent Iran re-shaped with the Islamic Revolution and re-positioned as anti-Westernist from attaining a degree of power that might influence the regional equilibrium.

The war that continued between 1980 and 1988 and resulted in the deaths of about a million people on both sides, and in the end, no victor came out of it as it was a stalemate between Iraq's weapons and Iran's manpower. Despite this, contrary to the expectations, the war played a unifying role for Iran, and the revolution had the chance of settling in and becoming permanent during the war. Particularly, the nationalist-separatist movements in the Southern Azerbaijan were balanced with more extensive and patriotism-focused Farsi nationalism based on Shi'ism; the country's unity was secured with psycho-political factors created by the war era; and the revolution settled in and became permanent. Therefore, it may not be inaccurate to suggest that, although it did not result in either a military victory or defeat, the war led to facts that were exactly the opposite of the expectations and served to the consolidation of the Islamic Revolution and a regime based thereon.

On the other hand, Khomeini introduced Iran with new goals and directed the focal point of the internal dynamics to the foreign policy. The most concrete example of this is the perception of the U.S. and Israel as the new enemies (the Great Satan - the Lesser Satan), and the invasion of the

U.S. Embassy that developed within this framework. During the invasion, 52 U.S. officers were taken hostage by the Pro-Khomeini students, and the U.S. Military operations to rescue the hostages failed.

In 1989, according to the 'Velayat-e Faqih' doctrine ¹⁵, the position of guide (imam) vacated upon the death of the Shi'a leader Khomeini was filled by Ali Khamenei, who still is the leader.

During this period, Iran had issues with the Arab countries due to denominational differences and the secular countries like Turkey due to the attempts to export the regime as with the western countries in fundamental human rights and freedoms, and was accused of supporting terrorism as one of the countries called the "Axis of Evil" (U.S. Department of State, 2007). It may be suggested that these accusations and the following isolation and containment of Iran led to its becoming powerful and that the Farsi nationalism supported by the rising Shi'a faith turned into a principal determining dynamic.

Up to this point, the study has sought to provide the historical background with small side notes about today to help determine Iran's current position and understand Iran. At this stage, the socio-economic and political spectrum forming today's Iran will be analyzed.

15 Also known as the Islamic Government the concept of Velayat-e Faqih means jurists' guardianship). The Guide is also the controller and practitioner of the judicial organ in the system governed according to the Sharia believed to determine the rules regarding functioning of the social life.

CHAPTER - 2 -

THE ROAD TO THE IRAN'S ISLAMIC REVOLUTION AND ITS AFTERMATH

SOCIO – POLITIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC OPRESSION AND INTEREST GROUPS

Celebrating its 36th year in 2015, when our study was written, Iran Islamic Revolution, contrary to the predictions of some researchers and the expectations of some political actors, has not proved to be short-lived, and although it created a regime opposing the U.S., the dominant power in the international relations in the Cold War era and its aftermath¹⁶ and tackled many domestic political uncertainties, and has adhered to its fundamental principles and survived to this date. During this period, Iran also became different not only with its political regime, but also with its foreign policy and positioned itself as a powerful country in the region in the post-Cold War conjuncture.

From the present study's perspective, Iran is considered a regional power that has a potential of undertaking the "Islamic factor" of the current socio-political polarization with its geopolitical position capable of influencing four different strategic axes including Caucasus, Middle East, Central Asia and Europe, oil and natural gas reserves and its Islamic republic regime.

Throughout the history of its Islamic Republic since 1979, Iran's internal dynamics and its foreign policy agenda and approach have directly influenced each other. Therefore, in order to analyze and evaluate Iran's place in the international system, its role in the Middle East region and the future of its Islamic regime, the political scene that emerged during and after the Iran Islamic Regime must first be analyzed.

Following the overthrow of the Shah in 1979, the credibility of the Islamic Republic and the public's commitment to the revolution have been maintained to a considerable extent to this day. The Iranian Islamic Re-

¹⁶ Differing with its radical Islamic regime and Shi'a identity in the region and the world, and opposing the U.S. and Israel imperialism, the Iranian Regime stands out with the emphasis that it is Islamic regime that is fair, righteous and moral.

public has managed to survive despite the destructive consequences of the 8-year long Iran-Iraq war, international isolations and the death of the founding leader Khomeini. The Iranian public has undergone a social transformation under the dominance of the political culture and ideology for 36 years of Islamic regime. Construction of a powerful Islamic political culture with effective social, political and legal control mechanisms is considered to be the key to the regime's success.

From some sources, the Iran Islamic Republic has been considered a "disaster" that changed the country's political, social, economic and legal structure (Cleaveland: 2008; 467). The system that completely abolished the monarchy, replaced the rules of universal law with sharia laws, and created a *crème de la crème* consisting of religious elite was admittedly founded with the support of a great majority of the Iranian public. The pro-revolutionary population, which contains many different views from radical right to leftist movement and groups, and is therefore believed to represent a qualified majority in this respect actually, constitutes the basis of the differences of political opinion that were likely to emerge after the revolution and the factions that would re-position themselves in the political life.

Major political factions must be considered the most important factors defining the dynamics of the internal and foreign policy in Iran. The domestic political environment in the post-revolution Iran first witnessed economics-based differences of opinion between the right and left groups inherited from the pre-revolution era. The death of the charismatic leader of the revolution, Grand Ayatollah Khomeini at a time crucial for governing the political differences in harmony was followed by intensified debates on which of the republican, Islamic and economic foundations of the revolution to survive or be dominant in Iran.

How these debates will end is critical not only for Iran's domestic political parameters, but also for the Middle East's current dynamics and the validity of the political Islam and Samuel Huntington's so-called "Clash of Civilizations" thesis. In order to make an in-depth analysis of the said matters and explain Iran's political spectrum, this chapter will first investigate how the Iran Islamic Revolution took place, then the governance and the political culture in the Islamic regime and lastly the oppression and interest groups determining Iran's socio-cultural and economic structure.

The 1979 IRANIAN ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

The discontent among the public caused by the policies of the Shah in Iran before the Islamic Revolution is an important factor that paved the way to the Islamic revolution in Iran. The success of the Iran Islamic Revolution has been considered the consequence of the Shah's failed policies by many researchers. The fact that the "Shah's policies" that were generally focused on strengthening and perpetuating its power based a major part of their legitimacy and functionality on agreeable relations with the West, which may be one of the main reasons for the said discontent among the traditionalist public.

In this context, the vicious circle experienced by the Shah who used the strength he received from the close and warm relationships with the Western world, and the U.S. in particular, as a reflector in a way to consolidate his position within Iran may be considered a signal for the inevitable beginning of the end, which, considering the structural characteristics of the conservative and traditional Iranian public, should actually be expected,.

The Shah, who increased his oppressive and autocratic hold at home in proportion to the strength and support derived from abroad, was caught between the emerging discontent of the large masses and the opposition against the West that ignored this attitude for the sake of maintaining the regime and remained unresponsive, and paid a bitter price for ignoring the possibility of a social outbreak and ever-increasing opposition by leaving his throne and country.

The Shah required the support of the West more as the reactions among the large population increased against the Western world, including the U.S. in particular, they held responsible for their status, and failed to envisage the inevitable consequences of the said simple equation, which must be another current repercussion of the typical ultimate illusions of the tyrants seen in history.

The two fundamental elements of the governance model in Western norms are defined as economic liberalization coupled with transparent and participatory democracy. Although the Shah government tried to take strong steps toward realization of economic liberalization, its failure to transition from autocracy to democracy, or its deliberate failure to share the

power must be regarded the dilemma of his pro-Western monarchical government. In order to understand the dynamics of the overthrow of the Shah regime and the foundation of the Islamic republic in its place, the socio-economic reasons leading to the Iranian public's discontent with the regime, the Iran Islamic Revolution's ideological basis and the series of events dominating the revolution must be separately studied.

Socio-Economic Reasons

Ironically, the reform program launched in 1963 to repress opposing groups and increase the support of and his popularity among the public is considered one of the main reasons why the Shah lost the support. The "White Revolution" also called the "Shah's and People's Revolution" was accepted on January 26, 1963. Within the scope of the said "revolution", it was decided to prepare a plan that envisaged a land reform, privatization of public manufacturing plants, a new election law also protecting women's rights, nationalization of forests, establishment of rural education unions and distribution of part of industrial profits among workers. Launched by the Shah in 1963 with the aim of liberal economics and social rights, the reforms (White Revolution) further increased the discontent with the Shah for various reasons.

One of the main reasons for the said discontent is related to the land reform. The land reform carried out with the 1963 White Revolution was a movement that abolished the feudal structure and subjected the landlords to the center. The feudal elite who had the chance to be a shareholder in the industrialization in lieu of the land first looked pleased. However, low labor wages in the industrial sector, the aggrieved workers working in the nationalized agricultural industry due to the wage policies and Inclusion of mostly infertile and arid lands in the scope of the reforms resulted in the people's increasing opposition to the regime.

As a result of the price increase policies of the OPEC countries in 1973, Iran, being one of the major oil producers in the world, increased its gross national product. However, failure to distribute evenly the GNP among the "Boutique" class being the industrial and commercial bourgeois under the influence of the Western culture and the "Bazara" (Market) class representing the middle class resulted in a class gap that further increased the unrest. While the richer boutique class was influenced by the Western culture regarded artificial, it created justified grounds for opposition of the

traditional and conservative Market/Bazara class who did not benefit from this opulence.

The said separation was symbolized by a conflict between pornography, luxury consumption and alcohol perceived as the effects of the artificial westernization or emulating the Western aspects considered degenerate, and the religion, morals and system regarded as the "icons" of traditionalism (Ari, 2004: 334). On the other hand, being close and even dependent on the U.S. to become westernized did not seem acceptable to the Iranian people who were sensible for their independence due to their historical background.

The "market" classes had another common problem regarding the Shah regime in the said conflict environment. Both the Boutique class who aimed and was enthusiastic for westernization and the Traditional Middle Class who believed they were treated unjustly complained about the failure of this sudden and unexpected westernization to reflect on the system and the social life. According to the said social groups who had different problems, the Shah failed to or did not deliberately create the social participation forum. The Shah preferred to become an authoritarian and maintain the monarchical regime in lieu of the liberal democracy which is the inevitable requirement, and in a way the Magna Carta for westernization in the political life. Lack of an arena to govern political participation, i.e. expression of problems later led to organizations of leftist and Islamic groups and their small variances, which would one day become the driving forces that contributed to the revolution between 1978 and 1979. Inability to communicate system-related demands, criticism and complaints due to the lack of communication channels naturally increased the discontent of the opposition groups and a sociologically inevitable environment for searching new things began to spread.

Ideological Reasons: the Concept of Velayet-e Faqih and Islamic Regime

Grand Ayatollah Khomeini who stirred the masses against the Shah and carried out the Iran Islamic Revolution also prepared the ideological basis of the revolution. Therefore, Khomeini's views and works must be carefully studied in order to understand the Iranian Islamic Revolution and today's Iran.

In its book entitled *Kashf-Al Asrar* (Discovering the Secrets) he wrote in 1943, he criticized the Shah for closing the religious schools, prohibiting religious sermons and replacing the religious (Sharia) courts with state courts, and claimed that alcohol and musical culture inciting sin were encouraged and that women were encouraged to go out naked by banning chador¹⁷. Khomeini also emphasized that the monarchy should respect the religion despite the Shah's policies, that the parliament should have more clergymen and that the state laws should be harmonized with the religious laws (Abrahamian, 1993: 19).

Being one of the five persons who held the title of "Ayatollah Al-Uzma", the highest ranking religious authority in the Shah's time Khomeini, explained why an Islamic revolution was necessary and how the Islamic regime could be structured in his book entitled "Houkumat-e Islami" (1971), which would form the ideological basis of the Islamic Revolution.

According to the Shi'a denomination's belief today, when asked, the Prophet said, "Ali is my brother, inheritor, and vice-regent, and the caliph of every believer after me. After him come Hassan, then Hussein and then nine descendants of Hussein" and listed the name of Twelve Imams.

12th Imam Mahdi (Imam-e Montazar) went into occultation and is believed to return before judgment day to bring righteousness and justice, and intercession to the Shi'a (Fiğlalı, 2007). Khomeini brought up the concept of Velayet-e Faqih because he believed in the necessity of an Islamic governance that would show the right way and righteousness to the people in the light of religious rules (sharia) until Mahdi returned.

In this context, "Faqih" represents the expertise that will act as an arbitrator in the society and be regarded as role model in the light of the teachings of the Quran.

The logical chain underlying the "Faqih" phenomenon and institution is clearly based on the question, "there is a need for imams after the prophet, and but who will guide the Muslims if the last imam who is in occultation until he returns is not present in today?"

17 The fact that people were provoked with similar discourses during the Kahraman Maraş and particularly Corum incidents before the 12th-September-1980 coupe is another sad example of the similar experiences of Iran and Turkey.

Within this framework, the concept of Velayet-e Faqih is more than pure symbolic religious leadership for Iran and is the essence, spirit of the system, and even the system itself, so to speak. In this context, the scientific validity of all analyses on Iran will be dubious without understanding the said concept and explaining its qualities.

Events Dominating the Iranian Islamic Revolution

Grand Ayatollah Khomeini, after the 1963 White Revolution, argued that pro-Americanism destroyed Iran's culture and traditionalism and that Iran had become America's minion, and criticized the Shah, and as detailed in previous chapters, was sent into exile initially to Turkey (Bursa) and then to Iraq and France (Paris). Khomeini blamed Shah Reza Pehlevi on the grounds that the White Revolution was an act done for foreigners and against the Iranian people. When he said that he would issue a fatwa that the Shah was in blasphemy and reminded the fate of his exiled father, the Shah had him arrested and Khomeini was sentenced to death at the trial. Khomeini's arrest led to riots in Qom known as the city of the religious ulama, and the riots were suppressed as a result of the clashes that killed many. The commemoration ceremonies held in Tabriz in 1978 for those who died in Qom again ended in the deaths of many Iranians during the clashes between the police and the people. The Tabriz incidents are considered the milestone of the chain of events that triggered the revolution. In the following months, particularly in Ramadan, Khomeini invited the Iranian community in France where he was in exile to collective worship and called for action against the unjust practices of the Shah regime, upon which increasing number of religion-based small groups began to form.

The Shah regime's movie theater arson to shake Khomeini's authority may be suggested as the second incident that triggered the revolution. Being considered the symbol of the Western culture, the Abadan Rex movie theater was set fire, and it was claimed that the arson was staged by Khomeini known to have anti-Western culture views. When it was found out shortly after the incident that the arson had been planned by the Shah through Savak, the Shah's and monarchical rule's authority was significantly shaken.

When we look at the far and near history, we see that many countries that may be defined generally as authoritarian and rarely as democratic resorted to similar covert provocative actions and however that all thereof were unraveled and created a boomerang effect.

Arson of the Reichstag in Germany, which was an important milestone in the Nazis' accession to the power, and, although the purpose was quite different, bombing of Atatürk's home in Thessaloniki may be the examples that come to mind in this respect.

Failing to control the social incidents that became increasingly widespread, the Shah declared martial law, but the public did not fear the police and Savak and did not vacate the streets and continued to shout slogans requesting Khomeini to return to Iran. Thereupon, although the Shah, as a last resort, sought to save his authority by rallying supporters from the conservative fundamentalist circles, it did not help and he was forced to leave Iran in January 1979.

The Shah who relied on the army's power and loyalty, saw that an imminent civil war would end his and his family's lives when his reliance on the army's power and loyalty was shaken because of its inadequacy and reservations against use of force against the public. Also, in line with the advice of the U.S. and British secret services, he was forced to admit that he ran out of options and took refuge in the U.S. upon the negative stance of some countries in which he wanted to take shelter. Thus, Khomeini's threat or prediction of years ago that the Shah's fate would be as his father's came true, and the Pehlevi Dynasty's second Shah lost his throne and was forced to leave his country and live in exile.

The similarity between the end of the Ottoman Dynasty (Sultan Vahdetin's taking refuge in England) and that of the Pehlevi Dynasty appears to be another example to the similarities between the two countries that must be remembered as the inevitable common fate shared by autocrats who did not derive their power from their own people and left their authority and legitimacy to the calculations and mercy of the foreign powers. After Khomeini set foot in Iran in February 1979 and Bazergan was appointed as the head of the provisional government, the new government's program was read and the new Islamic regime was officially proclaimed on April 1, 1979.

ISLAMIC REGIME AND GOVERNANCE IN IRAN

The regime put into practice under the leadership of Grand Ayatollah Khomeini after the Iran Islamic Revolution (April 1, 1979) is Islamic republic. In this system where Qanun-e Assasi (the Constitution) is based on reli-

gious rules, the laws are applied by the Guardian Council of the Constitution (Shora-ye Negahban) and the top authority of the state, the Guide (Velayet-e Faqih). According to article 110 of the Constitution of Iran, the Guide is also the commander-in-chief and controls the military intelligence, and has the power to declare war and peace (Diro, 2005: 39). The Guide who owns the judiciary power in Iran, described as an independent power, appoints a "Mujtahid" as the head of the judiciary to serve for a period of five years. Also, the supreme judicial courts where matters related to the revolution and religious practices are discussed directly report to the Guide. The Guide also is authorized to remove the head of state and the council of ministers by 2/3 vote of the Advisory Council on the grounds that they are not in violation of national interest or do not fulfill their duties prescribed by the Constitution.

Becoming the Guide (imam) after the death of Grand Ayatollah Khomeini, Ali Khamenei is still in this position. However, the three fundamental qualities of the Iranian regime including "religious, revolutionist and populist" accompanied the heads of state's becoming more active during the leadership of Khamenei who did not possess the charisma and religious knowledge of Khomeini (Moslem; 2002:83).

The Guardian Council of the Constitution (Shora-ye Negahban-e Qanun-e Assasi) is a religious expertise council. The six members of the council are appointed by the Guide, and the remaining six are recommended by the judiciary again reporting to the Guide and approved by the parliament. The six members appointed by the Guide in the council of twelve in total are faqih who decide whether or not the decisions put into force comply with the Islamic doctrines. On the other hand, the other six members appointed by the parliament must have received education in different branches of the Islamic law. Considering that the members of the judiciary are also appointed and controlled by the Guide, the Guide may be suggested to have a binding authority over the Guardian Council of the Constitution.

The Guardian Council of the Constitution is supervised by and its members may be removed by the Guardian if he deems necessary. According to article 99 of the Constitution of Iran, the Guardian Council of the Constitution is authorized to supervise the elections of the Assembly of Experts for the Guide, the President of the Republic, the Islamic Consultative Assembly (The Constitution of Iran). The Council that is authorized to accept or veto

the parliamentary candidates and the Presidential candidates also has the authority to approve or reject all decisions taken by the Parliament and all laws in respect of their compliance with the Islamic Revolution.

