THE ASCENDANCE OF IRAN:
A STUDY OF THE EMERGENCE OF AN ASSERTIVE IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON IRANIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS

James Harlon Williams

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by

James Harlon Williams

June 1979

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by

James Harlon Williams
Captain, United States Army
B.A., Texas Tech University, 1969

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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I. INTRODUCTION

The post-World War II era witnessed the ascendance of Iran as the paramount force in the Persian Gulf. Immediately after the war, Iranian foreign policy was primarily concerned with mobilizing Western support for countering the Soviet threat to Iranian territorial integrity. Once this was accomplished and the immediate Soviet threat dissipated, the Iranian government, under the leadership of Dr. Mohammad Mossadiq, attempted to: (a) eradicate the vestiges of British interferrence in Iranian domestic affairs, particularly London's control over Iranian petroleum resources; and (b) establish a truly nonaligned foreign policy. Perceiving the latter objective as a threat to Western interests in the region, the U.S. and Britain engineered the overthrow of the Mossadiq regime. The downfall of the nationalist government led to systemic changes in the Iranian political system, which in turn resulted in the substantive restructuring of Iranian foreign policy.[1]

In the aftermath of the domestic crisis of 1953, the remanetory domestic constraints on the arbitrary powers of the monarch were swept aside, the pseudo-parliamentary system was "totally abandoned," and Iranian foreign policy adopted a

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[1] See Shabram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, The Foreign Relations of Iran (Berkley: 1974), pp. 2-3.

decidedly pro-Western course.[2] Iran's membership in CENTO and its subsequent bi-lateral accord with the U.S. were designed as much to insure the continued viability of the regime as to provide for the defense of the nation. The Shah's dissatisfaction with Washington's unwillingness to commit the U.S. to the preservation of the monarchy, however, prompted Iran to seek a normalization of its relationship with the Soviet Union, and engendered a foreign policy shift away from total reliance on the U.S.

Iran was relatively successful in implementing its "national independent foreign policy" until 1968, when Britain's announced withdrawal from the Persian Gulf upset the politico-military equilibrium in the region. The Iranian leadership was surprised by the British announcement and unprepared for their withdrawal. Iran had no cohesive gulf policy, and Tehran was concerned that the Soviets might be tempted to exploit the "power vacuum" created by the British departure. Furthermore, the Shah was aware of Washington's hesitancy to continue committing U.S. forces to such far-flung areas. Encouraged by the U.S., the Shah decided to assume for Iran the former British role as the policeman of the gulf. Accordingly, Iran began building up its armed forces, particularly its air and naval capabilities.

Even before the British had completed their gulf pull-out, another regional crisis--the third Indo-Pakistani War--necessitated another modification to Iran's foreign policy.

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[2] Ibid., p. 4.

The 1971 war motivated the Shah into extending Iran's security interests beyond the confines of the Persian Gulf, encompassing in the process all of the Arabian and Red Seas and much of the Indian Ocean. In addition, the Shah became convinced of the need to employ Iran's growing economic wealth to prevent radical change and promote political stability within the region. Once again, Iranian policy changes were accompanied by a further expansion of Iran's military capabilities. In developing and implementing a more dynamic and regionally active foreign policy for Iran, Iran's leaders overlooked one crucial factor: an ascendant Iran might well be interpreted by the Soviet Union as a threat to its long term interests in the area.

A. SUBJECT TO BE ADDRESSED

This study will attempt to determine if both systemic and environmental changes in the policy-making process in Iran from 1962 to 1978 led to the development of a foreign policy which was perceived by Moscow as a challenge to Soviet interests in the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean (PG/IO) region. Although in recent years, as Chubin and Zabih note in their work _The Foreign Relations of Iran_, Iranian foreign policy and the Shah were virtually synonymous, such a condition has not always been characteristic of the Iranian policy-making process. In the past, institutional constraints existed which served to curb, to a greater degree than since 1953, the arbitrary

decision-making perogatives of the Persian monarch. Therefore, some factor or set of factors must have developed to either reduce the influence of, or eliminate altogether, those traditional constraints on the monarchy. Such factors could consist of internal systemic changes in the nature or structure of the policy-making process, or of changes in the regional or international environment which in turn affected the political system of Iran, or both. As noted above, parallel with the emergence of the monarch as the "unitary rational actor" in Iranian policy-making was the development of a new foreign policy which was intended to move Iran toward a nonaligned position in the international arena by reducing Iran's dependence on the West while simultaneously normalizing relations with the Soviet Union. In order to successfully implement such a policy vis a vis the Soviet Union, however, Iran would have to insure that it took no action which might be construed by Moscow as a threat to its interests in the region. If subsequent Iranian actions indicated to the Kremlin that Iran had in fact developed a more assertive foreign policy designed to limit Soviet involvement in the area, then the Iranian policy-making process--in the absence of the traditional constraints on the monarch--had produced a foreign policy which failed to appropriately interpret and assess the regional security interests of the Soviet Union.

B. FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

In their study of Iranian foreign policy, Chubin and Zabih maintain that in developing nations like Iran in which the decision-making system is closed, and for which there is little reliable information as to the functions of organizational and institutional actors, the development and use of a cognitive framework for analyzing Iranian foreign policy is "extraordinarily difficult."[3] While their contention is accurate for the period on which their study was based (1963-1974), the closed system which they analyzed was a recent development in the history of Iranian policy-making. As the revolution in Iran has demonstrated, moreover, the closed system was alien to Iranian politics, and in the final analysis temporary. This study will begin, therefore, with an examination of the traditional Iranian polity, including the position and role of the monarch vis a vis the other members of the established elite. Because of the unique position of religion in Iranian society, the institutional and societal roles of Islam will be addressed. The discussion will then attempt to examine another crucial set of variables which the Chubin/Zabih study does not address: the Persian belief system which formulated the images and impressions of the decision-makers concerning events and issues in the outside world. This portion of the study also will assess the similarities and differences between the traditional and the modern decision-making systems.

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[3] Ibid., p. 9.

Due to the nature of the problem addressed by this study, which requires an appraisal of the Soviet perception of Iranian foreign policy, Soviet interest in, and the formulation of Kremlin policy toward, Iran and the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean region will be analyzed. Soviet strategy under both the Czarist and Soviet regimes will be examined, as will the relationship between Soviet policy toward the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean region and overall Soviet policy objectives. The discussion will also focus briefly on the domestic determinants of Soviet policy toward the region in question.

From here the study will move into a historical context for analyzing significant issues in Iranian-Soviet relations over a 400-year period. A description of Iran's efforts to maintain its territorial integrity in the face of successive Russian attempts to penetrate the Caucasus and to conquer Central Asia will be followed by an examination of Iranian-Soviet relations since 1917. Collectively, these two discussions will provide a record of those Iranian-Soviet interactions which have played such an important role in influencing the perceptions of Iranian policy-makers.

The capstone of this study will be a description of the domestic and environmental factors surrounding Iranian foreign policy changes from 1962 to the present. Beginning with the Iranian-Soviet rapprochement, this discussion will attempt to place the evolution of Iran's independent

national policy in the context of changing international conditions. Soviet gains and setbacks during the period also will be analyzed both in an international context as well as in juxtaposition to developments in Iranian foreign policy. In conclusion, this study will attempt to assess Soviet perceptions of the recent revolution in Iran, and postulate the likely impact on Soviet-Iranian relations of the foreign policy of three alternative future Iranian governments.

II. THE IRANIAN PERSPECTIVE: DETERMINANTS OF IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Before embarking on any study of Iranian foreign policy, including an analysis of Irano-Soviet relations, it is essential to first explore in some detail the socio-cultural, institutional, and environmental components of Iranian foreign policy in general in order to develop a more thorough understanding of how those factors have historically impacted on Iran's relationship with its northern neighbor. This chapter will analyze the traditional political and socio-cultural features of policy-making in Iran, including the traditional role of the monarch in decision-making and the unique impact of Shia Islam, both as an institution and as a value system, in Iranian politics and foreign policy. Persian images of the outside world which effect foreign policy decisions will also be addressed. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a discussion of the systemic and procedural changes to Iranian policy-making which occured under the last two monarchs and the effects of these changes on Iranian foreign policy. It is the intent of this initial discussion to provide a more rigorous and substantive framework for analyzing Irano-Soviet relations, rather than in a solely historical context, thereby enhancing a more profound understanding of the intricacies of the two nations' relationship.

A. POLICY-MAKING IN A TRADITIONAL CONTEXT

In Iran, as in other Islamic societies, government can be characterized as the politics of personalism, i.e. politics is "paternal, patriarchal, and patrimonial."[4] This means that politics is the purview of a limited elite, which is itself dominated by the ruler or patriarch, who serves as the "model, guide, innovator, planner, mediator, chastiser, and protector" for the remainder of society.[5] The ruler governs society through "an identifiable administrative structure [which] develops and spreads throughout the... society" with the result that "the ruler's relationship with the ruled tends to be filtered through a huge network of bureaucratic personalities."[6] Cleavages within society manifest themselves along social, economic, and kinship lines. As a result, rivalry and tension are "institutionalized" within the society. Rivalry characterizes all "interpersonal, intergroup, and inter-class relations" and pervades all institutions of society "from the family all the way to the national bureaucracy."[7] Such a system necessitates the

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[4] James A. Bill and Carl Leiden. The Middle East: Politics and Power. (New York: 1974), p. 105.

[5] Ibid., p. 110.

[6] Ibid., p. 104; see also James A. Bill, "The Patterns of Elite Politics in Iran," in Political Elites in the Middle East, ed. by George Lenczowski (Washington, D.C.: 1975), p. 18.

[7] Bill and Leiden, The Middle East, p. 117.

existence of a central authority with the not inconsiderable power required to arbitrate, mediate, and adjudicate between the various rival factions. For about 2500 years of Persian history, this role was performed by the institution of the monarchy and the person of the Shah.

1. The Monarch: "the hub of the system"[8]

Historically, numerous adulatory titles have been applied to the Persian monarch in an attempt to describe the position of the monarchy in Iranian society. The Shah has been known as the "King of Kings," the "Pivot of the Universe," the "Sun of the Aryan Nation," and the "Shadow of God." From pre-Islamic times, when Iran was the bastion of Zoroastrianism, the Shah has been perceived as the embodiment of the "Mithra-principle," i.e. the monarch supposedly served--like the legendary Mithra of Zorastrian tradition--as the living nexus between mankind and the divine.[9] This tradition added a "metaphysical dimension" to the status of the monarch, enabling him to employ certain mystical powers in the course of his rule.[10] With the advent of Islam to Iran in the 7th century, and particularly following the adoption of the Shia form of Islam under the Safavid Shah Isma'il in the 16th

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[8] Bill, "Patterns...", p. 20.

[9] Pio Filippani--Ronconi, "The Traditions of Sacred Kingship in Iran," in Iran Under the Pahlavis, ed. by George Lenczowski (Stanford: 1978), p. 57.

[10] C.A.O. Von Nieuwenhuijze. Sociology of the Middle East. (Leiden: 1971), pp. 307-308.

century, the metaphysical dimension of the Persian monarchy took on increased significance as the Shah came to be regarded as either a "reincarnation of the twelfth [or "hidden" Imam"] or as the "agent of the hidden Imam."[11] In either case the Shah was presumed to be at least of a semi-divine nature. While the supernatural capabilities ascribed to the Shah were significant in legitimizing his rule in the minds of his anagocially oriented subjects, his ultimate importance lay in his position as the "pivot" or "hub" of the Iranian political system. His power as the supreme ruler, the Padishah, depended less on his coercive powers[12] than on his ability to serve as an effective mediator and arbiter between the various interdependent, competitive, and mutually antagonistic components of the Persian elite.[13]

Unlike traditional elites in feudal western societies, membership in the Persian elite, at least since the advent of Islam, has transcended socio-economic lines, making it a more dynamic but less secure grouping.[14] Elite membership was drawn from:

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[11] W. Montgomery Watt. Islamic Political Thought. (Edinburgh: 1968), p. 112.

[12] Reliance by the monarchy on a large standing army is a recent advent in Iranian political history. Prior to this century the only standing force was an archtypical royal guard of limited size. For mustering a larger force the monarch had to depend on forces supplied by the tribal khans.

[13] C.A.O. Von Nieuwenhuijze. Social Stratification and the Middle East: An Interpretation. (Leiden: 1965), pp. 53 and 55.

[14] See James A. Bill, The Politics of Iran, (Columbus, Ohio: 1972), p. 30; see also Von Nieuwenhuijze, Sociology of the Middle East, pp. 53 and 55.

(1) the aristocracy--the royal family, members of other "noble" families,[15] and the "economic aristocracy"--large landowners and wealthy merchants--whose wealth was based on royal patronage and whose power and influence was determined by loyalty to the monarch,[16] another contrast with western society where wealth generally begat power.

(2) tribal leaders[17]--geographically based elements which could, and sometimes did, function as alternative centers of political, economic, and military power to that of the central government. Tribal notables often had large landholdings and filled key positions in either the bureaucracy or the military.

(3) bureaucratic and military elites--court ministers, military leaders, advisors, principle functionaries, and intellectuals.[18]

(4) the religious hierarchy--a group whose influence with the throne has been, historically, rather erratic but crucial at times either for its support of or opposition to both rulers and their policies. This

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[15] Marvin Zonis. The Political Elite of Iran. (Princeton: 1971), p. 121; see also Reuben Levy, The Social Structure of Islam. (Cambridge: 1957), p. 100.

[16] Bill, Politics of Iran, pp. 9-10; see also Bill and Leiden, The Middle East, p. 80.

[17] Ibid.; and Zonis, p. 121.

[18] Ibid.; and Levy, p. 100.

> group is significant for its linkages with other groups both in and out of the elite, for its ability to mobilize the masses, and for its role as an avenue of socio-economic mobility.[19]

Within this elite, the political modus operandi for acquiring influence or power was, and still is, bargaining,[20] which occured both within each group of the elite--such as between separate tribes or between "noble" families--and between groups--as between the religious hierarchy, the bureaucracy, and the tribes. Bargaining consisted of offers for support (allegience, troops, money, etc.) in return for influence (position or dispensation).[21] Although the position of the monarch was ostensibly separate from and above that of the rest of the elite,[22] he was in fact deeply involved in the bargaining process. Since the monarch traditionally lacked a military force of sufficient size to enable him to rely on coercion as a motivating factor, the Shah was forced to rely on patronage as his primary means of securing support from the heterogeneous elite and on

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[19] Zonis, pp. 212-122; and, Bill, Politics of Iran, p. 28.

[20] Leonard Binder. Political Development in a Changing Society. (Berkeley: 1962), pp. 227-231.

[21] Ibid., p. 265.

[22] Bill, Politics of Iran, p. 9.

consultation with appropriate elite members as the principle method of reaching decisions.[23] Such a posture inherently served to constrain the authority of the monarch by "binding" him to the rest of the elite.[24] The advantage of this type of system, which Zonis calls a "flexible autocracy", is that it allows the monarch to either defer or delegate authority to any element or group, even those from outside of the normal elite, should either the system or the monarch be threatened.[25] Even the area of foreign policy was not exempt from the effects of bargaining, as various groups and individuals among the elite began to develop linkages with foreign interests, the most notorious being the competitive networks of linkages between various Persian officials, families, and tribes and either British or Russian interests during the 19th century.[26] That the roles of bargaining and external linkages remains a significant factor in Iranian foreign relations is evidenced by the recent scope of continued outside involvement in Iranian economic, military, and political affairs.

2. Islam: the "stiff religious cement" of the system[27]

Although there is a natural tendency for Western observers to discount the role of religion when analyzing the policy-making

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[23] Binder, pp. 247-248.

[24] Ibid., p. 63.

[25] Zonis, p. 126.

[26] Bill, Politics of Iran, p. 10.

[27] Gaetano Mosca. The Ruling Class. Translated by Hannah D. Kahn. (New York: 1939), p. 345.

functions of developing nations, such an omission can result in grossly distorted and inaccurate perceptions of situations and policies, as much of the recent reporting on the Iranian crisis has woefully demonstrated. Particularly in the Middle East, where religion serves as the very fabric of society, the impact of Islam as a continuing and viable force in the political process, including foreign policy, must not be overlooked. In the Iranian context, Islam serves two functions: as a value system, combining in Iranian Shi'ism basic Islamic patterns of social organization and behavior with uniquely Persian cultural traditions; and, as a vital institution in Iranian society for meeting the social, economic, and even the political needs of the Iranian people. It is not within the scope of this study, however, to present a detailed discussion of the role of Islam in Iranian society, but rather to enumerate those aspects of the Perso-Islamic heritage which have influenced Iranian policy-making in particular.