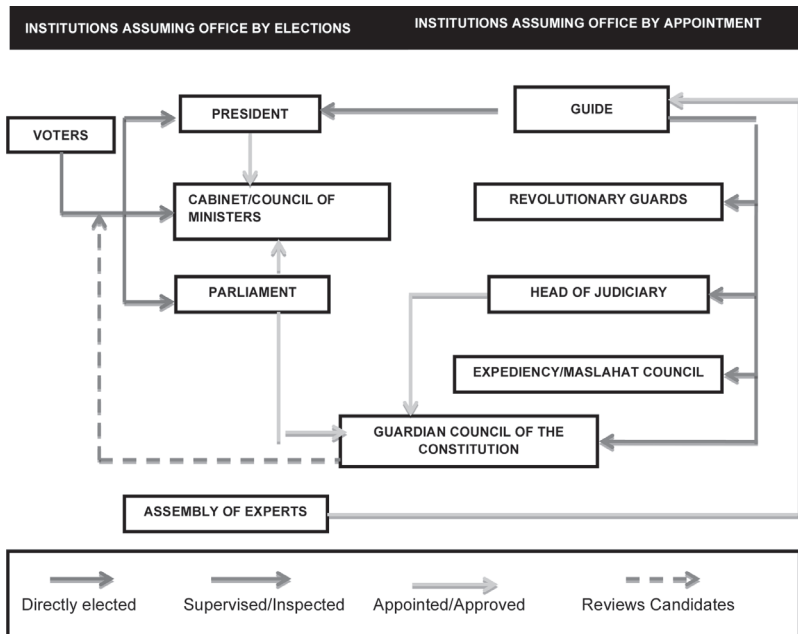
Another important authority reporting to the Guide in Iran is the Supreme National Security Council (Showrāye Āliye Amniyate Mellī). Founded to protect the Islamic Revolution, the Council is the highest security, defense and intelligence authority in Iran. The members of this Council are the Chief of Staff, the commanders of the Armed Forces, the Head of the Budget and Planning Organization, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Intelligence and the Commander of Revolutionary Guards.

In Iran's regime, the highest authority after the guide is the President. The President is the head of state and assumes office with elections held every four years. After the death of Khomeini, respectively, Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-1997) held the office for two terms and Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005) held the office for two terms. The authority of the presidents over the Iranian People and the governance structure is described in the Constitution of Iran. Article 56 of the Constitution of Iran stipulates, "Absolute sovereignty over the world and man belongs to God, and it is He Who has made man master of his own social destiny. The people are to exercise this divine right in the manner specified in the following articles." Article 56 can be interpreted as that the responsibility given to the head of state in the next article 57 is approved by Allah. Article 56 underlines the fact that legislative, executive and judicial powers are independent from each other and that the head of state is responsible for ensuring communication between these three powers (Diro; 2005: 40).

The number of chairs in the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majles-e Showrā-ye Eslāmī) serving under the President tends to change every 10 years and its members take office by elections. The first example in the near history of the duality claimed to exist between the moderates and the radicals in the Iran Islamic Republic today took place in a parliamentary session in January 2004. In the demonstration held by 50-120 members of the parliament for three weeks, the Guardian Council of the Constitution's exclusion of the then 83 members from the following elections was protested. Upon the debates becoming increasingly severe, Khamenei requested the Guardian Council of the Constitution to review the decisions, up on which the number of vetoed members this time rose from 83 to 89 and the debates ended with the victory of the conservatives. (Diro; 2005: 28).

In the first parliament formed after the Islamic Revolution, the number of clergymen exceeded that of civilians by a slight difference. (Cumhuri Islam had 85 members, supporters of Cumhuri Islam had 45 members, the Liberal Movement had 20 members¹⁸ and the independents had 84 members). In the second parliament, none of the sides achieved a majority. Since Khomeini preferred a balanced distribution in the parliament, Khamenei also had to follow this approach.

Apart from the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majles-e Showrā-ye Eslāmī) reporting to the President and the Guardian Council of the Constitution reporting to the Guide, there are the Expediency Discernment Council of the System) and the Assembly of Experts (Majma-e- Tashkhis-e- Maslahat-e Nezam) and the Advisory Council (Majles-e Khobregan). Founded in 1988 after the death of Khomeini, the Maslahat/Expediency Council is responsible for ensuring harmony in case of a conflict between the Parliament and the Guardian Council of the Constitution and advising the Guide. Despite its controversial enforcement authority, the Assembly of Experts is technically authorized to appoint and remove the Guide.



18 it was founded by Mehdi Bazargan and Ayatollah Mahmoud Talekani in 1961

The 1989 CONSTITUTION

The first constitution of Iran Islamic Republic was adopted in 1979. Today, although the regime in Iran is described as extremely conservative, it is hard to qualify the 1979 Constitution completely as conservative. The text prepared based on the Constitution of the 5th Republic of France and on Montesquieu's views about separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers does not appear to qualify as conservative (Abrahamian;1993: 19).

In the text prepared on the grounds that Islam belonged not to the oppressor, but to the oppressed, equality and social justice concepts were highlighted, class differences wanted to be destroyed, the equality of all before the Islamic Republic were emphasized. Also, with the argument that abolishment of women's right to vote was contrary to Islam, women's right to vote was not precluded. In his book entitled *Divine Will* ((Matn-e Kamel-e Vasiyetnameh-e Elahiva Siyasi-ye Imam Khomeini), Khomeini underlined that the Islamic Revolution had succeeded with the support of the oppressed classes and large masses, and warned that the fate of the pro-Islam leaders would turn up like the Shah's if they lost the support of the masses (Abrahamian; 1993: 37). The said warning becomes more meaningful when considered together with the words of the President Mohammad Khatami following the conflict atmosphere after the 2009 elections. Mohammad Khatami criticized the attempt to subdue the protests of the reform proponents against the election results and the conservative wing by use of force and Guide Ali Khamenei and supported Khomeini's view by saying, "preventing people from voicing out their demands may have gruesome consequences" (Juan Cole Website; June 22, 2009).

It is suggested that Khomeini realized the separation between the conservatives, liberals and secularists in the government positions before his death in 1989 (Ehteshami; 1995: 5). The political variances and differences among the pro-Islamists in Iran paved the way to new additions and amendments to the Constitution. Being aware of the fact that the separation in the political area might also spread to the social area, Khomeini, although he did not allow any faction during his leadership, made some attempts to re-regulate the political system. Therefore, Ayatollah Meshkini founded a structure called the Council for the Reappraisal of the Constitution in the western resources.

The 1989 Constitution adopted after Khomeini's death is thought to be based on the "need" to strengthen the political regime in Iran and rationalize and routinize the authority of the Revolution's leader Khomeini based on his charismatic leadership qualities¹⁹. Institutionalization of Khomeini's authority can be described as a transition from paternalism to the presidential system.

Following Khomeini's death, Iran's new Constitution was adopted with new articles submitted to the referendum on July 9, 1989. With the 1989 Constitution, the former articles 5, 57, 64, 69-70, 85, 87-91, 99, 107-113, 121, 122, 124, 126-128, 130-142, 157-158, 160-162, 164, and 173-176 were amended, and the new articles 109, 112 and 176 were added (Ehteshami; 1995: 38).

Article 176 authorized foundation of the Supreme National Security Council under the supervision of the head of state. Article 109 re-defined the qualities a faqih must possess and his duties, aiming to have certain organs advise the faqih and establish a control mechanism over decisions.

An idea was suggested to replace the Faqih (guide) position with the leadership council, and was however not put into effect later. The rule that the faqih had the last say in all decisions taken with regard to the Islamic republic remained. However, the Maslahat Council instituted with the purpose of re-regulating the constitution and eliminating the problems within the government positions and to advising the guide for a temporary period was made permanent with article 112 of the 1989 Constitution. Also, the amended article 5 authorized the Assembly of Experts elected from the public to technically appoint and remove the leader.

The 1989 Constitution increased the authorities of the head of state, limited the Guardian Council of the Constitution and separated the faqih and the marja (Brumberg; 2001: 147). The leadership qualities defined according to article 109 Of the Constitution were also expressed by Khomeini. He emphasized that the Leader should not necessarily have the marja'iyat authority and it would suffice to have a fair mujtahid elected by the experts (Brumberg; 2001: 148). With the aim of preventing any future legitimacy crisis that may arise from differences of opinion between

19 For the said phenomenon listed among the sources of Khomeini's authority, Weber's charismatic leader concept can be examined.

persons possessing religious titles in the society and the leader, it was also emphasized that the leader should be a person who was competent in political and social sciences and particularly Islamic law and renowned for his good governance qualities.

Also, it may also be mentioned that the authorities of the head of the state should have been strengthened as a natural outcome of the limiting authorities of the faqih. Therefore, the 1989 Constitution abolished the prime ministry system.

It may be suggested that a dual political system of the elected and the appointed was created by the Islamic Revolution in Iran and that the appointed were in a more powerful position than the elected. The Constitution of Iran protects the structural continuity of the Islamic regime with its strong balance mechanism. Due to the requirement of approval of the candidates by the Guardian Council of the Constitution in Iran, no one has the right of election independently from the system. It appears that the elected are approved and governed by the appointed in practice or at least that the appointed has more constitutional rights than the elected.

There is a chairperson of the Assembly of Experts, who is authorized, even though technically, to remove the Guide in the system where almost all government organs are controlled by the Guide. However, considering the strong influence and authority of the Guide over all government organs, Iranian people's traditionalist nature and the dominant Shi'a faith, the said authority may be suggested not to be functional.

FOUR HEADS OF STATE, FOUR DIFFERENT MENTALITIES

Rafsanjani, Khatami, Ahmadinejad and Rouhani

Khomeini showed Hujjat-al-Islam Khamenei as his successor after his death (1989) who did not possess Khomeini's status in terms of religious competence. Since the Islamic regime is based on the guide's absolute authority, the last say belonged to Khamenei after Khomeini's death. However, again different populist and popular qualities exhibited for different circles by the presidents during the Guide Khamenei's time including Rafsanjani, Khatami, Ahmadinejad and lastly Rouhani have seemed to have limited Khamenei's influence in active politics to a certain degree (Moslem: 2002; 82).

Therefore, the time periods after Khomeini continue to be referred to with the names of the presidents in Iran.

Today, President Rouhani is suggested to be more in the front compared to Khamenei because of his distinct qualities, especially compared to Ahmadinejad, his good command of diplomacy, being a theologian (member of the clergymen), and his good accumulation and experience thanks to having served in many important and key positions in the Iranian state for long years, and have increased the functions and significance of the office of the President by strengthening his position particularly following the nuclear deal made with the P5+1 countries.

Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-1997)

Elected as the head of state after Khomeini's death, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was born in 1934 as a son of a family of farmers in the province of Rafsanjani situated in the central Iran. He grew up receiving theological education from Rouhollah Khomeini in Qom. He partook in student groups that held demonstrations against the Shah's pro-American policies in the 1960s and 1970s. He was an important member of the Cumhur-e Islam party that initiated the revolution and the Council of Revolution until Khomeini's death.

He served as the Parliament's Spokesman between 1980 and 1989, was appointed as the Commander-in-Chief of Iran Armed Forces by Khomeini in the last year of the Iran-Iraq War²⁰ and helped end the Iran-Iraq War by accepting the solution recommended by the United Nations.

Having served as a President for two terms after Khomeini's death, Rafsanjani lost the 2005 elections to Ahmadinejad.

He is currently serving as the chairperson of the "Expediency Discernment Council" to which he was appointed on March 14, 2012 for five years.

Rafsanjani is close to the religious wing due to his religious education and his close relationship with Grand Ayatollah Khomeini, and also a liberal who advocates that a utilitarian-pragmatist and peaceful policy should be followed in the international arena. Rafsanjani draws a leader profile who

²⁰ Historical Personalities, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Iran Chamber Society "http://www.iranchamber.com/history/arafsanjani/akbar_rafsanjani.php

is economically liberal, politically authoritarian and philosophically traditionalist.

The Rafsanjani Era is called "the Reparation Period" in which liberalist G6 movement took the foreground ²¹. The reparation period was not revolutionist, but a reformist/structuralist era that aimed to re-build the economic power and stability lost during the war.

This era may be suggested to have adopted a stance that reminds us of Weber's rationalism as a principle. Rafsanjani's two-term presidency was a period when expertise gained the forefront over the personal doctrines, a utilitarian realistic politics over the revolution, and liberal, entrepreneurial economic policies over the "hand of the state" ²².

Rafsanjani has a more influential authority and more competent Islamic infrastructure than the Guide Khamenei. On the other hand, his liberal policies led to questioning of the absolutism of the "faqih" concept and the dilemma of whether to bring forward/cause to be brought forward the Islamic or republican characteristic of the revolution. Some analysts argue that the conservative group represented by the Guide Khamenei and the liberal group represented by Rafsanjani facilitated the creation of a double-headed government in Iran ²³.

Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005)

Being a member of the left-leaning Association of Combatant Clerics before he ran for presidency in 1997, Mohammad Khatami is a clergyman who has a well-established academic background. He became the candidate of the moderate and liberal G-6 led by Hashemi Rafsanjani against the traditionalist and conservative candidate Nategh Nouri in the 1997 elections. Since the chairperson of the parliament was usually to become the president in accordance with the Iranian political tradition during that time, it was for granted that Nategh Nouri should win the 1997 elections. However, the protest votes against the extremely oppressive regime that became evident with first the women's movements and later the student movements in Iran were united and made it possible for Khatami to be elected as the President despite the Guide Khamenei's support for Nategh Nouri.

21 Oğuz, S. , Çakır, R. (2000) "Khatami's Iran" İstanbul, İletişim

22 Moslem, M. (2002) "Factional Politics in Post Khomeini Iran" USA, Syracuse, pp.

23 Akdevelioğlu, A., Kürkçüoğlu, Ö., "Relations in the Middle East" Oran, B. (ed.), Turkish Foreign Policy Book 2: 1980-2001, İstanbul, İletişim, 2001 pp. 124-158, 579.

Khatami is known for his moderate, tolerant and rational attitude. It may be suggested that he influenced the elections' result in his favor by stating that "I will be the first person to comply if the leader believes that I am not fit for this position" ²⁴ after the Guide Khamenei openly declared he was supporting Nategh Nouri in the 1997 elections. The reason for this is that being elected as president with the participation and approval of the Iranian people is very influential over the legitimacy of the regime in Iran. Indeed, upon Khatami's said statement, the Guide Khamenei had to make a statement and prevent Khatami's withdrawal by saying, "A candidate who receives the people's votes possesses the people's legitimacy and will be the legal president."

Khatami's understanding of reform is different than that of Rafsanjani's. Rafsanjani brought liberal policies and free market economy to the foreground. Khatami, on the other hand, was inclined to a moderate Islamic model focusing on equality between the groups of people. This point is important in understanding the political differences between Rafsanjani and Khatami. Although Rafsanjani is inclined to be liberal, he is from the conservative wing and was able to obtain their support at all times. On the other hand, reformist policies launched by Khatami after the election (allowing public movements, putting legal rules into practice, re-opening the diplomatic representations in Europe) did not receive the same support from the archconservative wing. As a result, a double-headed government emerged with the election of Khatami as president in 1997. Although Khatami looked promising for reformists with his political, religious and social background, his influence was impeded by the fact that the Guide had the last say as required by the political regime. The conflict between the head of state and the religious leader led to dualities both in domestic policy and foreign policy.

The said dualities provided the opportunity for an attempt to direct the political structure toward conservatism and election of the conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013)

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was born in Garmsar in central Iran in 1956. The poverty he experienced is said to have pushed Ahmadinejad to Islamic conservatism (Al-Ahram Website, June 20, 2009). Having completed his

24 Oğuz, S. , Çakır, R. (2000) "Khatami's Iran" İstanbul, İletişim

undergraduate and graduate degrees as an engineer, Ahmadinejad founded the Islamic Students Organization of the University of Science and Arts of Elmo in 1979 and argued that theological seminars should be held at universities. This group is claimed to have been responsible for the 1979 "Hostage crisis". Demonstrations held in 1980 to emphasize of anti-Western dimension of the revolution were later referred to as the "1980 Cultural Revolution". This revolution that led to the closure of universities in the following three years is known to have been planned by a group led by Ahmadinejad.

After the Cultural Revolution, Ahmadinejad served in the intelligence and security units under the Revolutionary Guards during the Iran-Iraq war that broke out upon Iraq's attack on Iran under the leadership of Saddam Hussein. When America was found out after the war to have helped Iraq, Iran's frustration against the U.S. grew higher, and this atmosphere influenced Ahmadinejad (Global Security Website; June 23, 2009). He is said to have served in execution of the political thought criminals in the Evin Prison under the Internal Security department of the Revolutionary Guards of Iran. After serving as a mayor in various cities in the Northern Iran between 1990 and 1993, he also served as a consultant to the Ministry of Culture.

Becoming the Governor of Ardabil in 1993, Ahmadinejad was removed from office in 1997 by the then head of state Khatami and returned to the Elmo School of Arts as a professor and organized the youngest group known as new radicals called as 'Abadgaran-e Iran-e Islam'. Considering the young population potential in Iran, it is not surprising to see that the said group had a great impact on Ahmadinejad's election (Al-Ahram Website, June 20, 2009).

Ahmadinejad is a religious conservative advocating Islamist and populist views. His election campaign and post-election activities generally focused on poverty, corruption and unemployment (Al-Ahram Website, June 20, 2009). He gained popularity among the poor with his policies highlighting his simple life style, good educational background and rhetoric of honesty.

Ahmadinejad's election as president may be considered a beginning of interruption of the rise of the 15-year reformist movements in the political arena. This interruption must be perceived not as "a return to the con-

servative line in Iran”, but as “the replacement of the duality and conflict between the religious cadre and political cadre by a more agreeable, balanced and monopolistic environment”.

The period concerned is characterized by Ahmadinejad who, as a leader, time to time had a provoking and aggressive stance and who had status quoist line for Iran due to the threat perceptions created by the international conjuncture.

The U.S. threat strongly felt in Iran led to the requirement of strengthening the regime factor that differentiated Iran as a state.

Although anti-Western sentiment continues to be an effective unifying element in Iran, Ahmadinejad’s said uncompromising foreign policy was also felt in the domestic policy practices. In the presidential elections held in June 10, 2009, Ahmadinejad won the majority of votes, but the legitimacy of his election victory was regarded questionable by a considerably high number of people in Iran.

Hassan Rouhani (2013-...)

Iran’s new president, whose real name is Hassan Feridoun and who later assumed the last name Rouhani, was born in Sorkheh, the capital of Sorkheh province in the Semnan region on November 12, 1948.

Rouhani is married with five children, two of whom are boys and three of whom are girls, and his wife has almost never appeared before public. It is rumored that his eldest son was killed or committed suicide at his twenties, but there is no definite information regarding this matter. It is known that his living son is an engineer and that one of his daughters is married.

Rouhani began to receive religious education in the Semnan seminaries in 1960 at the age of 12 and continued it in Qom in 1961. He began to study in the Law School of Tehran University in 1969 and graduated in 1972 and received his doctorate degree in Glasgow Caledonian University in England. The doctorate study subject of Rouhani, who also holds the rank of Hujjat-al Islam in the clerical ranking, is the Flexibility of Shariah.

In addition to his mother tongue Farsi, Rouhani speaks English, German, French and Russian.

The mother of Rouhani from a family involved in trade and known to be anti-Shah is living in the Semnan region, and his father passed away in 2011.

Rouhani has books published in Farsi (16), English (2) and Arabic (2) and over a hundred scientific articles.

Being a Khomeini sympathizer since his very young years, Rouhani exhibited a very pro-Khomeini stance in his public addresses, and when he defined Khomeini as Imam in one of them, he was forced by SAVAK (Iran's Secret Service) to leave Iran in 1977. Arriving in France over Iraq in 1978 to join Khomeini, Rouhani was among Khomeini's close circle after the Islamic Revolution. Referred to as the "Child of the Islamic Revolution" in Iran, Rouhani entered the parliament in 1980 and became a member of parliament uninterrupted for five terms (2000).

He served as the chair of the Defense Committee in his first and second terms, and as the Deputy Chair of the Parliament and Chair of the Foreign Policy Committee in his fourth and fifth terms.

Being the right hand of Rafsanjani during the Iran-Iraq war, Rouhani served in on the Supreme Defense Council-High Council for Supporting War. Appointed as the Air Defense Commander during the war, Rouhani became the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces in 1988. Being a member of the Expediency Council in 1991 and of the Assembly of Experts in 1999, Rouhani served as the president of the Strategic Studies Center directing Iran's foreign policy from 1992 and until he was elected as president in 2013. Serving as the Parliament Spokesperson between 1992 and 2000, Rouhani served as the General Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council to which he was appointed in 1989.

Serving as the National Security Advisor to Rafsanjani between 1989 and 1997 and for Mohammad Khatami between 2000 and 2005, Rouhani participated in the negotiations with EU-3 countries (France-Germany-England) as the chief negotiator between 2003 and 2005 upon Khamenei's request, and his performance during that period earned him the title of "Diplomat Sheikh".

Although he made statements that may be defined as moderate and time to time as sound to be opposing some of Khamenei's ideas, Rouhani is known to have been raised by and be loyal to the Islamic Revolution.

Since the candidates running for presidency in Iran were vetoed by the Guardian Council of the Constitution, the only cleric Rouhani was presented with his reformist identity in the election campaign. However, he possesses a pragmatist philosophy and believes that the Islamic Revolution will not succeed unless it adapts to the international community and system. Rouhani, with his moderate policy understanding, may be suggested to be more a centrist than a reformist or a conservative.

Criticizing Ahmadinejad with impulsive and harsh statements during the election campaign that he caused great harm to Iran, Rouhani was also noticed with his opposition to restricting public's peaceful demonstrations.

Emphasizing that their priority was to solve the increased unemployment problem and repair the economy that was in poor shape due to the embargoes, Rouhani announced that some agencies abolished during Ahmadinejad's time (for example, Plan, Organization and High Economic Council) would be re-instituted. Rouhani, who stated during his campaign that he would adopt a different attitude regarding the political detainees, gave the signals that he would pay attention to moderation to eliminate the contradiction in the society.

It would be an inaccurate conclusion if all these and Rouhani's said moderate policy after elected as president that aimed to repair the relations with the West and made great progress in a short time are perceived as deviation from the Revolution. Considering the religious education of Rouhani (Hujjat-al Islam) who participated in nuclear negotiations with the Western countries for years, is well-experienced in diplomacy and holds a doctorate degree from England, in addition to his long-standing relationships with the revolution's senior ranks and leaders, the trust he earned and the positions he held to protect the essence and spirit of the revolution, the policy he follows may be suggested to be consistent with a pragmatist approach and real political facts in the current situation and conjuncture.

When they have been isolated, and contained by unfriendly countries or through the use of the territory of these countries, their economic life has been cramped due to the embargoes, their welfare have dropped despite the expectations, and the unemployment rate is constantly rising, the answer to the question of how long the Iranian people will stand by the revolution's side and be loyal to it must be that the revolution cannot maintain

its identity only by means of dialectically pure nationalist discourses or actions.

Considering that Rouhani has read this picture very well and his policy exhibits a pragmatist approach in terms of protecting the revolution's principles and the regime instead of deviating from the regime, it appears to be a realistic analysis to conclude that Iran is reinforcing its identity as a regional power by repairing its relations with the West without making any compromises about the revolution.

POLITICAL LIFE IN IRAN

Social Classes, Oppression and Interest Groups

Dominant Groups in Iran: The Market, Clerics and Intellectuals

At this point, as previously stated, Iran's political structuring and culture must be analyzed to understand the reasons for the disputes going on between the reformists and the conservatives. The political structuring in Iran appears to result from the groups separated by the social structuring that manifest themselves at the parties' platform in the political domain. Iran's social structure is divided into three groups including the "Tradesmen" (Market), "Clerics" and "Intellectuals"

The Market

The "Market" has been an important actor in Iran to this day since it was founded 150 years ago with the alliance of small markets near the Golestan Palace (Kakh-i Golestan) during the years when the Qajar Dynasty reigned. It is an influential and powerful class that has a voice not only in the economic and commercial domain but also in social and political domains. The Market's commitment to the religion and revolutionist character that have traditionalism and innovation at the same time can be said to have stemmed from the early 18th century.

The constitutional revolution in the Qajar Dynasty in 1905 took place as a result of the uprising with the clergyman of the market group doing sugar trade that was not satisfied with the economic conditions.

The Market's ties with mosque date back to the first ages of Islam. The fact that Hz. Mohammad and his wife Khadija were involved in trade and managed the caravans going from Mecca through Jerusalem to Damascus formed the basis of the ties between the commercial class and the clergy-

men. In Iran, as in all other Muslim countries, religious ulama descend from the same families, and the tradesmen pay some kind of tax to these families who in return provide educational, social relief and religious services. This also led to an increased respect in the society for the religious ulama. Also, tradesmen in Iran served as a mediator between the momins (believers) and the ulama class (Hiro: 2005; 5-7). In the meantime, clerics' (ulama's) influence and dominance over the education (such as preparing the curriculum) also during the Shah period must be also noted to understand their influential force over the system.

The "Market" (Bazara) class is an influential class that has a voice in social, political and economic domains in Iran and is grouped within itself into the industry bourgeois (boutique class) and the merchant bourgeois (traditional middle class) (Ari: 2006; 333). The boutique class is a bourgeois class that is liberal leaning and inclined to the Western system and values. The so-called "traditional middle class" is the traditionalist and conservative middle class. The members of this class opposed the liberalization policies implemented by the Shah before the Islamic regime and the liberalization movements during the time of Khatami and Rafsanjani.

The Iranian market (class), although it has always been regarded as the representative of the opposition from within the public, noticeably did not support the winds of change during the Islamic revolution. This appears to indicate that the Market's conservative identity rather than its identity of the representative of the people is in the foreground in the Islamic regime.

Bonyads

There is a very large number of private and public foundations for Islamic aid purposes. These foundations are accountable only to Iran's religious leader (the guide) and exempt from tax. They can operate in almost any domain from commerce to manufacturing; from religious propaganda to education and art. The largest ones have a strong status and better means to move the masses and apply political pressure. Bonyads are financially and legally independent agencies and only the Imam has authority over their actions.

Being the most autonomous structure in Iran, bonyads have the unlimited right to use the state resources and constitute 58% of the state budget. All foundations are administered by important religious figures called moluk-e

tavayef (little king). Names of major and influential foundations in Iran are listed below to give the reader an idea:

- Bonyad-e janbazan va mostafazan (The foundation for Persons with Disabilities and the Oppressed)
- Bonyad-e shahid (Martyrs Foundation)
- Bonyad-e astan-e god-e rezavi (Īmam Reza Foundation)
- Bonyad-e panzdah-e khordad (15th Khordad Foundation)
- Bonyad-e eqtesad-e eslami (Islamic Economy Foundation)
- Bonyad-e Resalat (Holy Tasks Foundation)
- Bonyad-e Maskan (Housing Foundation)
- Bonyad-e Refahat (Welfare Foundation)
- Sazeman-e Tablighat-e Eslami (Islamic Propaganda Organization)

Clerics

Clerics represent the group called the defender of moral values of which Khomeini was a member before the revolution. The highest rank in the religious hierarchy is Marja Taqlidi al-Mutlaq. It is perceived as the source of emulation.

Ayatollah al-Uzma means the Great Sign of Allah. There are over 20 Ayatollah al-Uzmas in the Shi'a world, and most of them live in Iran. Ayatollah means the sign of Allah; Hujjat-al Islam means the proof of Islam; and Tekat-al Islam means trusted by Allah.

The ranks and education of the members of the clergymen were provided here in previous chapters.

Intellectuals

The intellectuals represent the intellectual elite that follows nationalist, socialist and religious movements that come to the forefront at different times in the international system. The intellectuals are divided into two main groups according to their political and economic purposes; those who demand more democracy and those who advocate equal distribution of resources.

These two groups that emerged as a result of criticism of the radical Islam has one thing in common: they are anti-Western. The former argues that Islam's influence on the social life should be restricted, that a state of law complying with the universal rules should be founded and that democracy

must be developed and supported, etc. The latter, on the other hand, defends an economically socialist and egalitarian system, and is more moderate toward the radical Islam. While criticizing Ulama's interference with everyday life events, they believe that the ulama should only look into whether decisions taken are consistent with the Islamic rules.

Other Groups: Women's Movements, Students and External Pressure Groups

There are also influence groups and individuals situated between the regime and the civil society in Iran. These are referred to as semi-opposition. The Kiyani School, Montazeri faction, The Freedom Movement of Iran, Iran-e Farde faction, Islamic Women Rights organization are the examples of these groups.

Women's Movements

During the time of Shah before the Iran Islamic Revolution, the country-wide socio-economic inequality created two types of woman: Western, modern and richer women consuming luxurious goods, and economically incapable women working in agriculture. The Islamic Revolution tried to bring these socio-economically divided woman groups together by creating a uniform Islamic woman.

During the period following the Islamic Revolution after the Shah period, the rights of women were considerably restricted. The women were prohibited to study mining and agriculture or work as a lawyer and required to wear hijab when going out. Also, men's rights to unilaterally divorce and have multiple wives came to the agenda. Women's entitlement to their children's custody were almost made impossible by the laws. In the early 1990s, an Islamic feminism phenomenon emerged, which strengthened the "New Religious Thought" (Now-Andishi-ye Dini) advocating modern and democratic interpretation of the Islamic law (Mir- Husseini; 2006: 25). In recent years, some improvements have been attempted in the restrictions and limitations imposed on women in Iran, and particularly in Rouhani's time, the said improvements expanded and accelerated.

Student Movements

Today, it is time-wise hard to say that the Shah era or the Islamic Revolution is in the memory of the young generation in Iran. Since they did not witness the monarchical and autocratic period, it makes it quite harder for

the young generation to perceive the Islamic revolution as revolutionist. Therefore, as the young generation that was born during the Islamic Revolution era has begun to mature ²⁵, their critical stance against the system has begun to be gradually more active.

The student movements in Iran can be grouped into two as early twenties and under-twenties (Khosrokovar; 2002: 8). The first group supports and follows Khatami, and their main critical stance is about acquiring more political freedom.

On the other hand, what the other group that comprises younger people including middle-schoolers and high-schoolers demands is seen to be related more to the social life. They want to be freer in their relationship with the opposite sex, organize parties, consume alcohol and listen to music. These demands that are not claimed in liberal societies as rights as it does not accord with the flow of life and the system of values are an illuminating example of the restrictions of the social life and general recognitions in Iran. The current younger groups perceive the current state policy as the lack of confidence felt toward them and demand more freedom and responsibility.

The emergence of the student movements is critical because it means reviewing and revising the revolutionist policy, and entry of a new social power into Iran's political life. For, a major part of the students are almost completely against the social system.

Inspired by the student movements in Europe in 1968, the students became one of the most important groups that opposed the Shah regime and supported the Islamic Revolution (Ali M. Ansari:2006; 118). As a continuation of this trend, their participation in a reformist group should not be underestimated.

External Pressure Groups: Islamic Marxists, Kurds and Sunnis

The groups against the Iran Islamic regime from the outside are Monarchists, Islamic Marxists, Kurds and Sunnis. At this point, we will briefly talk about the said groups.

25 According to the 2006 census, 65% of Iran's population of 70,472,846 is under 25 years of age.

Islamic Marxists

Being a continuation of the Tudeh party before the revolution, the group advocates the social state understanding based on totalitarian single party system. The People's Mujahedin Organization stationed in Iraq during Saddam's time is generally considered "Islamic Marxist". Mujahedin and Iran Zamin are known to be the media organ of the Islamic Marxists.

Kurds

51% of Iran's population are Farsi living in Mashad, Shiraz, Kerman and Isfahan, 24% thereof are Azeris living in the northeast (Tabriz, Rezaie), 8% are Galikai and Mazandarani living in the north, 7% are Kurds living close to the Iraq and Turkey border most of whom are Sunni, 3% are oil-rich Arabs concentrated in Khuzestan region, 2% are the nomadic Lurs generally staying in the west, 2% are the Beluchians living close to the Pakistan border, 2% are Turkmens, and 1% are other ethnic groups (Armenians, Durcis, etc.)²⁶. About 30% of the five million Kurds living in Iran are of Shi'a origin and are reluctant to cooperate with the other Kurds in the region, which has made it easier for the Iranian State to govern the Kurds in the near history. However, PJAK, being an extension of PKK, has partially managed to break the resistance of the Shi'a Kurds against uniting with other Kurds, together with the Iran Kurdistan Democratic Party aiming on foundation of an autonomous Kurdish region in the areas in Iran, Turkey and Syria where Kurdish population is concentrated (Keskin; 2008).

Sunnis

The majority of the Shi'a are Farsi and Azeri, and the majority of the Sunnis are Kurdish, Turkmen and Beluchians. Almost 90% of the population being Shi'a ensures a religious homogeneity. However, the fact that the Shia are the founder of the Islamic regime and naturally the dominant power thereof makes the Sunnis uncomfortable. The Sunnis who demand to have equal rights with the Shi'a in Iran follow aggressive policies through diplomatic tools using Pakistan and London as a base.

The Sunni groups are trying to be active through unsuccessful attempts within Iran, lobbying in the U.S. and England and using the Western media.

26 Also, 58% of the population speak Farsi and its dialects, 26% Turkish and its dialects, 9% Kurdish, 2% the Luri and 1% Belluchian

The Political Party System after the Iranian Revolution

The said social groups participate in the political life in Iran by forming groups within themselves according to the circumstances. The said groups are not a wide-spread and powerful party culture, but rather small unorganized formations. These groups define themselves under a common roof and tend to unite pragmatically when the existing discontent with the regime is at its peak. After the demanded reform or revolution takes place, the dominant group liquidates the other group(s) and the pragmatic unity is again separated into small groups. This can be said to have become a political ritual in Iran.

This very ritual may be suggested to have taken place during the Iran Islamic Revolution. For example, the communist party Tudeh that cooperated with the Islamic wing before the Revolution was liquidated by Khomeini after the elections.

Social unrest caused by the socio-economic inequality in Iran allowed the small groups opposing the Shah rule to unite under one umbrella and turn into a major opposition movement. (The Shi'a majority of Iran's social and cultural structure corresponding to 90% of the population and Iran's homogeneous structure in this respect must be seen as a factor that facilitates unification of the said groups under the umbrella of religion).

In order to understand whether or not the Tehran-based social events after the 2009 elections point to a revolution or a reform, the groups that existed before and were formed after the Iran Islamic Revolution must be analyzed.

Since the Iran Islamic Revolution brought many different views from radical right to communism together, the Islamic regime based on the conservatism of Khomeini was in fact placed on a slippery surface. The concerned slippery surface differed when Khomeini supporters defined themselves with a new term which is *bonyadegar* (Abrahamian; 1993:19). Contrary to this group that defined itself as conservative and was committed to Khomeini, Khomeini was more involved in sociopolitical matters and "third world populism". The said trend, which holds that the middle class stirs the lower classes, was able to find a functional ground with populist policies, charismatic leader and figures. Khomeini, in parallel to the said paradigm, aimed to strengthen his personal charisma and eliminate the private prop-

erty principle based on small bourgeoisie (Brumberg; 2001:11), and thus managed to gather the power in himself with the public support.

Pre-Revolution Groups

The pre-revolutionary groups varied as radical Islamists, moderate Islamists, nationalists, liberals and moderate leftists ²⁷. Radical Islamists defined themselves as anti-Shah and anti-monarchist. Some of the radical Islamists who were to assume important state positions state during the revolution are the key figures such as Grand Ayatollah Khomeini, Hashemi Rafsanjani and Ali Khamenei. The Cumhur-e Islami party that survived until the last years of Khomeini was also founded by this group.

Moderate Islamists demanded the Shah's authorities, thus the monarchy to be restricted. Nationalism was the driving force for the moderate Islamists. Within this group advocating a constitutional monarchy, Ayatollah Shariatmadari is noticeable with his Azeri identity. It is very noteworthy that he, as a voice of the Azeri community in the region called South Azerbaijan in the north of Iran, demanded a constitutional monarchy based on a parliamentary system.

Nationalists advocated an Islamic Republic based on democracy and opposed the Islamic authority. Moderate leftists, although they believed in the necessity of a revolution, emphasized the importance of radical changes to be made in social and economic domains and institution of social equality rather than the importance of the Islamic structure of the revolution. The People's Mujahedin Organization (Mujaheddin-i Khalq) that was to operate in several countries and in Iran as the regime opponents after the revolution is not exactly socialist, but can be considered part of this group for their socialist interpretation of Islam. Radical leftists side with communism. The most powerful formation after the Islamic wing before the revolution is the leftist party Tudeh.

The said groups were liquidated by Khomeini to ensure homogeneity after the revolution. After the foundation of the Islamic Republic in Iran, the so-called Cumhur-e Islam party that played an important role in the realization of the Islamic Revolution was dominant until it was closed upon Rafsanjani's request and Khomeini's approval. During the time when the

27 Oğuz, S., Çakır, R., "Khatami's Iran" İstanbul, İletişim, 2000.

foreign threats relatively decreased after the end of the Iran-Iraq War, Rafsanjani requested from Khomeini to close the Cumhur-e Islam party on the grounds that some factions had emerged within the party.

The Political Spectrum during the Iranian Islamic Revolution

The Iran-Iraq War that began immediately after Iranian Islamic Revolution took place (1980-1988) made the factions in the regime to unite against the external threat and Iran's domestic politics had a stable look until the end of the war. Toward the end of the war, trends existent in Iran's domestic politics re-emerged in the forefront. The said trends can be defined as the conservative left supported by Hossein Mousavi, the moderate liberals led by Hashemi Rafsanjani, and particularly the conservative wing based in Qom regarded as the capital of Clerics.

At a time when the revision of the constitution was on the agenda, the state's governing positions including the guide and the president were to be re-determined, the crisis experienced immediately after the end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988 can be regarded as a reflection of the said factions in the Islamic regime.

After Khomeini, Grand Ayatollah Hossein Montazeri was anticipated to be the Guide in Iran. Montazeri that seemed fit for this position with his religious competency and his esteem among the public was forced to resign from the membership of the Guardian Council for Constitution before Khomeini's death for his statements that might be described as liberal, and thus, his appointment as the Guide was prevented. Grand Ayatollah Hossein Montazer's stating that the political system in Iran should be revised was not welcomed by the conservative wing. Montazeri was not considered an appropriate candidate for the Guide position by the Assembly of Experts for his statements published in written and visual media that a more open and tolerant state understanding should be adopted and that the last 10 years of the Islamic Revolution should be critiqued.

Montazeri was excluded not only for his criticism of the domestic politics but also for violating the anti-Western sentiment adopted as an official policy in Iran. In the event in 1986 recorded in the history as the Iran-Contra, Mahdi Hashemi working with Hossein Montazeri was claimed to have attempted to buy weapons from the U.S. Mahdi Hashemi's and Hossein Montazeri's said activities were perceived as anti-revolutionary, and Mahdi

Hashemi was killed, and as said before, Hossein Montazeri was requested to resign. These incidents that took place before Khomeini died suggest that the Islamic Revolution did not originate from a uniform thought. A Hashemi-Montazeri alliance was observed against the Rafsanjani-Khomeini alliance in the said incident. It should be noted that the said statesmen are still active today and particularly that Rafsanjani has approached the opposing camp.

After the crises regarding the constitution and the political order in 1989, the article series published by Behzad Nabavi on the left-leaning *Asr-e Ma* paper in 1994 mentioned about the new categories of the political life in Iran (Moslem, 2002: 92- 93). After Khomeini's death and the fourth parliamentary elections in 1992, the factions in Iran were re-defined.

With the idea of having economics-based factions, the political spectrum was divided into two as traditional right and dynamic right. The dynamic right was used to define Rafsanjani's supporters. Rafsanjani and his supporters adopted a more liberal view in socio-cultural events and supported participating in modern industrial economy, foreign borrowing, high taxation rates and compliance with the development programs structured by the World Bank. On the other side of the political spectrum, the traditional right consisted of the supporters of Nategh Nouri. They wanted the Market to maintain its economic system, opposed introduction of a modern taxation and banking system, and emphasized the need to make sharia rules more influential in socio-cultural life.