Although in the past other Muslim nations adopted a heterodox form of Islam, today Iran is the only Islamic country to embrace Twelver (Ithna Ashari) Shiism as the state religion. Like their orthodox Sunni counterparts, Shi'as believe in the unity of God, the prophecy of Mohammad, and life after death. Ithna Ashari Shi'ism differs from orthodox Islamic doctrine by its: (1) insistence on a hereditarily determined line of successors to the Prophet Mohammad through the Prophet's grandson, Ali; (2) acceptance of the Imams as

a spiritual intermediary between God and man, and therefore the true successors to the Prophet; (3) insistence on the infallibility of the doctrinal interpretations of the Imams; and (4) recognition of the importance of reason (ijtihad) as a necessary means of determining appropriate behavior.[28] In Persia, Shi'ism took root because it was compatible with Persian cultural tradition and because it fulfilled a political need as well. Culturally the concept of the charismatic, omniscient, infallible Imam was amalgamated with Zoroastrian monarchial tradition.[29] One legend had it that Zayar al-Abidin, grandson of Ali and son of Husayn, married the daughter of Yazdigird III, the last Sassanid Shah.[30] This synthesis continued until its culmination during the Safavid period when Shi'ism became the official religion and the Safavid rulers claimed to represent the "hidden" Imam, thereby uniting in the concept of the Shahanshah Shia dogma with the traditional Persian theory of the Divine Right of Kings.[31] Persian Shi'ism also borrowed heavily from Zoroastrian eschatological doctrine.[32]

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[28] Caesar E. Farah. Islam. (Woodbury, N.Y.: 1970), pp. 175-178, 187-188; see also Charles F. Gallagher, Contemporary Islam (New York: 1966), p. 184; and Alfred Guillaume, Islam (Middlesex England, 1956), pp. 115-120.

[29] Von Niewenhuijze, Sociology of the Middle East, p. 191; and Gallagher, p. 180.

[30] Roger M. Savory, "Iran: A 2500-Year Historical and Cultural Tradition," in Iranian Civilization and Culture, ed. by Charles J. Adams, (Montreal: 1972), p. 85; see also Richard W. Cottam. Nationalism in Iran, (Pittsburgh: 1964), p. 134.

[31] Norman Jacobs. The Sociology of Development: Iran as an Asian Case Study. (New York: 1966), pp. 214-215.

[32] Ibid., p. 86.

Politically, Shi'ism was significant for providing a mechanism for resisting Arab (and later Mongolian and Turkish) domination and for maintaining a sense of "self-identity." As a "rallying point for national political unity," Shi'ism in Iran became the focal point for political dissent.[33] The current crisis in Iran aptly demonstrates the continued viability of Shi'ism as a major vehicle for popular protest "against the stress and disruptions that modernization involves."[34] Regarding the linkage which has developed between religion and nationalism in Iran, Professor Savory succinctly notes that "by adopting, and adapting to their own ends, the Shi'i...form of Islam, the Persians forged a political weapon of immense strength which has served them well throughout their centuries of effort to preserve their historical and cultural tradition, and in recent times has constituted an important element in Iranian nationalism."[35]

Over the years Shi'ism in Iran evolved, like its Zorastrian predecessor, into a major institution in Persian society. The

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[33] Gustav Thaiss, "Unity and Discord: The Symbol of Husayn in Iran," in Adams, pp. 116-117.

[34] Michael Fischer, "Persian Society: Transformation and Strain," in Twentieth-Century Iran, ed. by Hossein Amirsadeghi (New York: 1977), p. 186.

[35] Savory, p. 84.

Shia hierarchy, the ulema, fulfill two significant political functions. In the first place, the ulema serve as the guardians of legitimacy vis a vis the secular political authority. Although the religious establishment long ago delegated to the political authority the right to protect society, ostensibly until the return of the "hidden" Imam, it in fact has retained the right to saction the secular authority, including the authority to: (1) legitimize, on the order of a court of last resort, the policies of a secular regime; (2) the authority (as was most recently demonstrated) to withdraw sanction from a secular authority which consistently abuses its privilege; and, in turn, (3) the power to determine the nature of a successor authority.[36] Thus the ulema can go into opposition "whenever their moral sensibilities have been offended" by the policies or actions of the secular authority.[37]

In addition to its watch-dog role, the Shia hierarchy is politically significant as a mechanism for channeling inputs from other groups into the system and for providing feedback to those groups on the regime's response to their demands. Serving as the primary link between non-elite elements and the political authority, the ulema are in a unique position to influence policy decisions. One of the groups with which

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[36] For a contrasting viewpoint based on the position of the ulema under the Pahlavis see Jacobs, pp. 209-214.

[37] Ibid., p. 218.

the ulema have traditionally had strong ties has been the bazaar merchants. Jacobs notes that "the bazaar and the mosque often have been contiguous."[38] Other domestic elements linked with the ulema through the lower clergy or mullahs include students, lower ranking civil servants and semi-skilled labor, all of which also have been the primary focus of the secular opposition, particularly the National Front.[39]

The religious establishment in Iran has also been an important factor in foreign policy-making due primarily to its ability to mobilize either support for, or opposition against, a given policy. In 1891 a coalition of ulema, bazaari, and liberal intellectuals succeeded in overturning a decision by Nasr al-Din Shah to grant a tobacco concession to the British.[40] Although the nature of Russian historical involvement in Iran will be discussed in detail later in the study, opposition by the ulema to various attempts by Czarist and Soviet Russia to obtain oil and other concessions in Iran has been consistent and vociferous. Needless to say, foreign powers have become aware also of the influence of the ulema in Iranian policy-making. As will be discussed later, the British frequently supported the religious-tribal-bazaari alliance as an effective counter to several Russian moves.

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[38] Ibid., p. 220.

[39] Ibid., p. 221.

[40] See Nikki R. Keddie, Religion and Rebellion in Iran (London: 1966), for a complete analysis of the various forces involved in the "tobacco rebellion."

That the British eventually lost the support of that alliance during the oil nationalization crisis of 1951-53 was also significant. Washington was able successfully to mobilize support for the Shah's return in 1953 through the bazaari-ulema link. The final chapter on the influence of the religious establishment is still to be written, but its role in the current crisis in both unseating the monarch and his appointed successor and in forging a re-alignment in U.S.-Iranian relations needs no discussion. In this respect, Dr. Jacobs warning that "it would be a grave error to ignore the religious element in Iranian nationalism" and foreign policy was prophetic.

B. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONDITIONS AND EVENTS IN THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT AND IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Interwoven with the socio-cultural determinants of Iranian foreign policy discussed in the preceding section there exists a complex geo-political framework, image pattern, or screen through which Persians have traditionally filtered information concerning situations in the outside world. According to the tenets of Islam, the world is divided into the "Dar al-Islam," the region of peace, and the "Dar al-Harb," the region of conflict. The nature of the relationship between the two was traditionally assumed to be one of competition, if not actual hostility. Muslims further believed that, due to the spiritual and moral superiority of Islam as a way of life, the "Dar al-Harb" would gradually diminish in size and importance as territories and societies within it converted to Islam.[41]

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[41] See Farah, pp. 158-160, and Raphael Patai, _Society, Culture, and Change in the Middle East_, Third, Enlarged Edition (Philadelphia: 1971), pp. 355-356 & 4-2.

In Iran, this concept was refined into one which described the outside world in terms of three concentric circles, with the two inner most circles corresponding to the "Dar al-Islam" and the outer and largest circle to the "Dar al-Harb."[42] The smallest and innermost circle corresponded to Iran's perceived area of vital national interest and, in addition to the area of modern Iran, included the Caucasus, the Trans-Caucasus region south of the Oxus, Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf littoral, and the region west of the Indus. Most of the remainder of the Islamic World was included in the second circle, which depicted the area of significant, but less than vital, interest to Iran. Enclosed within this circle was most of what today is generally accepted as the Near East: Central Asia, the Eastern Mediterranean littoral and the Arabian Sea littoral. Encompassing the non-Islamic regions of the "Dar al-Harb" the third circle included the remainder of the Old World areas of the Eurasian and African continents.

What was unique about the Iranian perception of the world, which differentiated it from the perceptions of the other great Islamic empires--the Arabs, the Turks, and the Moghuls of India--was that Iran viewed the external environment not as an area predestined to subjegation under the liberating swords of righteous conquerors, but rather as an area from which powerful forces would be periodically unleashed by some

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[42] Richard Burt, "Power and the Peacock Throne," Round Table, Vol. 260 (October 1975), p. 351.

unseen malevolent force in an attempt to destroy the great and glorious heritage of Persian culture. In other words, the Iranian perception was one of apprehension, anxiety, and insecurity, resulting in a strategy within its foreign policy which was essentially defensive in nature. It was a strategy born perhaps as early as Alexander's conquest of Persia in 330 B.C. and later tempered by the Arab and Mongol invasions of the 7th and 13th centuries A.D. respectively. Iranian foreign policy emerged then as a reflection of what some modern observers have identified as an inherent and acute feeling of insecurity within Iranian society as a whole.[43] Another aspect of Persian culture which complemented their defensive strategy was the flexibility which they consistently demonstrated when faced with an adversary of overwhelming military superiority. This was especially evident in both the Arab and Mongol conquests. In both of these instances, the relatively high level of efficiency of Persian administration and the advanced state of Persian civilization, coupled with the willingness of Persians to pragmatically adapt to such changes in their environment by utilizing their bureaucratic and cultural talents in the service of their conquerors, enabled them to "always conquer and absorb their conquerors."[44]

With the founding of the Safavid dynasty in the 16th century, Iranian perception of the external threat began to

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[43] See Zonis, Chapter 7, and Bill, p. 15.

[44] Peter Avery. Modern Iran. (London: 1965), p. 15.

focus more intently on the danger from the north.[45] As a subsequent section of this study will discuss in some detail, concern about the northern threat was to become a permanent feature of Iranian strategy for centuries to come. By the 16th century the Arab threat had long dissipated, Ottoman attention was directed west and north and an eastern threat was not to re-appear until the 18th century. A third factor of Iranian foreign policy which mirrored a feature of domestic politics was the use of diplomatic bargaining by Persia to maintain its independence and territorial integrity. This policy was at least partially necessitated by the failure of the Persians to modernize their military apparatus.

Although during ancient times, particularly during the period of "the 10,000 immortals" of the Achaemenid dynasty, Persia maintained a highly effective standing army, over the centuries later dynasties relied increasingly on untrained forces supplied by either local satraps and tribal chiefs or on paid mercenaries. This problem was particularly acute during the latter years of the Sassanid and Safavid Empires. After a brief revival under Nadir Shah in the mid-18th century, the condition of the military again declined under the Qajars until the late 19th century when the Shah began to employ foreign officers to train and command a standing force.[46]

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[45] See Von Nieuwenhuijze, Sociology of the Middle East, p. 303.

[46] See U.S., Department of the Army, Area Handbook for Iran, 2nd ed., by Harvey H. Smith et.al., DA PAM 550-68 (Washington D.C., 1971) pp. 557-579.

Lacking an effective army to rely on when threatened by an external power, Persia sought to defend her interests by seeking support from the threatening power's major international rival. As a subsequent section will show, this strategy by Persia was, for centuries, greatly enhanced by Anglo-Russian competition in the region. Due to the ambiguity inherent in such a precarious policy, Persia attempted to buttress its position by seeking out a third great power to defuse the intrinsic Anglo-Russian rivalry. France, Germany, and the U.S. were all, at one time or another, contenders for the third-power role, with the latter ultimately replacing the British as a primary superpower competitor.

C. POLICY-MAKING IN A CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

At the time of this writing, the monarch who has ruled Iran for 37 years in both the best and worst traditions of the classical oriental despot has left the country for what officially was termed a vacation, but which ultimately may prove to be his de facto abdication as the second Pahlavi dynast. Although his future return to Iran must remain within the realm of possibility until such a time as he might formally abdicate, the likelihood of such a comeback appears to diminish almost daily. What remains a very viable issue, however, and one which is currently being debated both within and without Iran, is the future of the monarchy itself as an institution of Iranian society.

Even though the continued viability of the monarchy as a political institution in Iran is questionable, there are

several substantive reasons which counsel against prematurely discounting the policy-making role of the monarch in any study of Iranian foreign policy. In the first place, policy-making in Iran, as previously noted, has been traditionally authoritarian. The systemic characteristics of Iranian politics are such that, even should the present Shah eventually abdicate or otherwise cease to function as a ruling monarch, his successor--whether prime minister, president, party chairman, ayatollah, or general--will find himself as the focal point of the same patrimonial mechanism which served the Shah. Throughout the centuries of Iranian civilization, this mechanism has become institutionalized into a bureaucratic organization whose primary, if not only, function is to implement the policy directives of the nation's leader. When the Shah's successor finally emerges, not only will the system be poised to put forth its best effort in service to the new leader, but also the nature of the patrimonial system itself will be a tremendous temptation to the emergent leader to simply fill the power vacuum. Although Iran's new leader may not be called a Shah, it will be the all-powerful shoes of the monarch that he in fact shall fill. Additionally, as was discussed previously, the monarchy in Iran, besides its obvious political role, plays a longstanding and deeply inculturated religious function, one which can be reclaimed by the religious establishment but which seemingly could not be transferred to a purely secular leader. Finally, a discussion of the monarch in the context of policy-making

in a modernizing society is still relevant because for over half of the present century, policy-making and the monarchy in Iran have been synonymous.

As is true in all modernizing societies, there are aspects of the Iranian political system which have remained relatively unchanged throughout the centuries. Patrimonialism remains the essence of a system which continues to be characterized by rivalry and insecurity. Bargaining is still the name of the political game in Iran, as the current crisis has repeatedly demonstrated, and if anything, more deeply permeates Iranian politics than ever before. In what was the first modern study of the Iranian political system, Professor Binder noted that "every wealthy family, every high army or police officer, every mujtahid, every university professor, every tribal khan, every high official, judge, legal adviser, or accountant...labor leader, editor and publisher, leaders of political parties, leading merchants... leaders of interest of professional associations" are all engaged in bargaining.[47] It is also a game which the last Shah for many years was able to play with consumate skill by creating "a dynamically stable balance of tension in which ministers, courtiers, security agents, military leaders, industrialists, and clerics are systematically divided against one another at all levels."[48]

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[47] Binder, p. 228.

[48] Bill and Leiden, The Middle East, p. 118.

The traditional position and role of religion in Persian society is another feature of that nation's heritage to emerge relatively unscathed into the 20th century. Islam is still the glue which binds most of the disparate forces together. Because of the unique role Islam has played in Iran, however, it has provided the patrimonial leader with an ideology that buttressed and strengthened the political patterns by which he ruled."[49] The recent Shah in particular attempted to use religion as a "legitimizing device" by locking himself "into the legitimizing tradition of the Imams and Shi'ism."[50] Although the religious hierarchy was used to a certain degree of competion with the monarchy over the question of "legitimacy via emanation," the delicate nature of their relationship was upset when the Pavlavis first denied the ulema a voice in policy-making and ultimately challenged the institutional position of Islam itself in Iranian society by attempting to transfer to secular institutions responsible only to the monarch many of the social and economic functions traditionally performed by the religious establishment.[51] One problem that contributed to widespread discontent was the monarchy's failure to create viable secular institutions to provide the services previously performed by religious organizations. As a result, the monarchy not only aliented the

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[49] Ibid., p. 122.

[50] Ibid., p. 109.