The only common point that the above two groups can agree on seems to be the utilitarian foreign policy trends. Apart from the political right wing, a "new left" formation was observed in the leftist wing. The New Left Movement in a sense institutionalized the new left movement together with the Union for Defense of the Values of the Islamic Revolution (*jame'-e defa'-e az arzeshha-ye engelab-e eslami*) founded in 1996 (Buchta, 2000: 18). The "new left" have some traces from the old left with its egalitarian Islamic republic and anti-American views, and from the right with commitment to sharia and denial of the Western culture.

The political spectrum defined in 1994 is suggested to have survived to this day with some small changes and deviations. During the concerned period in which the political party culture was newly forming, many Iranian

politicians still preferred to work with political pressure groups. As a reflection of the political ritual in Iran, political parties, on the other hand, are generally founded before elections and dissolved shortly after.

Political Formations After the Islamic Revolution

When Rafsanjani who was close to the conservative group, however relatively more moderate and liberal became the president after Cumhur-e Islam was closed and Khomeini died, the small groups that differed before the revolution, but were able to come together with Khomeini's revolution discourse began to divide into parties again. These parties that were all in fact the Children of the Revolution were separated as conservative right, liberal right, traditional left and modern left (Oğuz and Çakır, 2000: 7).

Combatant Clergy Association (Jāme'e-ye Rowhāniyyat-e Mobārez-JRM)

It is an Islamic conservative right-wing party supported by the Market (Bazara) that owned the traditionalist commercial capital after the closure of Cumhur-e Islam. The conservative Nategh Nouri, who lost the 2000 elections to the reformist Khatami, and the liberal Rafsanjani, who lost the 2005 elections to Ahmadinejad and was the then reconciliatory parliament chairman, served as the council members in this party.

Executives of Iran's Reconstruction (Kargozaran-ı Sazendegi-G6)

It is an organization that was instituted to repair the economic decline in Iran caused by the costly 8 years of the Iran-Iraq War and the decreased oil prices, and advocates economic, social and cultural liberalization. It was founded in 1996 by Hashemi Rafsanjani and the Governor of Tehran in Khatami's time Gulamhossein Karbaschi also including various bureaucrats and technocrats This group supported Khatami and helped him win the 1997 elections that turned into a race between the reformist Khatami and the conservative Nategh Nouri. This group uses the media as an effective political tool and has Iran, Iran Daily and Ittialat as its media organs.

Combatant Clerics Union (Mecme-i Ruhaniyun-u Mubariz-MRM)

It is an organization founded after breaking from JRM with Khomeini's permission on March 1, 1988. It defines itself as a "traditional left" on the reformist line. Mohammad Khatami who served as president between 1997 and 2005 and Hujjat-al Islam Mahdi Karroubi are among the founders of this group. They emphasized individual freedoms and class equality (Oğuz and Çakır, 2000: 58).

Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Organization (Saziman-i Mojahedin-i Īnkilab-ı Īslami-i Īran)

Defining itself as the “modern left”, this group in overall poses close standing to traditional left. This group stands out for being flexible about the Iran Islamic Revolution’s political culture according to the changes in the international system, executing moderate cultural policies and preferring to interact with other groups.

Ansar-e Hezbollah (Supporters of the Party of God)

Independently from the right and left groups, it remains loyal to Khomeini and the Islamic regime. It can also be described as the active power of the conservative wing. It organized demonstrations in shopping centers and neighborhoods symbolizing Western life style and supported the conservative wing with demonstrations against political actors such as the moderate and reformist Tehran Governor Karbaschi during the time of Khatami.

Nehzet-i Azadi-e Īran (The Freedom Movement of Iran)

This group supports the Islamic Republic, but opposes the religious monopoly’s control over the political power. They are against the Guide’s absolutism and advocates that the regime’s republican aspect must come to the front with democracy.

The new two parties that have been recently founded drawn a particular attention. Mahdi Karroubi, who became the sixth Parliament spokesperson in the 2005 presidential elections founded the National Trust Party. The Iranian Development Coalition (Abadgaran) that participated as a new party in the 2004 parliamentary elections won the majority of the seats and became active in the following term.

The said groups that emerged after Khomeini’s death constitutes the basis of the separation observed in Iran’s domestic politics. The political conflict that took place between the moderate and radical groups in Iran after the 2009 elections is not something new. We believe that the matter that keeps the international circles busy or can be accepted “new” for the post-revolutionary period is a political separation that has existed in Iran all along, and once in a while turned violent.

Although the moderation and reconstruction process that started in Rouhani’s time is supported by large and different groups in Iran, it yet stands

as a question mark how long the archconservative groups pressurized by the existing conjuncture will keep their silence.

The developments in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen²⁸ that will probably end in Iran's loss of influence remain as a risk factor that may preclude Rouhani from attempting to save Iran from its current isolation and integrate it into the Western world. Although the deal reached with the P5-1 countries seems to have strengthened Rouhani's position and considerably prevented any possible counter action and attempt from the conservative groups at this point, outcome of the developments in Syria remains to be important for Rouhani.

28 The support lent by Iran to the Houthis in Yemen must be seen not as a strategic implementation and target, but as a tactical action. It is misleading to argue that Yemen has an important place and position in Iran's regional policy and balance of powers.

CHAPTER –3–

POWERFUL POLITICAL FIGURES IN IRAN

Although today's international system is under heavy influence from the governments, international and transnational agencies in addition to the system's own dynamics and the governments' classic understanding of power originating from the past, it is not incorrect to say that certain individual political figures maintain their importance, particularly in Iran, and those countries similar to it.

Also, Iran's elite has recently turned to pure linguistic "Farsi terms" frequently repeated in the visual and written media addressing to the Turkish public, and their past and tendencies are almost never mentioned. Such "analyses" lead to very a misleading picture and it doesn't seem possible to make sense of Iran's politics shaped by the dominance of individuals (political figures) and make any sound future predictions.

At this point, it is useful to include an informative section about "who is who" on the Iranian elite scene. Undoubtedly, such analysis is a study produced by an institution of thought and addresses the figures believed to actually determine the system alone. For example, the Commander of the Revolutionary Guards, General Mohammad Ali Jafari and the Commander of the Quds Force Qasem Soleimani are believed to be the critical actors in the system.

Thus, the purpose here is to ensure that the texts read by the reader be not filled with "Farsi names" not only in this study, but also in all intellectual activities regarding Iran and that the reader avoid wrong evaluations offering the matter within a false context.

This need is strongly felt particularly in Turkey as Iran's neighbor that, as previously stated, has had no border dispute since the Qasr-e Shirin, but has had serious problems in the recent past and has been actively competing with Iran in the Caucasus and Central Asia quietly, yet strongly.

a. 'Ayatollah' Ali Khamenei

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is the religious leader and the highest authority in Iran. Khamenei's veto power constitutes the final decision in Iran's political

decision processes. The Guide has been widely accepted as the visible face of the country's conservative agencies and one of the three determining power elements of the revolution.

Despite President Ahmadinejad, who attracted the West's attention after taking office in 2005 until his departure, it was Ayatollah Khamenei, who assumed the role of Supreme Leader (Guide), constitutionally the most important figure in Iran.

Ayatollah Khamenei succeeded the first Supreme Leader Grand Ayatollah Khomeini who founded the Iran Islamic Republic in 1989. Grand Ayatollah Khomeini was at the highest rank of the clergymen (Marja Taqlidi). Therefore, when Ayatollah Khamenei took over the office, a constitutional amendment had to be made for a clergyman at a lower rank to take the same office.

Powers under Scrutiny

One of the first decisions taken after assuming the office of Supreme Leader upon Grand Ayatollah Khomeini's death by Khamenei, who had frequent disputes during his presidency with the then prime minister Ali Hossein Mousavi whom he believed to be left-leaning, was to abolish the office of prime ministry.

Ayatollah Khamenei was generally considered to have lacked the charisma and public support Khomeini had. However, he transferred his authority, the experience and relations he had acquired in the office of presidency to the institution of Guide and gradually reinforced his position by developing his contacts with the security forces and other agencies in Iran.

He differed in opinion with Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri in 1997 who was higher in the hierarchical rank order because Ayatollah Montazeri who was one of the main oppositions in Iran questioned the Supreme Leader's authorities. Montazeri's said action resulted in closure of the school, an attack on his office in Qom and his detention for a while.

Conservative Control

As the Supreme Leader (Guide), Ayatollah Khamenei is authorized to directly and indirectly elect the members of the Guardian Council of Constitution. He is responsible for elections, voting and the appointment of the

candidates for the said council (on condition that all members received religious education, six members were directly elected and another six members to be elected by the Supreme Judiciary that is under his control). In the 2004 elections where he won 70% of the conservative votes, he disqualified members of the Guardian Council who were moderate and reformist including hundreds of people who were members of the previous government. Even the Supreme Leader's brother Hadi Khamenei criticized the said situation, arguing that it harmed Iran's democracy, but Ayatollah Khamenei persisted in his role as the controller of the Guardian Council.

Religious Governance

The Supreme Leader Khamenei supported the Guardian Council's refusal of the draft law submitted by the Parliament about the media law in August 2009. As reported by the State's news agency (IRNA), in his letter to the Parliament, he stated that, "The existing law prevents control of the Islam's enemies over the media. Therefore, it does not serve the nation's interests to re-interpret the law in any manner." Although the letter led to debates and fights over "the Parliament's and the Guardian Council's power", the draft law on the media was withdrawn at the end.

Ayatollah Khamenei also interfered with the incident of the reformist academician Hashem Aghajari. In November 2002, Aghajari said that the Muslims should re-interpret Islam instead of following their leader unconditionally, upon which the court sentenced Aghajari to death. While the protests were increasing in the capital, Khamenei said that the sentence should be reviewed again and the death penalty was reduced to a prison sentence.

In May 2003, over a hundred members of parliament wrote an open letter to Khamenei warning him that the system would be in danger unless the obstacles before it in maintaining of the Islamic system were eliminated with reforms and that Iran was on the final crossroads of dictatorship and democracy. The letter was sent to two websites in Iran, however removed by the officers within 24 hours.

Foreign Relations

In his inaugural speech at the parliament as the president in 1981, Ayatollah Khamenei swore to oppress the deviations, liberalism and the leftist movements which were considered to be under the American influence.

When the reformist students revolted in June 2003, Ayatollah Khamenei announced that such actions were not to be tolerated and blamed the U.S. for masterminding the incidents, "The leaders have no right to show mercy to mercenary soldiers of the enemies".

He harshly criticized the U.S. policies during and after the war with Iraq and said, "The occupation of Iraq is not a morsel that the U.S. can swallow".

When the US President offered a new beginning in diplomatic connections with Iran in 2009, Khamenei replied by keeping his silence.

Addressing students in an Iranian New Year Message (2009), he said he didn't see any change in the U.S. approach and policies voicing and confirming its support to Israel and that, if President Obama, however, changed the position of the U.S., Iran would be also ready to move in the same way.

Khamenei's attitude and discourse after the deal reached on nuclear studies will be separately discussed in the respective chapters.

b. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was born in 1956 in the village of Aradan of Garmsar. He moved to Tehran with his family when he was one year old and completed his elementary and middle schooling there. In 1975, he was admitted to the Civil Engineering Department of the University of Science and Technology in Iran with a high score. In 1986, he continued in the same university for his graduate study. In 1989, he became the member of the Civil Engineering Faculty Board at the University of Science and Technology. In 1997, he acquired the doctorate degree in Transportation and Planning Engineering from the University of Science and Technology. While teaching at the university, he wrote several scientific articles and participated in scientific studies in many fields. During the same period, he provided thesis consulting to master's and doctorate students in subjects such as building operation, civil engineering and road and transportation. Dr. Ahmadinejad began to attend religious and political meetings before the Islamic Revolution when he was yet a student. As a result of the successful Islamic Revolution, he became the founding member of the Islamic Students Union at the University of Science and Technology. During the

war years, Dr. Ahmadinejad actively served in different divisions and sections of the Volunteer Forces (Basij) in the battlefield, particularly in the war engineering division until the end of the war.

Dr. Ahmadinejad is married with two sons and one daughter.

Career History;

- Maku governor
- Khoy governor
- Advisor to the Governor General of Kurdistan Province
- Advisor for Cultural Affairs to the Minister of Culture and Higher Education (1993)
- Governor General of Ardabil Province (1993-1997)
- Member of the Civil Engineering Faculty Board at the University of Science and Technology (1989-...)
- Mayor of Tehran (2003-2005)
- He was elected by the people of Iran as the Head of State in the 9th Presidential Elections held on June 24, 2005.
- He was elected President the second time in the Presidential Elections held on June 12, 2009.
- Beyond the governor positions, academic career and scientific interest, Dr. Ahmadinejad also carries out activities in the following domains.
- Journalism; authorship of various political, cultural and economic, social articles,
- Continuing the duty of manager in the Hamshahri Newspaper (the Hamshahri Newspaper has Hamshahri for passengers, Diplomatic Hamshahri, Youth Hamshahri, Monthly Hamshahri and many additional sections for intellectuals, students, etc.)
- Member of the Iran Tunnel Society
- Member of the Iran's Civil Engineers,
- Member of the First Central Council of the Islamic Society of Students of the University of Science and Technology,
- Member of the First Central Council of the Islamic Associations of Universities and Higher Education Institutes in Iran

c. Hujjat-al Islam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani

Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani has remained to be the dominant figure of the Iran politics from 1980 to this day. He is described as pragmatic conservative and, although he is a member of the religious structure, exhibits a stance that is open to any kind of thought in a large spectrum and utilitarian approach toward the relations with the West.

Rafsanjani served as a President for eight years until 1997 and lost the elections he re-entered in 2005 to Ahmadinejad in the second tour.

In the 2009 elections when Ahmadinejad became the president for a second term, he was one of the major supporters of Mir Hossein Mousavi.

Having close ties with Iran's industrial and commercial circles, Rafsanjani is believed to be the richest man in Iran. He constantly denies the allegations that he has made a large fortune thanks to his political ties.

Khomeini's Follower

He was born into an agricultural family in the southeast of Iran in 1934. He studied theology in the holy city of Qom together with Grand Ayatollah Khomeini of whom he was a close follower. During the Shah period, he was imprisoned several times due to his opposing views and discourse.

Rafsanjani served as the chair of the parliament between 1980 and 1989 and was appointed the commander-in-chief of the army by Grand Ayatollah Khomeini in the last year of the war with Iraq. He was seen as the chief actor in adoption of the UN Security Council's decision ending the war.

During his presidency, Rafsanjani was looked after as a person that supported getting closer to the West and re-introducing Iran as a regional power. In the early 1990s, he helped release of the Western hostages in Lebanon.

Pragmatic Politics

In domestic politics, he followed a liberal economic policy which was criticized to fail in terms of the distribution of social justice. He yet opposed the death penalty and improved employment and social opportunities for women.

With his financial policies, he aimed to have Iran transition from the state-controlled system implemented during the war years to a system leaning to market economy. In the recent years, he criticized Ahmadinejad's economic policies and accused him of causing serious harm to Iran.

Although he sides with reaching an agreement with the West on nuclear activities, he does not accept the West's "bullying and imposing its own

ideas". He warned Washington that its threats would remain ineffective. In his Friday Khutbahs in 2007, he said that he was against nuclear weapons, but he was disappointed that the U.S. that owned nuclear weapons was trying to prevent Iran that wanted to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes.

In 2002, he was appointed as the chair of the Expediency Discernment Council of the System that acts as an arbitrator in the disputes between the Parliament and the Guardian Council that has the power to block the Parliament. He was elected to the Assembly of Experts and began to chair this institution a year later. He became one of the major supporters of Mousavi in the 2009 elections as opposed to Ahmadinejad. The relationship between Rafsanjani and Ahmadinejad has been tense since the 2009 election campaign. Ahmadinejad blamed Mousavi for being backed by corrupt politicians and also wrote a letter expressly to Rafsanjani and Ayatollah Khamenei criticizing them for remaining quiet while there were several allegations of corruption regarding elections.

d. Mir Hossein Mousavi

Known for his love for arts and poetry, Mousavi is also the head of Iran Academy of Art.

Mir Hossein Mousavi, who was the greatest rival of Iran's conservative president Ahmadinejad, did not always operate in a liberal sphere. Mousavi remained in the office of prime ministry for eight years until it was abolished. After a long interval of twenty years, he returned with "his moderate stance" in the 2009 elections. It should be remembered that, although he exhibited a liberal approach compared to Ahmadinejad's hardline stance and discourse, he was referred to as a "strict radical" by economists in 1988.

Radical Revolutionist

Mousavi was born in Iran's Eastern Azerbaijan Province, moved to Tehran to study architecture and specialized in Islamic architectural studies.

He actively took place with his wife Zahra Rahnavard in the Islamic Revolution that overthrew the Shah. Considered a "reformist candidate" today, Mousavi defended Iranian militants' taking hostage of Americans in the embassy invasion on the grounds that it served the purposes of the revolu-

tion. So much so that he said in an interview published on New York Times in 1981, "We rediscovered our real Islamic identity after this incident (the U.S. Embassy invasion)".

As the prime minister, Mousavi also supported Grand Ayatollah Khomeini as the leader of the revolution; he is remembered to have been the prime minister of a government that had no internal disputes in the cabinet in his time. He is also said to have shown a successful economic performance to the extent possible under the circumstances of the Iran-Iraq War.

When the war ended in August 1988, he had a fierce debate with the then chairman of the parliament Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani upon his suggestion that Iran should accept the Western aid for restructuring. When Rafsanjani became president in 1989, he refused to invite Mousavi to participate in the new government. This incident was the beginning of the period when Mousavi completely stayed away from the public life, although he was the head of two high-level regime councils. During this period, Mousavi on one hand developed his interest in art and poetry and focused on architectural studies and teaching on the other.

Mousavi became a part of the reformist movement as of 1997, which was regarded as the best opportunity he had to become president. Yet, he refused to take part in the election activities of Mohammad Khatami. Later, Mousavi and his wife served as an advisor to Khatami during his 8-year presidency.

The former President Khatami withdrew his candidacy in March in support of Mousavi's election campaign. Mousavi also obtained assurance of his former rival Rafsanjani's support.

Mousavi said that as the underlying reason for his return to politics, he believed Iran to be in great danger, which, according to him, would further increase if Ahmadinejad was elected the second time. Mousavi also promised that he would fight against Iran's radical image abroad.

He called for more individual freedom and criticized the ban against private TV channels during his campaign. He stood against the West's call for suspension of Iran's uranium enrichment program while making a distinction between nuclear power and armament. In this framework, in his statement to the Financial Times, he said, "I think the recent discourse, which

differentiates between nuclear technology and nuclear weapons is a good one. The more this differentiation is emphasized, the greater the possibility of a détente”.

The Power behind Mousavi

The greatest propaganda tool of Mousavi during the campaign was his wife Zahra Rahnavard, one of the most powerful female figures in Iran.

Zahra Rahnavard remained by her husband’s side and appeared on the campaign posters, and even broke one of Iran’s political traditions by holding hands with her husband before the public. Ms. Rahnavard became an active campaigner that made speeches, partook in public meetings alone and openly criticized the then president Ahmadinejad’s attitude toward women.

Mohammad Khatami

Mohammad Khatami, whose many reformist attempts were blocked by conservative resistance, served as Iran’s Head of State for eight years. Following his resignation in August 2005, he adopted a critical approach to the foreign policy of the U.S. on his country and continued to defend his reforms.

He announced his candidacy for presidency at the beginning of the 2009 elections, however withdrew later in support of Mir Hossein Mousavi who had served as his advisor during his presidency.