[51] See Donald N. Wilber. Reza Shah Pahlavi: The Resurrection and Reconstruction of Iran. (Hicksville, N.Y.: 1975), pp. 246 & 263; see also Bill, Politics of Iran, Chapter 6.

ulema, but also the very members of society whose support it sought by attempting such change in the first place: the peasants, urban laborers, and the middle class.[52]

One area of Iranian policy-making has undergone considerable systemic change in the last 100 years. Under the two Pahlavi Shahs, the position of the ruler acquired a degree of power and authority whose totality was unrivaled in Persian history. Although the Pahlavi reign was not without its leadership crises--such as the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941 and the Mossadiq period from 1951-53--overall, the policy-making function of the monarchy under the Pahlavis became increasingly more absolute, arbitrary, and obtrusive. This increase in the authority of the monarch was fostered, aside from the forceful personalities of the Pahlavi rulers, by two separate but equally crucial developments. First was the institution of a standing military force, begun under Reza Shah but greatly expanded by his successor-son, Mohammed Reza. By forming a large and modern military the Pahlavi's were able to break the traditional hold of the aristocracy and tribal nobility on the throne by eliminating the monarchy's dependency on levies from the tribes and local rulers. Reza Shah's successful campaign to disarm the tribes also meant a centralization of coercive power in the hands of the ruler. His success was limited, however, by the fact the Reza Shah lacked sufficient financial resources to fully train and equip

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[52] See James A. Bill, "Iran and the Crisis of '78," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Winter 1978/79), particularly pp. 325, 327, 330-334.

an army of sufficient size to pose a credible deterrence to hostile external powers. Such a feat was accomplished by Mohammed Reza, but only following the second systemic change: greater control by the government over Iran's petroleum resources.

After WWII, Iran was able to gain both a greater voice in the development of its burgeoning oil industry and a greater share in that industry's profits. Following the resolution of the internal crisis of 1953 in the monarchy's favor, the use of that revenue became increasingly the perrogative solely of the Shah. Iranian production grew steadily during the 60's, and along with expanded production came increased petroleum revenue, particularly after the founding of OPEC in 1960.[53] Control of Iranian oil revenue meant that the Shah was increasingly able to pay for the expansion and modernization of the military, thereby lessening, and by 1968 eliminating, his dependence on military aid from external powers. This same period also witnessed a further centralization and consolidation of royal authority through the organization, in the wake of the Mossadiq crisis, of an extensive intelligence and security apparatus within both the government and the military. The State Security and Intelligence Organization, SAVAK, and Iranian

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[53] See Robert B. Stobaugh, "The Evolution of Iranian Oil Policy, 1925-1975," in Iran Under the Pahlavis by Lenczowski, particularly pp. 235-239.

Military Intelligence, Rōkn-ē dō, were organized with American and Israeli assistance.[54] Thus the monarchy acquired a total monopoly of coercive power within the state.

These changes--the development of a modern army and growing oil revenue--meant that the traditional systemic constraints on the authority of the ruler ceased to function. No single group, class, or institution in Persian society was able to effectively challenge the awesome power of the monarch. Although bargaining and co-optation were still the normative essence of Persian politics, increased reliance on coercion and suppression of all opposition became more frequent.[55] The monarch became virtually isolated from the mainstream of society, believing that it was no longer necessary to cooperate with the other members of the traditional elite, and that the monarchy's continued success could be insured by merely preventing: (1) any cooperation between opposition elements against the monarchy and its policies; and, (2) any external support for would-be domestic opposition groups. An increasing air of complacency apparently enveloped the ruler and his advisors and gave them a growing but false

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[54] See Zonis, p. 43, and Bill Politics of Iran, p. 42; see also Sharam Chubin and Sepehr Zabih, The Foreign Relations of Iran (Berkeley: 1974), p. 157.

[55] For a graphic first-hand account of the scope and nature of repression in Iran under the last Shah see Reza Baraheni, The Crowned Cannibals (New York: 1977), see also Bill, 'Iran and the Crisis of '78," p. 328.

sense of security. They assumed that their position was unassailable due to: (1) the support for their position by the majority of the people; and (2) the inconceivability of any opposition coalition from any logical combination of factions aligning itself against the government, since, as history had shown, any such opposition would have to include elements from both the religious establishment and the secular (social democratic and marxist) opposition (who were assumed by the government to be anathema one to the other), together with representatives of the economic elite, the middle class, urban labor, and mid-level bureaucrats and military officers (whose loyalty was assumed by virtue of their dependence on the government's success and continuity for their individual livelihood.)[56]

The above discussion is not meant to imply that the growth of the army and the expansion of oil revenue were the only aspects of modernization in Iran to impact on the policy-making process. Certainly, other significant changes have occurred. The development of a "new" or "professional-bureaucratic" class as an outgrowth of the modernization

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[56] See Bill, "Iran and the Crisis of '78," pp. 324, 331-334; and his "Iran: Is the Shah pushing too fast?", Christian Science Monitor, 9 Nov. 77, pp. 18-19; see also Linda Witt's interview with Marvin Zonis in People, 27 Nov 78; and Abul Kasim Mansur, "The Crisis in Iran," Armed Forces Journal International (January 1979), pp. 26-33; and Tony Allaway, "How the Shah could fall so far so fast," The Christian Science Monitor, 22 Feb. 79, p. 23.

process, including education as well as economic development, was the subject of intense study by both Professors Bill and Zonis. Similarly, changes have occured as to the makeup of the Iranian elite, as a result of all of the factors mentioned above. Although social mobility has been enhanced, not only has the actual size of the elite diminished over time, but the members themselves no longer have "any claim over the Shah."[57] The legendary "One Thousand Families," who were in times past regarded as the elite in Iran, have given way to a broader-based but narrower elite which, before the revolution, probably consisted of no more than 300-375 persons.[58]

The effect both of those factors which have remained relatively fixed over time and of the systemic political changes themselves on the modern Iranian foreign policy-making process is perhaps not as tangential as it might initially appear. Regarding the relationship between the ruler and policy-making, for instance, it should be apparent at this point that, although the Persian ruler has traditionally had a strong voice in foreign policy, which one source dates back to the Mossadegh's overthrow in 1953, the ruler and foreign policy have become synonymous.[59] Additionally the

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[57] Zonis, p. 127.

[58] The lesser figure is from Zonis' study; the larger from James A. Bill, "The Patterns of Elite Politics in Iran," in Political Elite in the Middle East, ed. by George Lenczowski (Washington: 1975), pp. 22-27.

[59] E.A. Bayne. Persian Kingship in Transition. (New York: 1968), pp. 197-198.

the significance of the ruler's enchanced role in policy-making is further magnified by a phenomenon inherent in developing nation politics: the "intertwining in countries like Iran [of] nearly all the vital policy decisions pertaining to planning, development, and social welfare...with defense and foreign policies."[60] As a result, Mohammed Reza Shah was not only able to "reserve" defense and foreign affairs "for his sole jurisdiction,"[61] but other related activities as well, such as oil policy, bureaucratic and military appointments and promotions, monetary and fiscal policy, and budgeting. For example, the Shah presided over a committee known as the High Economic Council, an ad hoc working group which was in fact the "highest policy-making body which considers and formulates policies which come under the category of mega-policies."[62] Also included in the HEC were the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, the Ministers of the Economy, Labor, and Finance, the Director of the Plan Organization, and the Governor of the Central Bank. One of the recent foreign policy decisions in which this group is known to have played a key role was the sale of natural gas to the Soviet Union.[63]

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[60] K. B. Sayeed, "Policy-Making in the Government of Iran," in Adams, pp. 92-93.

[61] Zonis, p. 83.

[62] Sayeed, pp. 93-94.

[63] Sayeed, p. 94.

Another recent ad hoc feature of Iranian policy-making was the use by the last Shah of a group of personal advisors who served as a sort of "Shadow Cabinet" providing the monarch with information and advice on a wide range of issues and policies, including foreign affairs.[64] Foreign and defense policy advisors to the Shah included several foreign as well as Persian advisors and with such varied backgrounds as education, journalism, intelligence, and administration.[65] Prominent Americans who regularly received audiences with the Shah were former C.I.A. Director and U.S. Ambassador to Iran Richard Helms, Berkeley Professor George Lenczowski, and Georgetown Center Director Dr. Alvin J. Cottrell.[66] Although the "Shadow Cabinet" and the staff of foreign advisors served as an important source of additional information and as a larger sample of opinion, no apparent attempt was made, in light of the recent revolution, by the Shah to provide himself with divergent opinions on policy issues as, for example, the U.S. President has done through the "A Team/B Team" input into American estimates of the Soviet threat.

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[64] Zonis, p. 90.