Being the son of a respected Ayatollah, Mohammad Khatami was born in Yazd Province in 1943. Among his former positions are the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Cultural Advisor to President Hashemi Rafsanjani before him and Director of the National Library of Iran.

“Democracy cannot be exported”²⁹

He won the presidential elections with a large majority in 1997. Among his election campaign commitments were broadening the scope of freedom of expression, overcoming unemployment and supporting privatization. The source of his success was attributed to the large support from the youth and women influenced by his view of “religious (Islamic) democracy”. This expression of the President Khatami served as a pioneer in the rebirth of the written media and relations developed with the U.S.

²⁹ From his speech broadcast on BCC in 2008

In his statement to CNN in 1998, he expressed his hope for a consensus by implying the "American People" and emphasizing that they did not bear any hostility against them. In September of 1998 again, he proposed the General Assembly of United Nations to declare the year 2001 as a "Year of Dialog between Civilizations", and the said proposal aimed to expand global tolerance was adopted.

Islamic Democracy

His attempt to realize Islamic democracy in his country was inhibited by the country's conservatives. The first stirrings in the media were followed by closure of the newspapers and the arrest of journalists. Despite the said resistance and the economic distress caused by the decreased oil prices, Khatami managed to win the elections for the second term in 2001. Although the participation in the said elections was lower compared to 1997, his vote rate increased.

Disappointed by the obstacles put before the reforms, Khatami brought another restriction to the role of the Guardian Council with a proposal that increased the authorities of the president. The draft law passed the parliament in April 2003 and was however denied by the Advisory Council on the grounds that it was contrary to the Constitution.

An open letter signed by 153 members of parliament read at the parliament in May 2003 stating that, "Iran would otherwise share the same fate with Saddam Hussein's Iraq" forced conservatives to open the door to reforms. When the students that had once supported Khatami with their votes took to the streets for the reforms not to be slowed down in June 2003, they requested the resignation of Khatami and his supporters. In his TV statements, Khatami said the following for the said student movements: "Our students have the right to arrange protests and, while doing this, exhibited their maturity in this matter." At the same time, Khatami, in return for the U.S. President George W. Bush's evaluation of the demonstrations that the Iranians requested freedom, gave a strong response saying, "no foreigner will be allowed to interfere with internal affairs". Khatami's said response that was not expected and disappointed some Western circles must actually be a result of misinterpretations and misperceptions frequently held about Iran. For, regardless of whatever his/her beliefs are, the reactionary approach of even the strongest critiques of the regime against any foreign discourse that appeared to be interfering with Iran's internal affairs is seen to be an inevitable prerequisite of being an Iranian.

Mohammad Khatami left his position after completing the two consecutive terms in 2005 as allowed by the Constitution of Iran. After Khatami, the archconservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who led to great debates in the West with his attitude and discourse about the Jewish Holocaust became the president.

Khatami said that he did not believe that any attempt to implement western style democracy in the Middle East would produce any result and that he had dedicated himself to fight against the extremism in the world. Supporting Iran's possession of nuclear energy, Khatami also believes that the justified concerns of the outside world should be mitigated.

f. 'Hujjat-al Islam' Mehdi Karroubi

As a mid-level cleric, Hujjat-al Islam Mehdi Karroubi was born in Luristan in 1937 and is the founding member and former chairperson of the Association of Combatant Clerics.

Arrested and imprisoned several times during the Shah period in the 1970s, Karroubi served as the chair of the Parliament between 1989 and 1992 and between 2000 and 2004, and lost his seat in the parliament after the 2004 elections. He resigned from the advisor position and the membership of the Maslahat Council to which he was appointed by Supreme Leader Khamenei after the 1995 Presidential Elections.

As the supporter of Supreme Leader Khamenei, Karroubi is one of the figures that criticizes the Guardian Council of Constitution, but defines himself as someone following the footsteps of Grand Ayatollah Khomeini. Arguing that the Guardian Council of Constitution was created 20 years ago to carry out compliance control, Karroubi claims that it had then turned out to be dominating the elections.

Karroubi frequently criticized Ahmadinejad's foreign policy understanding and made one of his most known outbursts with his statement describing the Holocaust as a phenomenon.

In the brochures he distributed to voters in the 2009 election campaign, he made several commitments such as protecting human rights, developing non-governmental organizations, and improving women's social status. Becoming the head of the Itimad e Milli Party in 2008, Karroubi is considered a 'moderate' and most of the time a 'peasant' by the Iranian elite.

g. Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari

Born in 1957 in Yazd, Ali Jafari is the commander of the Revolutionary Guards to which he was appointed in place of the Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei on September 1, 2007.

Jafari is known to be close to the conservative group, including Mohsen Rezaei (the former commander of the Revolutionary Guards) and Mohammad Baqre Qalibaf (former member of the Revolutionary Guards and Tehran's Mayor). Appointment of Jafari in place of Safavi was interpreted as Ayatollah Khamenei's balancing the radicals surrounding Ahmadinejad with conservative clique.

The experts define Jafari as a tactician, an organizer and an expert military man in unconventional warfare.

Jafari completed his elementary and middle school education in his city of birth Yazd and was admitted into Tehran University in 1997 to study building technology. During his student years, he participated in the protests against the Shah in Tehran and was therefore caught and put in prison. Jafari partook in the U.S. Embassy invasion.

In 1981, he became a member of the Revolutionary Guards and was promoted to the rank of 'Commander of Operations in the South and West Battlefields'. Jafari actively participated in several battles and served as the commander of Ashura Brigades, Quds and Najaf Headquarters.

He taught in the Revolutionary Guards War College between 1992 and 1993. Jafari is said to have created many doctrines about unconventional and asymmetrical warfare.

Before being appointed as the commander of the Revolutionary Guards, Jafari served as the Commander of the Land Forces and the President of the Revolutionary Guards Strategy Center for 13 years.

Jafari is the son-in-law of the Acting Interior Minister Mohammad Baqer Zolkadr,²⁴ and was among the authors of the warning letter sent by 24 Pasdaran commanders to Khatami (against the liberal policies).

h. Ayatollah Muhammad Yazdi

Born in 1931 in Isfahan, Iran, Yazdi served as the Representative of Tehran in the Assembly of Experts, the Member of the Guardian Council of

Constitution, the Secretary of the Association of the Mudarris of the Qom Religious Sciences Madrasas (Jamiat-e Muderrisiyn), the Secretary of the High Council of Religious Madrasas, the Chairperson of the Judiciary Power between 1989 and 1999 and the member of parliament during its first and second terms.

Being a radical conservative who argued that the opposing reformists must be fought against by using violence in the country, Yazdi is known with his prohibitive decisions during his chairmanship of the Judiciary Power.

Being the Chairperson of the Assembly of Experts since 2011, Keni had passed away at the age of 83 in the capital Tehran on October 21st. Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi who temporarily filled in as the Chairperson of the Assembly of Experts after Keni's illness is considered an opponent of Rafsanjani.

Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, known with his radical conservative identity, has won the chairperson elections, the most important agenda of the Assembly of Experts, held the 17th time under the chairmanship of Ayatollah Hashemi Shahroudi by 47 of 86 votes.

i. Mohsen Rezaei

An early leader of the Revolutionary Guards Mohsen Rezaei is one of the four candidates approved by the Guardian Council of Constitution for the 2009 Presidential Elections.

Born in 1954 in Khuzestan, Rezaei is a former military man who holds a doctorate degree in economics. His military background began with his membership in the paramilitary forces that fought against the U.S.-backed Shah before the 1979 Islamic Revolution. During the 8-year Iran-Iraq War, he was appointed the Commander of the Revolutionary Guard Corps when he was only 27.

Rezaei is known to be one of the five Iranians alleged to have partaken in an attack to a Jewish center that killed 85 people in 1994 in Argentina. Rezaei was appointed the Secretary of the Maslahat Council in 1997, which is known to be the highest-ranking consensus structure in the country.

Mohsen Rezaei participated in the 2005 elections, but withdrew later. Rezaei was also the only conservative rival of Ahmadinejad in the elec-

tions. Promising, in general, to fight against matters such as inflation, unemployment and corruption, Mohsen Rezaei accused Ahmadinejad of dragging the country into an abyss and promised to undertake reforms in Iran's troubled economy. Differing from his rival also in the nuclear program, Rezaei criticized Ahmadinejad's "adventurous style" and said that he himself would neither be 'passive nor an adventurer'.

i. Qasem Soleimani

Born in 1957, Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani is the Commander of the Quds Force (Niru-ye Qods) estimated to have 15000 personnel under the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (Sepah-e Pasdaran- Engelab-e Eslami) and Ansar al-Mahdi³⁰. Major General Soleimani appointed as the commander of the Quds in 1998 was promoted to Lieutenant General by Ali Khamenei on January 24, 2011.

Having joined the Iranian Army during the Iran-Iraq War at the age of 20, Soleimani, after the end of the war, was commissioned to fight against drug trafficking on the Iran-Afghanistan border and later joined the Quds Force.

The Quds Force, described as a combination of M16, SAS and DFID by the western intelligence experts, is in charge of the operations and intelligence outside Iran. The name of the Quds Force, described as the "long arm of Iran everywhere" has been recently quoted frequently with its fight against ISIS and the support lent to Assad.

Called the "living hero" by Khamenei, Soleimani is referred to as "Iran's shining star".

Known for his excessive commitment and loyalty to Khamenei, Soleimani is also known to be a military man that is expert in unconventional warfare and, according to some sources, is a determining actor in Iran's foreign politics.

Referred to as the person who changed the course of the civil war in favor of Assad in Syria, Soleimani may be expected to be a powerful actor in the near future of Iran.

30 Ansar al-Mahdi is a secret and elite military unit responsible for ex-Iran covert and counter operations and for protection of the senior statesmen.

j. Ali Larijani

Born in Najaf, Iran in 1958, Ali Larijani is the chairperson of the parliament of Iran, and a philosopher and a politician. Larijani was appointed by the then President Ahmadinejad to replace the current President Hassan Rouhani as the secretary of the 'Supreme National Security Council' for the period between August 15, 2005 and October 20, 2007.

The Iranian Government Spokesperson Golam Hussein Elham announced the acceptance of Larija's resignation (2007) that had been previously rejected by President Ahmadinejad

Larijani is one of the two representatives of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in the council (the other representative was Hassan Rouhani). In his former position as the secretary, he actively worked as the chief negotiator in the national security matters also including the nuclear program.

k. Mohammad Javad Zarif Khonsari

Mohammad Javad Zarif who was the head of the Iranian delegation in the nuclear deal negotiations between the P5+1 countries and Tehran and became the central focus of the world public opinion with his successful performance during the negotiations is a career diplomat and an academician.

Born into a conservative and devout family of merchants on January 7, 1960 in Tehran, and kept away by his family from the influences of television, radio and newspapers during his young years, Zarif received his first education in an Alevis school. Known to have been influenced by Ali Shariati's and Samed Behrangi's religious thoughts and ideologies during his young years, Zarif went to San Francisco at the age of 17 to study in Drew College Preparatory School and later attended San Francisco State University where he earned a BA degree in international relations in 1981 and an MA degree in 1982.

After San Francisco State University, Zarif earned his second master's degree in Joseph Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver (1984) and graduated from the said university with a PhD degree in law and politics. Zarif's PhD dissertation was "Self Defense in International Law and Politics".

Zarif who completed his high school, university, graduate and PhD studies in the U.S. and represented Iran in the U.N. as an ambassador between

2002 and 2007 is considered to have formed the infrastructure of his success in the nuclear negotiations strongly with his close familiarity with the U.S. and his good command of the English language.

Having married in Iran in 1979 and returned to the U.S. few weeks later, Zarif has a daughter and a son who were both born in the U.S.

Appointed to the U.N. Iran delegation in 1982 when he received his second master's degree, Zarif taught international law in the University of Tehran and served as the vice president of the Islamic Azad University responsible for foreign relations (2012-2012). Having authored several articles on disarmament, human rights, international law and regional conflicts, Zarif developed personal relations with many politicians also including Joseph Biden and Chuck Hagel during the period when he was the Representative of Iran to the U.N.

Zarif was included in the inner cabinet of Rouhani referred to as the Sheikh diplomat, and officially nominated by Rouhani as the Minister of Foreign Affairs by Rouhani on August 4, 2013 after his election as the President and was approved and appointed by 232 votes as the Minister of Foreign Affairs vacated by Ali Akbar Salehi.

It was published in the world media that, while chairing the Iranian delegation in this capacity in the nuclear negotiations held with the P5+1 countries, he would leave the table during prayer time and return after the prayer to say, "I fear only one power" and would time to time get angry and raise his voice, and even that he warned the P5+1 representatives during a polemic that "I would never recommend threatening an Iranian".

It is a common agreement of those specialized in Iran that Zarif who was nominated for the Nobel Prize along with his counterpart U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry by the Sweden-based think-tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) will be an important figure in Iran's future politics.

Although there is still a question about how the archconservatives will respond to the deal that has been welcomed by the public in Iran with great acceptance and joy, the "final settlement" (showdown) is believed to have been left to time in the face of the Guide Khamenei's cautious approval and Rouhani's open support.

As a matter of fact, one of Iran's powerful political and military figures, the Commander of Revolutionary Guards Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, as a fore sign, ominously noted that, "some conditions in the deal conflict with Iran's red lines". The archconservative and hawk wing also joined the said criticism on the grounds that "too many concessions have been made."

Zarif, on the other hand, responded to the said criticism in a speech addressed to the parliament, "Most of the red lines have been maintained. We do not say that the deal is fully in favor of Iran. We showed some flexibility. I am telling you what I have told our religious leader Khamenei; We have done our best to maintain not all, but most of the red lines. We should remember that each deal is a trade-off. Both parties waive some of their demands to win the more important part of them. Iran's key goals have been achieved. The other party's basic demand was to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons with restrictions and oversight."

The factors that will determine how the dose of such criticism or support and political reflections will develop will be the Iranian public's level of welfare and the momentum of its integration into the international system depending on the removal of the limitations and restrictions as a result of the deal anticipated to be put in effect in stages.

These matters shall be analyzed in detail in the chapter entitled Iran's Nuclear Journey.

WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT KIND OF IRAN?

Understanding the Structure of the Revolution and the Reform

In post-totalitarianism regimes, reformists have to cope with the political inheritance in the founding documents of the agencies and the revolution. In order to obtain results in the said struggle, not only political alliances, but also moderates who are motivated to implement reform without posing any threat to conservatives are functionally required. Executive elite's realization of a reform effort that can be described in some way as a transition may apparently be accompanied by conflicts that will lead to a chaotic environment. (Brumberg, 2001: 153)

A description of Khomeini's authority as charismatic and patrimonial can actually be explained by the fact that the Iran society is inclined to remain traditional. Iran's Islamic Republic has continued to have the Pehlevi Iran's social characteristics. The boss-client relationships in political relations have subsisted. Currently, there are bonyads under the direction and control of the clergymen that are the privileged class holding the economic power. There are many political thinkers that describe Iran's Islamic Revolution as a political incident where only the governing class was replaced and criticize it as a regime that did not make a very radical change in social balances, and this must be evaluated and discussed particularly within this framework ³¹.

It is crucial to analyze the conflict atmosphere experienced after the 2009 elections that imply that the Islamic Revolution failed to satisfy the masses. For, it should be remembered that Khomeini, while carrying out the Islamic Revolution, did not only dictate the events, but also had to react to them. In other words, unsurprisingly, the Islamic Revolution was carried out with an extraordinarily powerful underlying support. It shouldn't be surprising to see such "spectacular" outpouring of the oppressed freedoms after having lived under oppression for 25 years. According to some experts, the same mistakes shouldn't be made and the demands of the masses shouldn't be ignored in order not to re-experience the same and to ensure that the Islamic regime is not deposed (Ansari, 2006: 43).

Assurances of the Regime of Iran Islamic Revolution

On the other hand, it is an undeniable fact that assurance mechanisms that sustain the regime have power that exceeds the existing means and capabilities of the opposition. Within this framework, the "element of violence" used to subdue social incidents that once in a while arise is paradoxically open to interpretation. If we remember, "the "reluctant" behavior of those in charge of protecting the Shah regime during the Islamic Revolution played a key role in the success of the said movement and the hand-over of the power. Therefore, the determination exhibited by the security forces in oppressing the incidents seems to bring results by creating a perception on the reformists that, "the chance of success is limited".

Also, considering the potential of Pasdaran and Basij elements, it is not

³¹ It must be remembered that similar criticisms were also made against the 1917 October Revolution and that it was accused for oppressing laborers that supported the revolution by creating its own elite class.

possible to claim that the incidents were subdued using “disproportionate force in full capacity”. While commenting on the incidents experienced in the second term of Ahmadinejad, mullahs’ and Pasdaran’s education must be taken into account. Mullahs do not receive simply an ordinary religious education that purely contains theological elements, and nor Pasdaran has a formation based on the use of “hard power elements” purely related to internal security. Therefore, evaluating the means and capabilities of the Iranian security forces by assessing their responses within the framework of “the usual police response to a criminal or social incident” may lead the analysts to relatively incorrect conclusions. Instead, the reactions of the Iranian security elite and the Qom must be evaluated within the framework of intelligence-operational criteria. The primary mission of the security forces within the said framework is not to oppress the incidents on the spot with any means necessary, but to allow them to develop for a while and give rational and calm reactions by seeing

- the course of events,
- the capabilities and tendencies of the rival groups,
- which internal and external elements are providing support,
- the action styles and habits of the rival groups,
- the rival leader cadre, their weaknesses and group dynamics,
- how the international and national public opinion shall shape,
- what tools must be used,
- the leaders of the movement behind the scenes and similar elements.

The Iranian Revolutionary Guards founded by Supreme Leader Grand Ayatollah Khomeini independently from the Iranian Army in 1979 has a very large task remit from protection of the regime to the management of strategic missiles; from execution of unconventional warfare to the protection of the homeland; and from ideological control to execution of covert operations and organization of paramilitary activities abroad. This structure that maintains domestic security with Basij, owns air, air defense and naval forces of its own, and carries out covert operations abroad with the Quds Force can be described as a semi-independent, but powerful and dedicated army. The Revolutionary Guards that is accountable only to the Guide and has a very open-ended task of “ensuring the security of the regime” also carries out the said ‘task’ in practice to reinforce its dominance within the country. Jafari, the commander of this structure, who, if we should remember, sent a warning letter signed by 12 commanders to the then President Khatami (1999), stated in his speech dated September 2007 that the

primary duty of the guards then was to cope with the internal threats and added the following; "Pasdaran is not only a military organization, but also a political and ideological organization"³². This reminds us of the similar interference type practices of the Russian intelligence tradition.

32 Hamsahri Newspaper, September 29, 2007, Agahsazi (Tahran) February 29, 2008.

CHAPTER –4 –

IRAN'S MILITARY POWER

This analysis seeks to “understand and describe Iran” and, as previously stated, will approach the matter from a holistic perspective based on the general focus of “absolutely everything about Iran”.

In this context, the discontent of the Iranian public reflected in widespread for the Islamic Revolution since their level of welfare did not improve because a significant part of oil revenues that increased during the Shah period were allotted to modernize the army, and Iran's military power that is one of the important instruments in reinforcing Tehran's identity regional power must be analyzed.

As noted in the previous chapters of this study, Iran considers views itself as isolated and marginalized in its region due to ethnic identity and denominational differences and believes that the only option for it to thwart the perceived threats is to maintain a powerful army and defense industry.

Moreover, Iran is aware that it has expanded and ossified its current regime and the front against its policy and efforts to export its regime, and has deliberately chosen to support the strategic depth offered to it by its geography with a strong army and modern weapons systems and made significant progress in this matter.

Iran has imposed a kind of protoplasm function on the Shi'a population in the other gulf countries, particularly in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Afghanistan against any threat and dangers against (the core) itself and has created “deputy elements” around itself that it may mobilize whenever necessary, and thus shaped its defense strategy around there basic parameters.

One of them is to cascade its geographic depth starting from Turkey on the west and extending to Afghanistan on the east and thus to use its geography as a strategic function; the second is to maintain a powerful defense industry and armed forces and equip these forces with modern, particularly air-defense and short-medium-long range missiles; and the third is, as mentioned above, is to utilize the deputy elements it owns as a deterrent force.

In addition to these basic parameters that support and complement each other, a fourth parameter may be added, which is the paramilitary elements deployed in neighboring countries and supported by the local inhabitants, and supported, guided and directed by Iran, which makes Tehran's national defense concept and doctrine more evident.

However, a review of the foundation schematics of Iran's army shows that Iran's armed forces, in addition to their principal duty and function of national defense, is structured with the clear aim of protecting the regime.

In Iran, besides the conventional army comprised of land, air, naval and air defense forces, the Revolutionary Guards (Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enqelab-e Eslami) also has a similar organization, but also contains a separate force comprised of volunteer militia (Basij) in addition to the conventional army organization.

The Revolutionary Guards that have a separate command and hierarchical system than the conventional army and is estimated to have 150,000 personnel are equipped with the state-of-the-art weapons systems and deployed especially in the most critical regions for Iran.

The elite Quds Forces under the Revolutionary Guards, with estimated manpower of 15,000 and commanded by General Qasem Soleimani who is in charge of paramilitary activities and covert operations outside of Iran and its Ansar al-Mehdi draw particular attention as an elite unit frequently mentioned in the recent periods with their success in the fight against ISIS in Iraq and Syria and their support to Assad.

In Iran, the military service is mandatory for all those aged 21 and over, and the number of people under the arms according to the 2014 data is reported to be around 600,000, and with the reserves, around 900,000. According to the Jane Defence Weekly and Jane Defence Annual data, Iran's Land Forces have 400,000 personnel, Naval Forces have 20,000 personnel, and Air and Air Defense Forces have 45,000, and the Revolutionary Guards have 150,000 personnel, which makes 900,000 personnel with 300,000 reserves in total. In case of a war, Iran has the capacity to call around 11 million people from 18 million people who are fit in terms of age, and is suggested to have one of the most powerful armies in the region in terms of number, training and weapons systems.

Organized into three armies with headquarters in Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz, Iran Land Forces have 13 divisions including 2 mechanized, 3 armored, 5 infantry, 1 special forces, 1 parachute, 1 special purpose divisions, five of which are deployed in and around Tehran together with the 1th Army Headquarters.

Iran Land Forces' inventory contains around 2000 tanks, part of which is Russian-made advanced T-72's, over 2500 armored personnel carriers and combat vehicles, around 3000 towed and self-propelled guns, motorized rocket launcher batteries, the number of which is not precisely known, (45 km range Ograp and 120 km-range Nazeat) about a 100 U.S.-made attack helicopters, a small number of MI-17 attack helicopters and hundreds of Russian-made multi-purpose helicopters.

Iran has experienced tense relations in recent years with the Western countries, particularly the U.S. and Israel due to its nuclear program and constantly voices that a possibility of a military operation against itself is on the table and therefore has concentrated on and given priority to creating small mobile units that have a high fire power and swift movement capability and is able to fight independently when necessary against the U.S. and its allies.

Iran Air Forces' inventory contains around 400 fighter aircrafts including Russian-made Mig 29 and Mig 23's, U.S.-made F-4 D/E's, F-14's, F-5 E/F's, Chinese-made F-6, F-7, French-made Mirage F-1, Russian-made SU 22-24-25 fighter and fighter bombers, and several military transport aircrafts jointly manufactured by Russia and Iran-Ukraine.

In addition to domestically manufacturing armed and unarmed and unmanned reconnaissance aerial vehicles in recent years, Iran, within the inventory of its air forces, has various types of U.S., Russian, French and Chinese-made aircrafts and therefore experiences shortage of spare parts due to the embargo and training challenges and weakness due to the diverse fighter aircraft variety. Therefore, it does not seem realistic to claim that the deterrent force of its air forces on paper does not have the same operational magnitude and deterrence. In particular, around 100 aircrafts that are U.S.-made including those leaked (stolen) from Iraq during the occupation are known to have aged and have reduced operational capabilities since spare parts cannot be supplied.

As for the naval forces, Iran has three old-model and two U.S.-made classic destroyers carrying British-made guided missiles, five Russian-made Kilo class diesel submarines and several fast patrol boats carrying guided missiles, patrol vessels and armed (missile) speedboats. Iranian Naval Forces that possess several Chinese-made missile batteries used against naval targets also have reconnaissance and patrol aircrafts in its inventory.

Compared to other countries in the region, Iranian Armed Forces' most evident characteristic is the arsenal of several guided missiles in varying ranges. In addition to the Russian- and Chinese-made short and medium range guided missiles, Iran has developed its own guided missile program with the technology imported from China and North Korea and modified Scud-C, SS-4, SS-5, Taepo Dong, No Dong missiles and begun to manufacture ballistic missiles under the name of Shahab series. After the Shahab 1-2-3-4 series included in the inventory after completion of trial launches, Iran continues to work on Shahab 5 intercontinental ballistic missile system and has become an important power in the region with its guided missile arsenal that has up to 2000 km range.

As for the guided launching/delivery vehicles (missiles) in the inventory of the Iranian army, the examples are Mushak 120-160-200 type missiles with ranges between 130 and 200 km, 300-2000 km range Shahab 1-2-3-4 missiles, HY-4/C (150 km range) Harpoon, (120 km range) SS-N-22, (110 km range) YJ-2/C-802, (95 km range) AS-9 Kyle, (90 km range) Silkwarm, (100 km range) AS-11 Kilter, (50 km range) No Dong, Taepo Dong, Nazeat, Oghop, Sejil 1-2, (Ashura, 2000 km range) Ghadr-1, (1800-2000 km range) Fajr-3, (200 km range) Zelzal, (400 km range) Fateh, (170 km range) Sapphire-2 (2500 km range) SS-4, and Frog 7's. Although the exact number of guided missiles Iran has is not known, it is assumed to be in excess of thousands ³³.

When S-300 batteries ordered from the Russia Federation to strengthen the Air Defense system are delivered, the defense network created by Iran will become increasingly efficient.

Iran has made some serious progress on enhancing the pin point accuracy capacity in missiles, and its works to make Shahab 3 and 4 series

³³ BBC News/World/Middle East/Iran's arsenal of missiles. Iran missiles Arsenal/Iran Intelligence. Category: Ballistic missiles of Iran, Wikipedia. Jane's Defence Annual.

missiles compatible to load nuclear weapons by changing their war heads are shown as an evidence for the suspicions and concerns about Tehran's nuclear program.

Iran is considered to be a non-negligible factor in the current and future policies, a power to reckon with due to its conventional army, Revolutionary Guards and military and paramilitary elements consisting of about a million trained volunteer militias in total.

At this point, the general perception and image of the Revolutionary Guards as a militia force must be corrected to prevent any misunderstandings about Iran's military power.

As explained previously, the Revolutionary Guards must be considered a small-scale army that is comprised of Land, Naval, Air and Air Defense forces, has a military hierarchy, is highly trained and possesses modern vehicles, tools and weapons systems, and beyond all these, is dedicated to protection of the regime.

From the war fought against Iraq that lasted eight years and did not result in the victory for either side despite the death of over a million people, Iran learned important lessons about revision of its defense doctrine, force structuring and deployment and development of priority weapons systems and defense industry.

The previous Iran that used U.S.-made weapons and systems and became dependent on the U.S. in terms of military as a result of the rapprochement with the U.S. during the Shah period later diversified its weapons procurement resources (Russia, China, North Korea) due to the embargoes put into effect due to and after the deterioration in the relations in the years following the Islamic Revolution and began to focus on the manufacture of weapons and war crafts with original technology.

Iran attempted to balance Iraqi army's superiority in modern weapons system and fire power with the manpower during the Iraq war and therefore suffered excessive number of casualties, which taught another lesson that mere strength in numbers is insufficient to succeed in the battlefield.

The reflex reaction of preserving its existence that arise from distrust and skepticism created by its ethnic and denominational difference along with

its regime resulted in Iran's possessing a powerful defense industry based on its own technology and nuclear power, if at all possible.

At this point, another comparison despite clearly differing circumstances may be drawn between Iran and Turkey in the transition from monarchy to constitutional monarchy and abolishment of Shah and Sultan reigns.

Turkey also felt the need to develop its own defense industry and manufacture its own weapons systems due to the embargoes imposed after the 1974 Cyprus Peace Operation and had a first-hand experience of the fact that the disadvantages of one-sided dependence for military vehicles, tools, equipment and weapons might be accompanied by a weakness.

As mentioned in the previous chapter of the present study, overlapping reflex reaction of preserving its existence and threat perceptions of Iran and Israel that feel marginal due to their differences in the region (ethnicity, religion, denomination) must be considered a psycho-political factor that should be addressed with regard. The importance and priority attached by both countries to armament and development of military technologies may be explained with proliferation/aggressive purposes and a revisionist policy, or as a defense reflex-based policy as deterrence.

In this context, Iran's desire to have nuclear power/weapons can be seen as an argument open to discussion as an assurance of not suffering a general attack, just as Israel.

It should also be remembered that this desire also includes Iran's desire to rise to a separate and active player position in the league as a holder of nuclear power and thus carry this identity to an indisputable dimension and have a strong voice on the global plane.

CHAPTER -5-

IRAN'S NUCLEAR JOURNEY

Iran's nuclear journey, contrary to popular belief, is far from new and started about 60 years ago, ironically, with the support of the U.S. that presently exhibits a strong opposition against the said country's desire to be a nuclear power³⁴.

The period of World War II and its aftermath must be briefly reviewed in order to explain America's initial support.

While World War II was continuing, the allied forces assured the independence of Iran after the war with the Tehran Declaration at the Tehran Conference held in 1943. However, the USSR, one of the signatories, did not exit Iran despite the said agreement and chose to perpetuate its presence and activity in this country through the autonomous republics it established in the northwest of Iran (South Azerbaijan) (Please see chapter "Late Modern Period).

Having acquired concessions to operate Iran's oil fields, the USSR was forced to give them and leave Iran under U.S. pressure.

In the years following the end of World War II, the U.S. that had rightful concerns that Turkey in respect of the Straits and also Iran in respect of the oil resources were being targeted by Soviet Russia's expansionist policies balanced the threat to Turkey with Ankara's NATO membership.

As for Iran, it removed Prime Minister Mossadegh through a coup who nationalized the oil (1953), and through Shah Mohammad Reza Pehlevi, created a government that was loyal and agreeable to it. The U.S. put into effect its plan to increase Iran's military power and capacity against a possible Soviet military intervention through some regional pacts (CENTO, RCD, etc.) it supported and established.

Nuclear studies in Iran started in 1957 with the U.S. support and a cooperation agreement entitled "Atom Program for Peace" was signed between

³⁴ It should also be noted as another irony that among the countries besides the U.S. that initially supported Iran's nuclear program were the P5+1 countries France, Russia and Germany.

the two countries that envisaged use of nuclear technology for peaceful and civil purposes in the same year³⁵.

Following the said agreement, Iran became a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1958 and established Tehran Nuclear Research Center in 1959.

During this period, the U.S. initiated operations to create the necessary technological support and scientific infrastructure for establishment of nuclear research centers in friendly and allied countries such as Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Within the framework of this program, the U.S. donated a 5 megawatt research reactor to Tehran University in 1968 and a nuclear research center was established at the university. (Atomic Research Center Affiliated to Tehran University)³⁶.

In 1970 Iran signed the NPT-Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty³⁷ and, in 1973, made institutional progress and established and put into operation the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (Sazeman-e Energy-e Atomi-e Iran)³⁸.

During the negative effects of the global oil crisis in 1973 on Iran Shah Reza Pehlevi launched a program in 1974 to establish 20 nuclear reactors, each with 1000-megawatt power and initiated construction of the first six reactors. In this context, a contract was signed the Germany-based Kraftwerk Union (KWU) company for the establishment of a 1200-megawatt reactor in Bushehr. The same year, a contract was signed with France for the establishment of a 900-megawatt reactor in Bandar Abbas and with Belgium for the establishment of a Nuclear Medicine Center in Karaj, thereby the implementation of Iran's nuclear program accelerated. In parallel to these developments, Shah Reza Pehlevi purchased ten percent of the shares of the France-based Eurodiff, Europe's largest uranium enrichment company. Although these shares were transferred to Iran after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, France did not put into effect the agreement on sale of enriched uranium to Iran as a result of the U.S. attempts and pressure.

35 Simon, Jacqueline; "United States Non-Proliferation Policy and Iran: Constraints and Opportunities", *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol.17, No:3, December 1996, p.371

36 Today, the 5-megawatt reactor in the Cekmece Nuclear Research Center operating under the Atomic Energy Agency of Turkey was also donated by the U.S. under the same program

37 Sahimi, Mohammed; "Iran's Nuclear Program-Part-1: It's History", *Payvand News*, October 2, 2003, <http://www.payvand.com/news/03/Oct/2003/html>, date accessed August 11, 2015

38 Sahimi, Mohammed; "Iran's Nuclear Program-Part-1: It's History", *Payvand News*, 2 October 2003, <http://www.payvand.com/news/03/Oct/2003/html>, date accessed August 11, 2015

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the regime (Ayatollah Khomeini) banned nuclear studies on the grounds that it was both costly and religiously unfavorable and criticized the Shah's nuclear policy as being wasteful since they had sufficient oil and natural gas resources. Besides, even if the nuclear studies had not been banned, the new regime would have possibly not continued the program as all contracts were terminated by the Western companies due to its harsh feelings against the West and the U.S.

In fact, considering that it would have been extremely hard to meet the construction and commissioning costs of reactors during the war that lasted eight years and significantly depleted Iran's human and economic resources and that the Western companies closed their work sites and left Iran with their technical personnel after the revolution, the regime's banning the studies which were, in fact, not practically feasible may also be described as a "face-saving operation" - a fine policy of preserving honor and hiding weaknesses-, a reflection of Farsi culture and thinking system.

During this period when the regime decided on a ban and the contractors left Iran, 90% of the Bushehr-1 reactor's construction undertaken by KWU had been completed, and 60% of the technical fittings had been installed. The ratio in Bushehr-2 reactor was 50%, and both facilities were damaged to a large extent since they had been hit by Iraq during the war.

However, the moral and physical devastation caused by Iran's desire to balance the Iraqi army's superiority in high fire power and modern weapons systems with its manpower at the expense of large losses pushed Tehran toward a new quest and planning for its defense concept and strategy. As a result, a dramatic push for the return to nuclear studies banned by Khomeini was made again by Khomeini, and development and manufacture of guided launch vehicles (missile) gained real momentum.

Tehran's determination and persistence to continue its nuclear journey despite all pressures and sanctions put into effect in the later years against Iran is attributed to a successful propaganda and perception management, its anti-Israel sentiment and Israel's possession of nuclear weapons.

Although this is undoubtedly one of the main explanations, popular analyses that reduce the motivation of Iran's nuclear studies and desire to own nuclear weapons to solely counter the nuclear power of Israel due to anti-Semitic factors appear to be far from reflecting the entire truth.

As mentioned above, in addition to the lessons learned from the Iraq war, Iran's own geography necessitating a powerful military, the feeling of being "marginalized" rooted in Iran's ethnic and denominational difference, its isolation and being surrounded by hostile countries may also be considered other underlying factors for Iran's such desire. Also, the perception of threat caused by the U.S. that had extremely strained relations with Iran after the Islamic Revolution, regarded this country as an obstacle to be overcome or made agreeable in the MENA and Central Asia realizations of its global plans, and applied a containment policy with its military presence in some of Iran's neighboring counties (such as Iraq-Afghanistan-Qatar-Saudi Arabia-Kuwait-Turkey), the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean may also be put forward as a separate argument that increased Iran's desire to become a nuclear power.

When the fact that, in addition to Israel, the countries around Iran including Russian Federation, China, Pakistan and India own nuclear weapons is added to these factors, Iran's desire to become a nuclear power/have nuclear weapons to be deterrent in a military sense and balance the demographic disadvantages in comparison to the countries in its geography where conventional solutions tend to be consumed away quickly settles on a more realistic platform for the sake of a peaceful solution.

Another addition to the external factors is that the regime uses the "external threat and enemy" card as an instrument of internal politics to consolidate itself and neutralize the opposition under the Farsi Nationalism and Shi'ism's unifying leadership. When all external and internal factors are considered together with Iran's national perception of honor and Farsi Nationalism shaped on the axis of the Shi'a faith, the logic behind Tehran's nuclear journey will be understood better.

Iran's decision to resume nuclear studies it had banned immediately after the Islamic Revolution led to serious problems and developments in political and economic domains. Although Germany and France partook in actualization of Iran's nuclear program and are now interested in the resumption of the studies, they were removed from the equation along with other Western countries as a result of the pressure from the U.S. This is when countries where the U.S. pressure is not effective, including primarily the Russian Federation, Peoples Republic of China, North Korea and secondly India and Pakistan became mandatory options for Iran. Thus,

China, India and Pakistan that owned nuclear technology, needed Iran's energy resources and was carrying out a major part of their imports from this country became important partners of Tehran's nuclear program along with Russia.

| ITEM NO | COUNTRY | DAILY IMPORT (Barrel) | RATE (%) |
|---------|--------------|--------------------------|----------|
| 1 | CHINA | 543 000 | 10 |
| 2 | INDIA | 341 000 | 11 |
| 3 | JAPAN | 251 000 | 5.9 |
| 4 | ITALY | 249 000 | 13.3 |
| 5 | SOUTH KOREA | 239 000 | 7.4 |
| 6 | TURKEY | 217 000 | 30.6 |
| 7 | SPAIN | 149 000 | 9.6 |
| 8 | GREECE | 111 000 | 22.6 |
| 9 | SOUTH AFRICA | 98 000 | 25 |
| 10 | FRANCE | 78 000 | 3.7 |

Table: Countries that imported the highest amount of oil from Iran in 2011 and import amounts³⁹

As a result, while Iran tended more to Russia and China for the weapons systems and military technologies of which it needed and accordingly became ever more distant from the Western world, and thus, it, in a sense, evolved into a state that contributed the regional and global interests of the Russian Federation and China. Another reflection of the said outcome today is that the contributions and material and technology transfers of Iran's partners in nuclear studies were left without any inspection to an extent.

Thus, while Russia and China achieved a tactical superiority, though not in a sense of strategical scales, against primarily the U.S. and the Western world through Iran and its deputy elements and the Russian Federation also opened a door for transfer of nuclear materials via the former USSR

39 Dr. Önder, Ersoy, *An Analysis of Iran's Nuclear Program and Turkey*, IQ Culture & Art Publishing, October, 2013, Istanbul, p.87

countries, Iran had the chance to develop and implement its nuclear program by having multiple channels that were impossible to inspect fully.

Therefore, it seems useful to question whether or not it was a correct choice and policy that the Western countries, primarily Germany and France, declining to transfer limited assistance and technology to Iran's nuclear program along with inspection opportunities, forced Tehran to turn to the Eastern countries.

As a matter of fact, although it is not directly related to the present study's purpose and subject, the destruction and impairment of Saddam and his Pan-Arabist regime in Iraq and his predecessor Taliban in Afghanistan by the allied forces under the leadership of the U.S. that was welcomed in Tehran at the time since it considered them to be top external threats and led to Tehran's powerful presence in today's Iraq despite the fact that these two countries afterwards turned to a base to contain Iran should be questioned and analyzed in view of strategic forecasting and planning.