[65] See Princess Soraya, The Autobiography of H.I.H. Princess Soraya, trans. by Constantine Fitzgibbon. (London: 1963), pp. 80-81.

[66] Interview with Prof. George Lenczowski, Professor of Political Science, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, California, April 1978, and interview with Dr. Alvin J. Cottrell, Director, Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., 20 April 1978.

This chapter has attempted to formulate an analytical, socio-cultural, and political framework which will both serve as a background to and a basis for the remainder of the study. The following chapter will briefly explain the essential characteristics of Russia's historical interest in Iran, and a subsequent chapter will outline the historical development of Russo-Persian relations through the Cold War era. The final chapter will assess Iran's post-Cold War policy toward the Soviet Union in light of certain specific issues: detente, Britain's withdrawal from the Persian Gulf, the Indo-Pakistani conflict, and political change in the region. It was the intent of this initial chapter to discuss those features of the fabric of Persian society with which Iranian foreign policy has been and will continue to be inherently imbued, thereby enabling a more culturally sensitive approach to the subject.

III. THE SOVIET PERSPECTIVE: A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF SOVIET POLICY TOWARD IRAN AND THE PERSIAN GULF/INDIAN OCEAN REGION

In addition to analyzing recent developments in the character and substance of Iranian foreign policy, this study also deals with the impact of a more regionally active Iran on Soviet foreign policy. Such an undertaking requires a brief explanation of the historical, systemic, and environmental determinants of Soviet policy in the region. The Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean region is an area of longstanding strategic, political, and economic importance to Moscow, and Iran has emerged in Soviet strategy as a focal point of Kremlin interest in the region. This chapter, therefore, will attempt to describe the evolution of Soviet policy toward the area in terms of: (1) historical parallels between Czarist and Soviet strategy; (2) the Soviet policy-making process and its impact on formulation and implementation of Kremlin policy objectives; (3) the inter-dependency between Soviet regional interests and its overall foreign policy; and (4) the impact of domestic political, economic, and military constraints on Soviet policy. This framework should provide a more ratiocinative basis for examining Soviet involvement in the area than the traditional issue-area approach employed in most studies of Soviet policy in the

Middle East, such as those by Lenczowski,[67] Klieman,[68] Laqueur,[69] and Spector.[70]

Present-day Soviet foreign policy is a product of Russian historical experience. Russian strategy has tended to follow a general pattern of expansion, consolidation and preservation. Traditionally, there has also been a close relationship between expansionist foreign policies and internal perceptions of strategic vulnerability.[71] Russian strategy under both Czarist and Soviet regimes has focused on establishing either physical control or political neutralization of the Eurasian continent and attaining unrestricted access to contiguous maritime areas.[72] Russian expansionism also has coincided with a perception of either military weakness, political instability, or shifting strategic priorities in the capitals of neighboring states.[73] Russian activism has been largely

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[67] See George Lenczowski, Soviet Advances in the Middle East (Washington, D.C.: 1972).

[68] See Aaron S. Klieman, Soviet Russia and the Middle East (Baltimore, MD: 1970).

[69] See Walter J. Laqueur, The Struggle for the Middle East (New York: 1969).

[70] See Ivar Spector, The Soviet Union and the Muslim World. 1917-1958 (Seattle, WA: 1959).

[71] Roman Kolkowiz, "The Soviet Policy in the Middle East," in The U.S.S.R. and the Middle East, ed. by Michael Confino and Shimon Shamir (New York: 1973), p. 77.

[72] Lenczowski, Soviet Advances..., p. 2.

[73] Kolkowicz, in Confino and Shamir, p. 78.

dependent on its own momentum for success, or as one source notes, "a case of enormous power looking for a purpose."[74] Few nations on earth have been more attune to the nature of Russian strategy than Iran, as for centuries Iran served first as an objective of Russian ambition and later as a battleground on which a consistent struggle for regional supremacy between Russia and the other great powers was waged.

A. TRADITIONAL RUSSIAN INTERESTS IN IRAN

Unlike the West, which traditionally has been more concerned with the Eastern Mediterranean littoral as the strategic hub of the Middle East, Russian historical interest has centered on its souther rimland, or as it is known in the West, on the Northern Tier.[75] Because of this region's contiguity with the Russian heartland, it has been an area of greater interest to Russia than the Arab speaking nations to the south and west. Iran itself was located on a vital East-West crossroad linking Europe with India and the Far East. Furthermore, its dominant position on the Persian Gulf to the south linked Iran to the larger Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. Russian Czars appreciated and coveted the access provided by the advantageous geographical position

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[74] Ibid., p. 86.

[75] Ivo J. Lederer, "Historical Introduction," in The Soviet Union and the Middle East, ed. by Ivo J. Lederer and Wayne S. Vucinich (Palo Alto, CA: 1974), p. 2.

of the Persians to both Indian and Chinese trade.[76] Similarly, given their inability throughout history to gain entrée to the warm waters of the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf became increasingly inviting, particularly given the comparatively weaker position of Persia via a vis the Turks and the Europeans. At various times, Russia considered efforts to gain access to several Persian ports on the Gulf, including Bashehr, Bandar Abbas and Chah Bahar.[77]

A second aspect of traditional Russian interest in Iran and the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean region as a whole was socio-cultural. The peoples who inhabited the vast stretches of Central Asia from the Black Sea in the west to the Hindu Kush in the east were neither Slavs nor were they Christians as were the Russians. Rather the region was host to a myriad of ethnic, linguistic, and socio-cultural groups, including several groupings of Turkic, Indo-European, and Mongol peoples. Most of these peoples, moreover, had been at one time or another converted to Islam--a powerful socio-cultural force with, as was explained earlier, strong political implications. The dynamic characteristics of Islam meant that the Central Asiatics had very real ties with the three Islamic empires on

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[76] For an indication of Czarist intentions in the region see the discussion of, and excerpts from, Peter the Great's legendary will, in Sir Percy M. Sykes, A History of Persia, Vol. II, 3rd ed. (New York: 1969), p. 245.

[77] Kazemzadeh, pp. 201, 219, 333, 360, 467-470, and 488.

Russia's southern periphery: Persia, Ottoman Turkey, and Moghul India. This condition troubled the Czars, who were at the same time challenged by an urge to civilize the region--out of a sense of missionary zeal--as well as a political and military need to occupy what they perceived as a strategic "vacuum," waiting to be filled by any great power that could get there with a sizeable military force.[78] On the other hand, Russia felt threatened by the existing condition of tribalism combined with religious zenophobia which could be manipulated by the Islamic empires further south, or through them, by a hostile European power.

A final rationale for traditional Russian interest in the region was as a reaction to the demonstrated interest of other great powers in the area. Russia perceived increasing Western (British, French, and German) interest in the region as a potential threat to its security. With the rise of British power in India in the 18th and 19th centuries, Russia's general anxiety assumed more specific dimensions. As the British subsequently not only solidified their position in India, but also were able to extend their influence both across the Indus into Afghan territory as well as in Iran and the Persian Gulf area, Russia responded both diplomatically and militarily with actions designed to at least retard, if not halt, any further extension of British

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[78] See Howard M. Hensel, "Soviet Policy in the Persian Gulf," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia, 1976, pp. 11-13.

influence in the region. Caught in the middle of this centuries-long configration--which included every aspect of international relations from diplomacy to various economic mechanisms to intrigue to actual armed conflict--was Iran.

Russian involvement in the area evolved through three relatively distinct phases.[79] From approximately the middle of the 16th century until 1876 Russia pushed South expanding its territorial holdings in the Caucasus and later in Central Asia proper. Russian strategy during this period was designed to stabilize the frontier by decreasing both the threat of invasion--i.e. from Ottoman, Persian, and British-Indian forces--and the parallel risk of insurrection by non-Russian peoples in the area who might be sympathetic with these anti-Russian forces. Russian policy during this period relied primarily on military conquest for its implementation, with subversion and economic exploitation increasing in both frequency and importance during later years.

After the conquest of Central Asia, St. Petersburg largely abandoned its expansionist strategy and concentrated on consolidating its control over the newly acquired territories. As well as strengthening its own imperial position in the area, Russia also sought to neutralize further any threat from adjacent territories by preventing their use by

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[79] Kolkowicz, in Confino and Shamir, p. 62.

rival European powers seeking to take advantage of the enfeebled Ottoman and Persian empires.