Continuing its nuclear studies in cooperation with China and Argentina starting from 1986, Iran signed a comprehensive treaty with the USSR on January 22, 1989. The said agreement that aimed for comprehensive cooperation in technology, economics, science and commerce was followed by the "nuclear cooperation agreement" signed by the same countries in 1992. Bushehr Nuclear Station Construction that was commenced, but left incomplete by the German KWU was transferred to Russia in 1995.

Russia's rise to a dominant position in Iran's nuclear studies triggered the inclusion of countries such as Germany, Belgium, Spain and Argentina and China, North Korea and Pakistan in Iran's relationship network for both economic and political reasons. As a result, Iran due to its superior diplomatic skills and traditions Iran attained twenty nuclear facilities within a short period making use of the advantage offered by its energy resources in tandem with its tactical moves⁴⁰.

In addition to the Bushehr nuclear station that started production in 2011, Iran declared 17 nuclear facilities and nine places where nuclear materials

40 <http://www2.dw-world.de/persion//Iran/Internet-presse/1.112170.1.html>. Date accessed: August 12, 2015

were stored to the International Atomic Energy Agency in 2012⁴¹.



These are Tehran, Isfahan, Ramsar, and Bonab nuclear stations as nuclear research reactors, Bushehr-1 and Bushehr-2 as nuclear stations, Arak heavy water production plant, uranium enrichment plants in Natanz, Fordow and Kahan, uranium mining facilities in Yazd and Ardakan and the facilities in Saghand, Gazvin, Mashad, Ahvaz, Abadan and Gorgan⁴².

The “nuclear journey”, which led to heavy sanctions as a result of ongoing debates whether Iran’s nuclear studies, as claimed and argued consistently by Tehran, are intended only for nuclear energy production or aim on nuclear weapons production at the same time, the strong evidence acquired by the UAEA during the inspections and Iran’s non-suspension of uranium enrichment studies, seems to have entered into a recess and the rebuilding of political/economic damages with the agreement reached in Vienna on July 14, 2015. Since the main purpose of our study is not to clarify the said debates, some important findings of the UAEA in regard to Iran’s nuclear studies as a source of overall suspicions will be briefly provided and afterwards possible changes and reflections of the deal, if it is put into effect, on the regional and global plane will be analyzed.

41 IAEA, Board of Governors, Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreements and relevant provisions of Security Council Resolution in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 25 May 2013, p.3 Map; www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-11927720

42 Map; www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-11927720

Iran commissioned new centrifuges, secretly continued to enrich uranium with the purpose of increasing their number to 50 and did not share this information in the last 18 years, which made the existing suspicions valid. When Iran had to announce in February 2003 that it had established a gas centrifuge uranium enrichment facility in Natanz, the UAEA representatives found uranium enriched sufficiently to produce nuclear weapons during their inspection despite the cover up attempts by the Iranian experts. This further increased the suspicions of Iran's hiding some facts and carrying out a secret program.

In addition to the uranium enrichment facility in Natanz and the uranium extraction facilities in Isfahan and Arak, the production of plutonium, fuel required for nuclear explosions, in the heavy water facility in Arak, and the nuclear enrichment facilities constructed underground in Fordow that had been kept secretly from the UAEA for a long time, and certain nuclear facilities that were constructed in military zones and not allowed for inspection were considered to have turned the suspicions in regard to Iran's secret agenda and road map beyond its disclosed civil purposes into reality.

The author of the present study is convinced that Iran has a secret agenda for production of nuclear weapons and this agenda was put into effect as of the 1990s and made a great progress despite Iran's all refutations and objections. The author also believes that Iran's system of thinking idealized by the original logic pattern shaped by other important data not detailed herein and psycho-social structure of being an Iranian support this conviction.

Apart from what is known, the 'unknown', which is impossible to access from the open source information, is how close Iran is to production of nuclear weapons - it must be remembered that there have been various speculations about this matter that point to a period of around three to five months to five years.

CHAPTER -6-

IRAN'S RETURN

There is no bi-lateral or multi-lateral treaty in world's history that has directly or indirectly satisfied each party equally; just as the nuclear agreement signed between the P5+1 countries and Iran in Vienna on July 14, 2015 that was welcomed across the world with cautious optimism and created joy on the streets of Tehran, satisfaction in the U.S. administration, encouragement in Russia, anger in Israel and a visible anxiety in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Countries.

When we add other countries that are waiting -they have actually already begun to move- to see among whom the giant market will be shared that will emerge as a result of removal of the embargoes and are preparing for a strong competition to this scene, then we can start analyzing the near future of Iran that has returned to the global game as a powerful regional actor.

However, those who have gotten into the line with a briefcase filled with business proposals in the hope of entering a dazzlingly tempting Iran market take care to avoid any possible disappointments of the institutionalized, utilitarian and pragmatist policy and culture that have fortified through the ages in Iran that have exhibited the ability and success of surviving in this geography for three thousand years.

Following the signing of the agreement after long and tiring negotiations, which time to time almost came to the end of the road with severe polemics, at the Coburg Palace in Vienna on July 14, 2015, perhaps the most meaningful and interesting evaluation came from the respected Swedish politician Carl Bildt who, by making a reference to the Pope's election to describe the deal reached between the P5+1 countries and Iran, tweeted, "There is white smoke from the Coburg Palace in Vienna". Although Bildt's thoughts about whether or not there is going to be any change in the color of the smoke in the future are unknown, suspicion in some circles and discontent with the deal that was welcomed positively in general makes the next process sensitive in terms of enforcement and permanence.

In addition to the Revolutionary Guards Commander Major General Jafar's criticism (Please see chapter entitled Javad Zarif), the member of Security

and Foreign Relations Commissions of the Iranian Parliament Mohammad Kawsari announced just like Jafari that “Iran was not the winning side”, and the Council for Protection of Iran’s Interests that has a strong influence especially on the university youth supported his statement by stating, “Iran’s red lines have been trampled down and facts have been withheld from the public.” The foregoing appear to indicate that some circles in Tehran have prepared and taken a position against any possible disruption or road accident, if they are not a reflection of the policy of “balancing the internal dynamics” carried out by Iran for a long time with such skill.

Iran’s Religious Leader Ali Khamenei, in his speech after the bayram prayer in Tehran that was broadcast on televisions, said, “There will be no change in our policy against the arrogant American government. There are no talks or agreements between us and the U.S. about different regional or world matters. Regardless of whether or not the deal made works out, we will not leave our friends in the region. Since they had no other option left in their 10-12-year struggle against the Islamic Republic, they had to agree to the operation of thousands of centrifuges and continuation of research and development of the nuclear industry”⁴³. The foregoing statement on one hand, emphasized that there would be no change in Iran’s U.S. and regional policies and described the deal made as one in favor of the country on the other. President Rouhani, on the other hand, supported the deal by saying, “We have found a third way other than fight and submission”(Financial Times, July 15, 2015).

In his speech broadcast on Iranian televisions (July 14, 2014) also stressed that “inhumane and tyrannous sanction regime has ended” and added, “Today is the day when the persecution and misunderstandings against Iran have ended and new collaborations have begun in the world. “He also announced that Iran had achieved its goals such as “continuation of nuclear studies, removal of all sanctions and removal of the nuclear file from the UN Security Council”.

Khamenei’s and Rouhani’s said statements can be considered as messages to becalm the opposition that too many concessions had been made and also toward the domestic policy and the outside world that no change should be expected in Iran’s foreign policy dominated by anti-U.S. sentiment and, although no specific name was spelled out, its stance toward Syria, Iraq and Lebanon.

43 The Wall Street Journal, Aresu Eqabali, Asa Fitch, July 18, 2015)

In fact, President Obama in a statement he made with Vice President Joe Biden said the following: "Do we give a chance to the peace? Maybe: This is the first half of our negotiations," and made a reference to a Roman maxim, "Si vis pacem, para bellum - If you want peace, prepare for war"⁴⁴, thereby sent a strong warning to Iran.

After the deal, the government received harsh criticism from the Republican wing in the U.S. The Arkansas Senator Tom Cotton said, "This deal will give a 150-billion Dollar relief to Iran with the lifting of the embargoes. Besides, this deal also lifts the conventional weapons embargo and ballistic missile ban. As a result, even if they complied with every clause of the deal, it has paved the path for them to get a nuclear weapon in 8-10 years"⁴⁵. The Republican senator John McCain supported the foregoing by saying, "The result, I fear, is that this agreement will strengthen Iran's ability to acquire conventional weapons and ballistic missiles while retaining an industrial scale nuclear program, without any basic change to its malign activities in the Middle East."⁴⁶

The House of Representatives Speaker Republican John Boehner increased the dose of the criticism by saying, "It blows my mind that the administration would agree to lift the arms and missile bans," which was also supported by the presidential candidate Marco Rubio with the following words: "Given too much, gained too little"⁴⁷.

In a commentary published on July 14, 2015, New York Times said, "Tehran's nuclear program is just one of its instruments of power to destabilize the Middle East. And there is risk, especially in the next few years, that Iran's generals will step up their financing of Hezbollah and the government of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria," and thus supported the views of the senators and the house of representatives belonging to the Republican wing. The following view was expressed in the response of New York Times on July 14, 2015 to the statement of President Obama inspired by the expression of "where necessary, when necessary" contained in NATO's defense concept against the heavy criticism that necessary inspections would be performed in Iran: "Even if all of Iran's nuclear-related buildings

44 IRNA, April 15, 2015

45 The Wall Street Journal, Gordon Lubold-Felicis Schwartz, July 19, 2015

46 IRNA, April 15, 2015

47 Wall Street Journal, July 19, 2015

and installations were destroyed, no one can erase the knowledge Iranian scientists have acquired after working on nuclear projects for decades.”

It should also be noted that there are also some congressmen in the U.S. that strongly support the deal in addition to some Republican Congressmen who expressly approach the deal with express suspicion. For example, Congressman Hank Johnson, in his commentary published on the Guardian on July 15, 2015 said, “I’ll vote for the Iran nuclear deal because I want peace, not war. Congress must decide whether it will choose peace and support the deal or choose conflict by voting against it. We have a chance to choose peace. Now it is time for Congress to be on the right side of history.”

In his editorial published on Daily Telegraph on July 15, 2015, Pascal Carlucci from King’s College said, “Iran’s downgrading of its nuclear program does not seem to exclude the possibility of a future development of nuclear warfare capabilities,” which appears to indicate that the debates on this matter shall continue in the visible future⁴⁸. Indeed, the point shared by almost all comments covered in the Western media after the deal is that Iran’s ability to transform its nuclear program for civil purposes into military nuclear studies has become difficult and that it will not have the capacity to produce nuclear weapons at least for a year.

Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel that has strongly opposed the nuclear negotiations carried out with Iran starting from the Lausanne talks claimed that the deal made in Vienna threatened the existence of Israel, and the Israeli Government’s Spokesperson Mark Regev stated, “It is a very dangerous step and Iran’s sole purpose is to produce nuclear weapons.”

The RF Foreign Minister Lavrov said that the deal was a great achievement and recognition of a right in the name of the regional and global peace, and lent a strong support to it together with Putin.

The commentaries published on the Western media after the deal showed the Iranian President Rouhani, the U.S. President Obama, the RF President Putin and the Syrian President Assad as the winners while they described the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as losers⁴⁹.

48 Daily Telegraph, Pascal Carlucci, July 15, 2015

49 The Guardian, Iran nuclear deal: the winners and losers, Ian Black, July 14, 2015

The purpose of this chapter that provides mostly some criticism originating from the U.S. and some positive/negative views voiced in Iran as well as some examples from Russia and Israel because of their potential to determine and influence things is to help the reader make subjective analyses on how the principal parties of the deal, Iran and the U.S. responded to and perceived the deal by providing an outline of general agreements and reactions.

Israel-Saudi Arabia

Respective clauses of the Vienna deal that received reactions from the Republicans in the U.S. and the radical conservatives in Iran that excessive concessions were granted. And strong opposition from Israel and Saudi Arabia for understandable and expected reasons will be summarized to understand to what degree it has prevented Iran's capability and capacity of producing nuclear weapons.

However, while Israel, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Emirates should be pleased with the previous restrictions on Iran's nuclear weapons production capacity and the strict control of its nuclear program, we will attempt to analyze the concerns of the said countries and especially the extreme reservations of Netanyahu.

In terms of being Washington's strategic partner in the region and his very strong relations with the said country, it may be concluded that Netanyahu cannot accept the U.S.'s leading country role in a deal made with Iran that declared "the U.S. as the Great Satan and Israel as the Lesser Satan". In addition, from a psycho-political perspective, Netanyahu may be inclined to conclude that, despite his anti-Iran views and discourse, the leadership exhibited by the Obama administration in the deal weakens his standing and political position in Israel.

It is considered highly possible that, balancing the disadvantages created by its small geographic size in terms of strategic depth with the strengths afforded by superior and high military technology, Israel is disturbed with Iran's possession of nuclear weapons and the position of "recognized regional power" acquired by Iran by means of the said deal. It is also thought that Netanyahu has increased the dose of opposition due to the concerns that relations with the West that have entered into a detente process and the active fight against the Sunni radicalism on the ISIS, Al-Qaeda and Al

Nusra axis in Syria will lead to an informal alliance between the U.S. and Iran and thus weaken the severity of Western pressure on Iran. In this context, it will not be inaccurate to argue that Israel's concerns are based on the possible consequences of geo-political shifts that may arise from Iran's new identity and position in the region as a political and economic actor that becomes increasingly powerful by being rid of the sanctions against itself causing a heavy cost.

It may naturally lead to some discomfort especially for the hawks in the domestic politics of Israel if Israel, being used to the practical convenience of dealing with an Iran that is anti-U.S. and anti-Western, carries out a suspicious nuclear program and does not allow any control on it. and using Iran's existing position as a strong advantage and a basis to justify its policies in practice, adapts itself to this new reality.

With the option of the use of military power against itself being no longer on the table due to the new deal, Iran will possibly make use of the temporal and physical means provided by the conjuncture to strengthen its identity of regional power and have the option of focusing more on paramilitary activities - although it is not possible for it to use this option.

Other than Israel, the concerns of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Emirates that have a dense Shi'a population reveal themselves precisely at this point.

Saudi Arabia that has placed great importance to armament, become a center of Sunni/Salafi denominationalism using its economic power and become closer with Egypt, being the leader of the Arab world, due to its opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood is concerned about the new dimensions into which its eternal rivalry and disagreement with the Shi'a world may evolve due to Tehran's expanding space and means of maneuver.

Due to the Sunni radicalism spreading and rising in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Nigeria, Somalia and Afghanistan, the West's negative and mistrustful approach against Shi'ism within the context of the revisionist policies of Iran, the leader of the Shi'a world has begun to shift toward Sunnism, and the advantage and power of the political protection over the energy resources of Saudi Arabia known to be supporting the Salafi radical organizations is gradually eroding. (It should be remembered that the U.S. has noted that a majority of those that participated in the September 11th attack were of Saudi origin.)

With the Shi'a population in its country, Tehran's skill in using deputy elements and paramilitary forces and activities and the economic and political relief through which Tehran will gradually increase its power in its region added to these developments, it shouldn't be surprising to see that Saudi Arabia's anti-democratic, monarchical and theocratic structure restricting individual rights and freedoms will be frequently subject to criticism in the Western world.

In contrast to Iran that has expanded and diversified its power and maneuvering space in the region thanks to the Vienna deal, Israel's and Saudi Arabia's game fields are being constrained as a result of the changes and shifts in the geo-political and geostrategic parameters, and new balances have begun to form based on the new equations in the region. In fact, the former Head of Intelligence of Saudi Arabia Prince Bender bin Sultan stated that they were ready for a military intervention against Iran without the U.S. support and that "the powers in the region had lost their faith in the U.S.," which must be a clear reflection of the Saudi fear and concerns. Another country that has fallen under the field of the impact of this change, Turkey, on the other hand, will be analyzed in another chapter.

Although there are many state and non-state actors in addition to the countries situated in the region that differ in goals and interests, which seems to prevent making future predictions by creating an environment of chaos, turmoil and uncertainty, there are still net results behind all of these as in Brian Arthur's Complexity Theory. In fact, based on this theory, net and non-complex outcomes of some events that are hard to understand and interpret due to the chaotic environment and complexity in the MENA countries have begun to be sighted on the horizon.

OUTLINES OF THE DEAL

After explaining the reasons for Israel's and Saudi Arabia's reactions, this section will seek answers to the common questions; "Has Tehran's access to nuclear weapons been prevented and what have the parties of the deal gained?" by providing the principal clauses of the deal.

A review of the clauses in the deal that will gradually enter into force after it is approved by the respective country's parliament and covers 5-10-15-year time periods appears to have a structure that restricts (delays) Iran's

production of nuclear weapons, but accepts its nuclear program for civil purposes.

The agreement bans production of a certain amount of enriched uranium and plutonium used in production of nuclear weapons, stipulates that 98% of high-grade stockpile will either be taken out of the country or destroyed, and appears to place emphasis on the number of centrifuges which are the basic devices used in uranium enrichment.

The backbone of the deal including Arak and Fordow facilities is that 19,000 centrifuges that operate in several facilities across Iran and part of which are old generation (Dutch-made Urenca) (which were envisaged to be increased to 50,000) will be reduced to 6,014, that 5,000 of them will be commissioned in the Natanz Uranium Enrichment Facility, that no uranium enrichment will be made above grade 3.67% for a period of 15 years, and that the number of centrifuges will not be increased until 2025 besides the 5,000 centrifuges allowed to operate.

The Arak Heavy Water Plant used in plutonium production and the Fordow nuclear facility built underground will be converted to nuclear and physics research and technology development centers and used in matters such as isotope production (Fordow); Iran will not establish new uranium enrichment and heavy water facilities for a period of 15 years; and the plutonium level of the existing heavy water at the Arak plant will be reduced.

Thus, although Iran's two most important facilities, Arak and Fordow have been preserved by being redesigned to serve as research and technology centers, their nuclear weapons production capacity has been ended. The number of centrifuges in another important facility Natanz has been limited and the uranium enrichment grade has been reduced below the grade required for nuclear weapons. While Iran's nuclear capacity is being considerably restricted in terms of military for 10- and 15-year periods, the existing conventional weapons embargo has been agreed to remain in effect for five years and the current missile ban has been agreed to remain in effect for eight years.

According to the deal that authorizes the UN inspectors to inspect Iran's nuclear facilities and program based on reasonable grounds (provided that the facilities located within the military zones be subject to a separate pro-

cedure), it has been agreed to hold a meeting between the P5-1 countries and Iran at the ministerial level twice a year.

In exchange, Iran is allowed to continue the operations of the existing nuclear facilities without closing them and by re-designing and restricting them; Subject to maximum grade of 3.67%, uranium enrichment program has been recognized as a right within the limits of a certain number of centrifuges and tonnage; it has been agreed to rescind the seven respective resolutions of the UN Security Council regarding the sanctions imposed on Iran (including release of Iran's frozen monetary assets).

A review of the above agreements that constitute the backbone of the 150-page technical and extremely detailed deal suggests that there are two important points standing out for the parties. From the perspective of the P5+1 countries, Iran's high-grade enriched uranium and plutonium production capacity required for nuclear weapons production have been restricted for minimum ten years (2/3), and Tehran's actions and applications contrary to the deal have been secured in some way with an inspection mechanism and gradual enforcement plans. In addition, it has been intended to prevent an increase in Iran's existing capacity with the accord that the ban for Iran's guided and ballistic missiles perceived as a threat by the countries in the region will remain for 8 years and the conventional weapons embargo will remain for 5 years. It looks very doubtful that the ban that has not practically worked much so far, given that Iran developed the technology of guided launch/delivery vehicles by acquiring it from Russia, China and North Korea and modifying it, will be effectively put into force although Russia and China are the signatories of the deal.