B. SOVIET STRATEGY VIS A VIS IRAN SINCE 1917

Following the October revolution, the resultant civil war in Russia tended to de-emphasize the significance of foreign affairs and external strategy in Bolshevik planning. One policy from the Czarist period which the Bolsheviks continued to emphasize was the prevention of any ascendancy of a hostile power along its southern flank. Following the October revolution, Britain launched three military campaigns into southern Russia: (1) in Transcaucasia, a force under Dunsterville arrived in Baku via Iran in order to: (a) organize a local defense against invading German and Turkish armies, and (b) following the termination of hostilities, provide support to White Russian forces operating in the area; (2) in Transcaspia, British and Indian forces under Major General Malleson occupied Askhabad, using it as a base of operations against the Tashkent Red Army; and (3) in Turkestan, an expedition under Sir George Macartney proceeded via Sinkiang to Tashkent in order to assess and, if possible, support anti-Bolshevik forces in that region. Although the British government cancelled its anti-Bolshevik operations and withdrew its forces in 1919, the Bolshevik regime was extremely concerned with scope of anti-regime activity and general instability in the area. As the next chapter will demonstrate, however, Bolshevik operations in the area after World War

I were aimed more at achieving a "Findlandization"[80] of the region than a physical annexation of territory.

Under the current regime, the Soviet Union has pursued a policy designed to preserve what Moscow regards as its legitimate interests in the area. Similar in several respects to the Western policy applied toward the Soviets after World War II, the Kremlin's objectives in the area include "containing" and "rolling back" Western influence without provoking an actual superpower confrontation. Where possible Moscow's tactics include fostering the rise of friendly regimes by supporting local progressive movements when it is determined that such groups have a reasonable chance of success. The Kremlin's strategy is also designed to establish and maintain access to regional resources while simultaneously limiting Western access. In addition,

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[80] As defined by Prof. Vernon Aspaturian in an advanced seminar on Soviet foreign policy conducted at the Naval Postgraduate School during the Spring Quarter 1978, "Finlandization" is a term applied to attempts by the Soviet Union to create, along its periphery, buffer states which, while being technically neutral--i.e. they are not members of any defensive alliance--are in reality politically subservient to and economically dependent on Moscow. Willingness of a country to accept such an arrangement together with the absence of any significant military threat to the Soviet Union from the area eliminates the necessity for stationing Soviet troops in the country. The only country to date where such a condition exists is Finland, however, Soviet activities in Asia and the Middle East indicate that the Kremlin may have a similar operative strategy in portions of those areas--particularly in Iran, Afghanistan, and South-East Asia--and possibly, as a long-range objective, in Turkey and Pakistan as well.

Soviet objectives aim at preventing any penetration of the region by its ideological rival, the People's Republic of China.

Such a strategy emerged as a result of the failure of Moscow's confrontation policy of the Cold War years. This policy not only failed to accomplish Soviet objectives, but along the southern periphery served in fact to propel Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan into a formal anti-Soviet alliance. The present regime, however, has employed a more cautious approach, emphasizing the "carrot" (political support, economic aid, and military assistance) rather than the "stick."

For its part Iran is particularly aware of the success of Moscow's current strategy in the region. Under the Shah's rule, Iran perceived that the success of the Kremlin's policies had been enhanced by several related factors concerning the West's position in the area, including: (1) the American debacle in South East Asia; (2) a perceived move on the part of the U.S. toward a neo-isolationist policy (as evidenced by U.S. inaction in Angola, Ethiopia, and Afganistan); and (3) a general erosion of the western alliance in the wake of the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, the oil embargo of 1974, and the Cyprus crisis of that same year.[81]

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[81] See William E. Griffith, "Iran's Foreign Policy in the Pahlavi Era" in Lenczowski's Iran Under the Pahlavi's, p. 376; also Shahram Chubin, "Iran's Foreign Policy 1960-1976: An Overview," in Twentieth Century Iran, ed. by Hossein Amirsadeghi (New York: 1977), p. 201; and Daniel Southerland, "Afghan coup generates wait-and-see reaction," Christian Science Monitor, 9 May 1978, p. 5; information also based on interview with Dr. Assad Homayoun, Political Officer, Embassy of Iran, Washington, D.C., 21 April 1978.

Iran also recognized that the area offers "classic" opportunities for Soviet involvement due to the region's inherent instability, severe social and economic disequilibration, and nationalist euphoria. Its proximity, hostility to a Western protegé (Israel), and vast petroleum deposits further enhance its value to the Soviets.[82]

In recent years economic considerations have assumed greater significance in Moscow's relationship with Iran and the Middle East. Soviet industrial growth--the key to progress in all sectors of the Soviet economy, especially modernization of the defense sector--is inextricably linked to the need for increased supplies of oil for domestic consumption. Satisfying future demands through additional domestic production involves a level of financial investment and technological expertise which the Soviets appear unable or unwilling to incur. At least until the recent revolution in Iran effectively dried up the supply glut on the world petroleum market, Moscow imported about 15 MMT of oil annually from the Middle East. In several instances, the Soviets found that they could import oil cheaper than they could increase domestic exploitation of Siberian reserves, due to the prohibitive costs and technological requirements of exploration, production, and transportation of petroleum under such climatic extremes.[83] Another aspect of this problem

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[82] See Kolkowicz, in Confino and Shamir, p. 82.

[83] R. D. McLaurin. The Middle East in Soviet Policy. (Lexington, MA: 1975), p. 54.

is that Moscow is forced to export large quantities of oil in order to obtain desperately needed hard currency. In fact, oil is today the largest foreign exchange earner among Soviet exports. Because current projections indicate that by 1980 internal production will not meet Soviet and COMECON needs, unimpaired access to Middle Eastern oil becomes a political as well as economic necessity for the Kremlin.[84] As will be discussed in more detail later, access to Iranian and other Middle Eastern petroleum supplies was made possible by Moscow's post-Cold War rapprochement with both Iran and Turkey.

C. MOSCOW'S IRANIAN POLICY: SYSTEMIC DETERMINANTS

1. The Policy-Making Process

The desire by Moscow to develop a more pragmatic and flexible regional policy which could respond advantageously to the sudden changes endemic to the Middle East required that structural changes be implemented in the Kremlin's vast amorphous decision-making apparatus. Perhaps the most important change which subsequently evolved was the development and use of regional and functional ad hoc committees.[85] Where crucial issues or geographic areas are concerned, such as energy policy and the Middle East, these committees

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[84] Institute for the Study of Conflict. Soviet Objectives in the Middle East. (London: 1974), p. 24.

[85] Matthew P. Gallagher and Karl F. Spielman Jr. Soviet Decision-Making for Defense. (New York: 1972), p. 29.

probably assume a degree of permanence. Members are drawn from key ministries, departments of the Central Committee of the CPSA, and the Party Secretariat plus experts from appropriate agencies of the Academy of Science. Noted journalists may even at times be called upon for advice and recommendations. The staffing of the committee is normally co-ordinated by the International Department of the Central Committee. Area studies, background information, and analyses of special situations of interest to the ad hoc committee are provided by the regional institutes of the Academy of Science.[86]

Exact membership of the ad hoc committee on the Middle East is unknown, and in fact the membership probably fluctuates depending on the situation, issue, or country being discussed at any given meeting. It is known that the Middle East committee is chaired by no less a personage than Soviet Premier Alexi Kosygin, the Politburo's resident expert on the region.[87] Kosygin's deputy on the committee is most likely Boris Ponomarev, head of the International Department and a non-voting member of the Politburo, in keeping with Soviet policy of having party functionaries supervising professional bureaucrats. Representing the Foreign Ministry's

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[86] Vladimir Petrov, "Formation of Soviet Foreign Policy," Orbis, 17 (Fall, 1973), p. 832.