Rather than emphasizing that something not existent has been prevented or banned" since it constantly denied working on nuclear weapons production, Iran emphasizes the fact that its nuclear program and uranium enrichment operations have been approved with this deal, and sees it as an achievement and recognition of its rights as it was able to leave the table sat around with demands of closure of its nuclear facilities after ensuring to continue its operations by re-designing the said facilities.

In the news in the Iranian media reporting the deal, decreased number of centrifuges, the grade in uranium enrichment and how much enriched uranium will be derived, bans and restriction periods are seen as distracting

details causing the essence to be overlooked. According to Iran's media, what really matters is that Tehran's right to enrich uranium with its nuclear program for civil purposes has been recognized. In fact, on July 14, 2015, IRNA released a news bulletin evaluating the deal and announcing, "Historic deal has been reached; Iran is no longer under sanctions" - it is very important as it reflects the administration's official opinion and leads the Iranian people ⁵⁰- and stated the following;

"The West has accepted Iran's peaceful nuclear program it denied. Iran's nuclear technology, nuclear fuel and enrichment have been accepted by the United Nations. While the sanctions are being removed, the desired nuclear facilities will remain in operation. Uranium enrichment has not been banned and will continue. IR-4, IR-5, IR-6 and IR-8 Centrifuges will remain. The Arak facility will be modernized and continue to operate with the latest technology and new laboratory and equipment. Weapons embargo will be lifted five years later. The ban for aircraft purchases for civil purposes will be lifted. 800 institutions including among other the Iranian Central Bank, Iranian Air Lines and Iranian National Oil Company will be removed from the embargo list."

Although the foregoing headlines remind us of the statement by Iran's Council for Protection of National Interests that "the truth is withheld from the public", IRNA's bulletin may be put forward as a classic example of propaganda and perception operations carried out by the government in the "competitive autocrat" regimes although they are called a republic.

The headlines in the bulletin appears to attempt to create a perception among people and more importantly the opponents that no concession was made by the Iranian Government about the nuclear program, that the nuclear facilities and program remain as they are and that the sanctions have been fully lifted. For example, the bulletin does not mention anything about Natanz and Fordow and provides the centrifuge types and emphasizes that they will continue to operate, and does not mention about the decreased uranium enrichment grade, the 10-15-year restrictions and bans, and, on the contrary, states that the nuclear program has been fully approved by the UN.

Although such information is considered plausible for a while in a country such as Iran, where information access and social media resources are

50 IRNA, Historic Nuclear Deal Reached, Iran no Longer Under Sanction, July 14, 2015, Tehran

limited, the truth will be inevitably revealed, and the most probable boomerang effect created by the applied method will perhaps accompany a misevaluation in terms of the reliability and plausibility of the government in the eye of the public.

The deal where Iran's position as a regional power is approved and permitted, however, its ascension to the global actor league is prevented also means acceptance of the legitimacy of its existing regime in the international arena.

After the deal was reached, although Iran has been taken away from nuclear weapons production and prevented from promoting to the nuclear club league, it has achieved to rise to a more active and influential position in the region. As a result of the removal of the sanctions and release of the frozen resources, Iran's economy and thereby welfare will increase, and the opposition will weaken and Rouhani will have relief for the reforms he desires to carry out. The ending of the diplomatic isolation will allow Iran to make peace with the West and pave the way for its integration to the modern world, and the technology to be imported upon the removal of the sanctions will accompany optimum use of the energy resources and use of them in the economy. The relations that will soften with the West and particularly with the U.S. will minimize the opposition against its use of soft/smart power in the Middle East, and the imperialist influence in Iran's region may therefore tend to increase in the region. Introduction of Iran as a giant market with the removal of sanctions will make the Western countries that wish to have a share in this market more tolerant to Tehran's regional imperialist and revisionist practices, which will help Iran expand its game field and gradually gain a more advantageous position.

The above-explained advantages should not be expected to lead to a fast and radical change and transformation in Iran's existing policies, the place where it stands and its regime. Considering that changes in countries' routes take a long time, it may be expected to take longer especially in a country as traditionalist as Iran where relationships are built on distrust and skepticism.

Therefore, it will be extremely optimistic to expect Iran's policies against primarily the U.S. and Israel and Saudi Arabia to change in short time. Furthermore, in Iran that bases the consolidation of the Islamic regime on

foreign enemy/threat factor, it has created using the U.S. and Israel, ending the disagreement with these countries will create a gap in the domestic politics that may cause the radicalism to grow stronger. For this reason and for other reasons such as anti-Semitism that has almost been institutionalized, it will be more realistic to say that the softening and reforms in proportion to the welfare that will increase depending on the removal of the sanctions should be expected to come along over time based on the percentage of the public that accepts them.

Although Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons that would promote it to the global league, further increase its deterrence and influential power in the region and make the foregoing unquestionable has been prevented in the short run, Tehran that has had its civil nuclear studies accepted subject to inspection, have its relieved economy grow stronger after the removal of the tightening sanctions, have its diplomatic isolation ended and will have open channels with the West has made a strong comeback/return to its region.

It must be noted that, while the active fight of Iran having a strong state tradition and diplomacy against the Sunni extremism that tend to spread in the MENA region and is particularly centered in Iraq and Syria makes Tehran closer to the Western countries and its support looked for and is laying the groundwork for tactical cooperation, the Rouhani government has read this conjuncture very well and made considerable progress in a short period in strengthening Iran's indispensability in the region.

Iran that was not able to make effective use of its power and means offered by its geographical location in horizontal and vertical axes and was reduced to a position of "marginal country" due to the isolation may be suggested to have achieved the identity of a "central country" in terms of geopolitics and geo-strategy.

It should not yet be a wrong evaluation despite all optimistic discourse that Turkey and Saudi Arabia are among the countries that will be disturbed the most with this new identity in the near future after Israel.

For, the U.S.'s Middle East policies dominated by the Sunni monarchies and particularly Israel will settle on a more realistic ground in line with this

development, and Washington will have the opportunity to use the Shi'a card against the Sunni extremism more easily and actively.

Nevertheless, the U.S. will be at more ease to use the Kurdish card in respect of nationalizing different ethnicities in the region to create a balance and bring the Kurds who are Sunni and however from a different ethnic origin as a tactical ally against the ethnically Arab-origin Sunni extremism, as seen in Syria.

When this new tactical alliance based on mutual interest and threat perceptions that is, according to some analysts, temporary and will end once the goal is achieved is analyzed, the above-mentioned new balances may become permanent in view of Israel and the energy security and the "de facto formations" in the region may initially evolve into multiple de jure Kurdish states. The cantonal structure created by the PYD (Democratic Union Party) that has gained a powerful actor identity in the Syrian equation may become a state in case of a possible partition of Syria; however, since the regional and international dynamics will not allow two separate and rival Kurdish states, the said formation may be integrated into the IBKY on the basis of mutual interest after the disputes between them are resolved in time. Thus, a Kurdish State that is likely to expand further geographically in coming years will have taken its place on the scene with its energy resources and transmission routes.

It means to ignore the big picture to reduce the leadership in the nuclear deal reached with Iran that has been pursued by the Obama administration despite the strong resistance of the Republicans at home and Israel and Saudi Arabia abroad only to the Middle East policies and the rise of Sunni radicalism.

The unstoppable economic growth of China, forecasts that it will become the largest economy in the 2020s and Beijing's increasing economic power have begun to weaken and restrict the U.S. in Asia, Africa and even Latin America, which is causing inconvenience to Washington in terms of world leadership among other factors that impose resolution of existing frozen and active disputes in the region in favor of the U.S.

In fact, Pascal Carlucci from Kings College, while commenting on the nuclear deal, said; "The United States and Europe, for different reasons, wanted to close a bitter chapter of their past, while China and Russia

are carefully designing a future geopolitical strategy in proximity to each other⁵¹. On the other hand, Putin's Russia's hawk (aggressive) policies that signal going back to the cold war and do not abstain from the use of power in Georgia, Crimea and Ukraine, the return of Moscow to the global game as an active actor and the consolidated pan-Slavic movements as a result of the relations of the Russian Federation with the former Soviet Republics that have actually never ceased and been in the rise require the U.S. to digress from the Israel and Saudi Arabia domination and diversify its Middle East policy.

The direct and individual intervention capabilities of the U.S. limited by all the developments including the vacuum effect created in Syria by the civil war that has prolonged as a result of the miscalculation that the Assad regime would come down in a short time and for which great prices have been paid, the geopolitical reflections on the regional balances of the strong support lent by Russia and Iran to Assad, the increased domination of Iran on Iraq, and the seriously increased political and ideological power and military capabilities of Iran-guided Hezbollah in parallel to the partition of both countries seem to have directed Washington to a separate game plan.

When the foreign policy position with diversified options of Germany that has become closer to Russia and the rising power China in recent periods particularly because of its energy dependence and economic reasons is evaluated together with the other factors explained above, the position of the U.S. in the great picture in respect of the deal reached with Iran can be understood better.

In fact, the decision of the U.S. to re-initiate its support and military assistance program to the Sisi administration in Egypt creates the impression that Cairo, which has opened a front against the Muslim Brotherhood and highlights the Sunni Islam sensibility isolated from radicalism by supporting it with Arab identity has been given a principal role that serves as a balance in the said new game plan and that there is an attempt to create an axis including Tel Aviv, Cairo and Ankara. It appears as a strong probability that many changes and transformation will take place in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) geography that will include the existing borders and affect an area extending to the Central Asia in the upcoming 5-year period.

51 Pascal Carlucci, Daily Telegraph, July 15, 2015, London

CHAPTER -7-

POSSIBLE IMPACT OF THE VIENNA DEAL ON TURKEY

When we analyze the reflections of the nuclear deal reached with Iran on Turkey, it appears to have been received positively and optimistically by the political circles, business world and diplomatic circles. The IRNA bulletin dated July 14, 2015 stated the following regarding Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu under the headline "Davutoglu wishes that this deal had been reached years ago", which was also covered by the Turkish media; "The current and final state of affairs is pleasing for us. It is important to drop the tension in the region. We hope that a stance can be assumed to remove all other nuclear weapons holdings in the region based on this attitude. Also, it is a positive development for us to see the lifting of embargoes imposed on Iran."

In his statement, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlut Cavusoglu stated; "Implementing and maintaining the deal and lifting the embargoes will contribute to our region and also affect Turkey directly. I hope the deal will be accomplished and bring stability to the region. Iran must also reconsider its role in Syria, Iraq and Yemen and play a constructive role. "

Among those who have responded positively to the deal, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Taner Yildiz stated; "I find the nuclear deal with Iran as a highly positive development. We will see its effects once it is finalized. There were several items in Iran that have not turned into investment. The path will also be cleared for them." Also, Minister of Finance Mehmet Simsek supported Yildiz by saying; "The deal is very good news for the Turkish economy. Commerce and investments between the two countries will increase."

The retired Ambassador Umit Pamir used a cautious expression and said; "Is Iran a "state" or a "cause"? If Iran accepts this deal like a state and acts like a state, that means there are "new horizons" for the region. However, if it says, 'No, I see it as a temporary arrangement and will not change my regional policy', then it is something else. An Iran with nuclear capability will move to another league. Naturally, it will have a positive reflection on

the region in general"⁵². On the other hand, the retired Ambassador and the former Director General of the Middle East Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Oguz Celikkol stated; "It has become important, what policies Iran will follow in the solution of the regional problems after the deal. If Iran that will have economic opportunities takes steps toward peaceful solution of the regional problems, new opportunities will arise in ensuring the political stability in the region".

The former Minister of Foreign Affairs and the retired Ambassador Ilter Turkmen stated; "I don't think Iran will follow a more peaceful policy from now on... However, it is also another fact that we compete with Iran in the Middle East" and seemed to have supported Pampir's cautious words in a way⁵³.

In his statement to the Milliyet Newspaper⁵⁴, the Ambassador of Turkey to Tehran Riza Hasan Tekin said that there were one optimist perspective and one pessimist perspective with regard to possible developments that may arise from the deal, and added that the reformist wing in Iran would grow stronger with the turning of a new page with the West and that Tehran might bring its foreign policy to a more constructive line. According to Tekin, the pessimist perspective is that the deal reached has acknowledged that Iran has actually been right in the policies it has followed so far and that it may increasingly continue its operations in the region with the physical resources it will acquire.

Seeing the deal as a gain for Turkey, Tekin noted; "It would be an advantage for Turkey to see the breaking up of Iran's isolation. The potential between Turkey and Iran in respect of commercial relations may reach to a more advanced point together with the removal of the sanctions."

Despite the customary optimistic, but moderate expressions from the members of the political world and the agreeable, but cautious discourse from the diplomatic circles, the statements made by the business world appear to be content and have high expectations.

The President of the Turkish Exporters Assembly Mehmet Buyukeksi drew the attention to the 30% increase in the exports to Iran amounting to 1.9

52 Hurriyet Newspaper, July 15, 2015, p.28

53 Hurriyet Newspaper, July 15, 2015, p.28

54 Milliyet Newspaper, Dilara Zengin, July 18, 2015, p.18

billion dollars in the first month following the preferential trade agreement that entered into effect on January 1, 2015 and said that they expected the trade volume with Iran to reach 16 billion dollars by the end of 2015 and 25 billion dollars in 2016⁵⁵. The Chairperson of the Executive Board of Istanbul Chamber of Industry Erdal Bahcivan said; "Our private sector was hesitating about our economic relations with Iran due to the embargoes.

These adverse conditions are now behind us. Iran will present new opportunities for many industries in Turkey, particularly for durable consumer goods." The President of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce Ibrahim Caglar, on the other hand, said that the deal had an historic importance for Turkey and added, "The European countries and China will get into a lobbying race in Iran. Turkish and Iranian entrepreneurs may make joint investments and open to third countries together"⁵⁶. While the President of the Turkey-Iran Domestic Council of the Foreign Economic Relations Board Riza Eser commented as follows; "Turkey is among the first countries that have the opportunity to further commercial relations with Iran"⁵⁷, the Chairperson of the Executive Board of the Turkish Confederation expressed that it would create new opportunities for the regional economies from tourism to food trade. Stating that the Turkish retail companies were constantly surveying the Iranian market, Murat Izci (Kom Shopping Mall consultancy) claimed that several shopping malls to be opened in Iran would prefer Turkish brands⁵⁸. Following the market conditions in Iran closely because of his stores in Iran, Umit Zaim warned that it shouldn't be expected that everything would change instantly in Iran and that Iran did not want to make a big change and therefore would open the doors slowly⁵⁹.

The response of Mahdi Culazade, the Chairperson of the Iranian Industrialists and Businessmen to the favorable and optimistic statements of the Turkish business world seems to have increased the hopes for realization of the expectations. Culazade drew the attention to the geographical and cultural proximity of both countries and the presence of a large population speaking Turkish (Azeri's) in Iran and mentioned about the advantage that the Turkish brands were very well-known in Iran. Culazade also mentioned

55 Milliyet Newspaper, July 15, 2015, p.11

56 Milliyet Newspaper, July 15, 2015, p.11

57 Milliyet Newspaper, July 15, 2015, p.11

58 Milliyet Newspaper, July 15, 2015, p.11

59 Milliyet Newspaper, July 15, 2015, p.11

the tax advantages of the Turkish companies in Iran and draw attention to another advantage that the investments were under the government guarantee, and added that there were opportunities for Turkish companies in mining, tourism, construction industries, iron-steel, chemical and machinery production⁶⁰.

Although there is still formalities to undergo after the deal reached in Vienna is approved by the U.S. Congress and enters into effect and the sanctions are lifted, the European countries, particularly Germany, France and England, Japan, China and India have already begun very serious lobbying activities and initiatives to take a share from the Iranian market.

In fact, the offer extended to Tehran by the Minister of Economy of the Federal Germany Sigmar Gabriel about the renewable energy and the re-opening of the Tehran Embassy of the United Kingdom that was closed for four years upon the visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs Philip Hammond must be regarded as the precursors of the said initiatives. When adding the increased negotiations under the leadership of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for construction of a pipeline for natural gas transmission from the South Pars field over Oman to the Guajarati State in India⁶¹ to these developments an Iran-centered game field seems to have begun on a geographical area extending from Europe to Asia.

Particularly due to Iran's need for high technology, Germany that is not a member of the Security Council, but took part in as plus one in the P5 countries and actively took part in Iran's nuclear studies through KWU in the past, immediately followed by Japan and China that are the countries to which Iran exports the highest amount of oil rise to a more advantageous position compared to other countries in this respect.

Its superiority based on high technology as a whole in automotive, chemicals, iron-steel, mining, IT, heavy machinery production, durable consumer goods, health, renewable energy industries appears to have opened a great window of opportunity for Germany that has been desiring to open to the Iranian market all along.

The U.S.'s hesitation about directly and intensively entering to the Iranian

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61 Michael Tantum, Modi and the Sino-Indian Game for Iranian Gas, the Diplomat, July 17, 2015

market will probably push this country to partnerships that will keep it in the background, and Germany, Japan and Turkey may be suggested to come to the fore as ideal partners.

In the construction industry where Turkey is ambitious and experienced in the foreign market, China is believed to emerge as a competitor in Iran with its fast construction technology and cheap labor.

Also France that has important investments in the automotive industry and took place in the nuclear studies in the past in Iran is considered to be an important actor in race for market share.

One of the most important factors that must be considered in the race for share in the Iranian market is the fact that countries that produce modern conventional weapons and have developed missile technology will be initially luckier in the near future-oriented relationships in view of the bans that will end in 5 and 8 years as Iran has a culture of long-term planning and utilitarianism. From this point of view, Germany, France, Russian Federation and China appear to be at a better advantage compared to other countries in terms of starting the race earlier and in the medium and long term.

In line with all these explanations, when we look at Turkey's position and means; it looks possible for the Turkish business world to take a significant part in the Iranian markets in durable consumer goods, white appliances, tourism investments and management, shopping mall construction and operation, construction, ready-wear and garment industry, food, health, automotive and supporting industries.

However, it should be noted as a serious risk that Turkey's initially natural advantages due to the geographical and cultural proximity may gradually weaken in parallel to the increased influence of the countries that have superior technology, consulting and project services and strong economy in the long term, and investment and future business plans must therefore be made very rationally.

Although Iran's time to time hampering and negative attitude in Turkey's trade relations with Nakhichevan, Azerbaijan and Central Asian Turkic Republics does not constitute an example for the new period considering

Tehran's pragmatic attitude, it might still prove useful to remember it.

Although economy operates within the framework of its own rules, when the role and influence of Iran's regime, ideological structure and regime elements in economic life (for example, the Revolutionary Guards, bonyads under the control of the clerics, etc.) is considered, it shouldn't be surprising if Turkey's way of thinking and policies in many regional matters different than Iran's may lead to complications in commercial relations.

When the said factor is accompanied by the rising competition between Iran and Turkey on a geographical area extending from Caucasus to the Middle East and Central Asia, which is not expressly voiced out, it seems useful to reduce the initial optimism this time to a cautious optimism.

At this point, in order for Turkey to carry out the political and economic relations on the basis of mutual interests with Iran, which turns into the new area for international competition and contradicts with Turkey in the claim for becoming regional power, and to be an actor in the Iranian market, it would be useful if Turkey resets to factory settings in "secularism", leaves the Sunni actor identity criticized by some actors behind and shows in practice that it is at equal distance to both sides (Sunnism and Shi'ism).

In return, Iran must remember that it didn't act like a neighboring country that shares a common history, culture and geography when it attempted to export its regime to Turkey in the years following the Islamic Revolution and allowed PKK to base close to the border, and that, despite all these negativities, Turkey had never followed a foreign policy and practice aimed to capitalize on Tehran's isolated position, and must adapt itself to this new reality as expected.

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