[87] U.S. Department of the Army. U.S.S.R.: Analytical Survey of Literature. DA Pam 550-6-1 (Washington, D.C.: 1976), app. R.

interests would probably be Victor Minin, the chief of that ministry's Middle East Department. The Ministry of Defense would be well represented on the committee, including one of the Deputy Ministers such as General Pavlovskiy or Admiral Gorshkov, both members of the Central Committee who have been frequent visitors to the area. Also from the Defense Ministry would be representatives of the Directorate for Military Assistance and the Fourth (Middle East) Directorate of the GRU. Also representing the intelligence community would be a member of the Eighth (Middle East) Department of the First (Foreign Intelligence) Directorate of the KGB. Again depending on the nature of a particular session, other agencies with likely representation would be the Ministry of Petroleum Industry, the Ministry of Petroleum Refining and Petrochemical Industry, the Ministry of Trade, and the Committee for Foreign Economic Relations. Prominent journalists who specialize on the Middle East such as G. Mirskiy and I. Beliaev, and noted Iranian scholars from the Oriental Institute such as M. S. Ivanov and I. I. Korobeiniko, probably provide information and advice to the committee from time to time.[88]

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[88] See Wayne S. Vucinich, "Soviet Studies on the Middle East," in Lederer and Vucinich, p. 227, and Paul Cocks, "The Policy Process and Bureaucratic Politics," in The Dynamics of Soviet Politics, ed. by Paul Cocks, R.V. Daniels, and N. V. Heer (Cambridge, Mass.: 1976).

It must be recognized that the committee described above does not "make" the Kremlin's Middle Eastern or Iranian policy. Its primary role is to supervise the implementation of Soviet foreign policy by the various responsible organs of the Sovet bureaucracy. The committee can, and undoubtedly does, make policy recommendations, but the ultimate responsibility for determining Soviet foreign policy, and the ultimate decision-making authority, is the Politburo of the CPSU.

2. The International Environment

Moscow describes the international political system in terms of six interdependent sub-systems: (1) relations among socialist countries; (2) relations between socialist countries and the Third World; (3) relations between socialist and imperialist countries; (4) relations among Third World countries; (5) relations between Third World and imperialist countries; and (6) relations among imperialist countries.[89] Although Bolshevik strategy initially emphasized the importance of carrying the communist banner into colonial nations as the best means of causing a communist revolution within the imperialist states, this scheme was largely abandoned following the death of Lenin. With the exception of China, Stalin was primarily concerned with domestic problems and European affairs. As a result, Soviet foreign policy during this period was "out of tune" with the realities of world politics,

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[89] William Zimmerman. Soviet Perspectives on International Relations, 1956-1967. (Princeton, N.J.: 1969), pp. 244-245.

including the rise of consciousness and nationalistic feelings in the Third World. Such rigid policies and dogmatic thinking meant that Stalin's successors were forced to react to the inevitable changes taking place in the international environment.[90]

In contrast to Stalin's conservative and rather paranoid foreign policy, Khrushchev's approach was adventuresome and risky. Believing an arms race with the West to be an exercise in futility--since any demonstrable ability to employ nuclear weapons, regardless of how limited, would serve as an effective deterrent--Khruschev set about establishing coexistence with the West while simultaneously turning to the Third World as the new arena for East-West competition. He disavowed the "two-camp" theory, arguing that a third area, or "zone of peace" would enable developing countries to achieve socialism through non-violent means.[91] He advocated support for "wars of national liberation" and for all "patriotic forces" who were anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist.[92] In a speech to the 22nd Party Congress in October 1961 Khruschev announced, "the CPSU considers fraternal alliance with all peoples who have thrown off colonial tyranny to be a cornerstone of its

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[90] Paul Marantz, "Internal Politics and Soviet Foreign Policy," Western Political Quarterly, No. 28 (March 1975), p. 132.

[91] Lenczowski, Soviet Advances..., p. 15.

[92] Ibid., p. 16.

international policy."[93] Khruschev's demise was the result of ambitions which exceeded his capability to implement and support.[94]

Brezhnev has replaced his predecessor's idiosyncratic brand of leadership with a style which relies on a firm consensus among Politburo members and a foreign policy which exhibits a considerably lower international profile. By 1969 Brezhnev had apparently realized that catching up economically with the U.S. was, in the short run, impossible.[95] Consequently he emphasized the importance of detente with the West, while in the Third World. re-oriented Soviet foreign policy towards effecting improved relations with those states on the periphery on the Eurasian heartland. This shift was the result of several factors including the rise in Chinese power, Soviet failures in Africa and Latin America, and opportunities for expanding Russian influence in the Middle East and Asia. The objectives of the Brezhnev regime apparently include stable relations with the West, political caution and military preparedness vis a vis China, and flexibility in the Third World.[96] Under no circumstances, however, is

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[93] Ibid., p. 17.

[94] Kolkowicz, in Confino and Shamir, p. 78.

[95] Wolfgang Leonhard, "The Domestic Politics of the New Soviet Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 52 (Fall 1975), p. 66.

[96] Kolkowicz, in Confino and Shamir, p. 80.

Brezhnev willing to forego policy objectives which he perceives to be in Soviet national interest in order to preserve the U.S. image of detente.

One aspect of traditional Russian foreign policy which was initially incorporated by Lenin and has recently re-emerged under the Brezhnev regime is the concept of linkages between Soviet policy objectives in one region and its strategy in another. Like the Czars and Lenin, the present regime links its policy in the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean sub-region with its policies both in the Eastern Mediterranean/Arab World and in East Asia. Furthermore, Moscow's current strategy in the Third World is in turn tied to Kremlin policies toward the West and China. In recent years the present Kremlin leadership has demonstrated its intention of using the Third World as an arena in which timely diplomatic, economic, and military measures can be employed to: (1) stabilize Moscow's relationship with both Washington and Peking; (2) protect Soviet interests in areas of vital concern to the Kremlin, such as the Eastern Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and East Asia; and (3) enhance Moscow's prestige with the developing nations. In this manner, the Brezhnev regime can respond more readily to regional and global events, taking advantage of perceived weaknesses in the policies or resolve of its adversaries, and limiting the effects of adverse environmental changes on Soviet policy interests.

3. Domestic Constraints

An analysis of the entire complex realm of various economic, political, and military constraints on Soviet foreign policy is beyond the scope of this study, therefore, this section will only highlight the most important issues which impacted on Soviet relations with Iran and the Middle East in general. Moscow's regional strategy has exacerbated several domestic problems. Primarily these problems have been economic, and the result has been a growing fear among the leadership that they will foster increased internal unrest. Soviet industry stagnates under inefficient management, Russian agriculture is only 1/6 as productive as its American counterpart, and vital natural resources lie untapped due to the lack of additional capital to invest and in adequate technology.

Given the Kremlin's limited ability or willingness to divert financial, technological, and manpower resources from the dominant defense sector into the agricultural and light industry sectors, accurately assessing the real economic cost of programs where resources might be diverted, such as foreign aid, becomes a critical appraisal for Soviet leaders. One source estimates that from 1954-1976 Soviet foreign economic aid totalled over $7.3 billion. Over 63% of this, $4.6 billion, went to countries in the Middle East.[97] The impact

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[97] Central Intelligence Agency. Communist Aid to the Less Developed Countries of the Free World. (Washington, D.C.: 1977), p. 27.

of this program on the Soviet economy in terms of diverted resources, capital investment etc. is probably significantly greater than would be a similar program in the U.S. Although most of this aid went to Arab countries and not to Iran, advocates of foreign assistance in the Kremlin frequently find themselves opposed by a vociferous coalition of consumer, agricultural, and public service interests who would prefer to see the Soviet Union court those Middle Eastern and Third World nations who, like Iran, can pay for Soviet goods with either hard currency or with currency-earning products like petroleum rather than spending such vast amounts on aid projects to nations whose ability to repay Moscow is questionable at best.[98] As a result the Kremlin, since the October War, has begun to place more emphasis on economic ties with the more solvent states in the region, including Iran, Iraq, and Libya. The Soviets have been receiving natural gas from Iran since 1966 and have also purchased about 2MMT of oil per year from the Iranians since 1973.[99]

Soviet defense expenditures have been almost as hotly debated in Moscow as they have been by Western Kremlinologists. The need for an adequate capability to project Soviet power into distant areas while simultaneously maintaining a credible strategic deterrent given the constraints of limited resources

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[98] See McLaurin, p. 54.

[99] Robert W. Campbell, "Some Issues in Soviet Energy Policy for the Seventies," Middle East Information Series, No. 26/27 (Spring/Summer 1974), p. 99.

is a dilemma which has faced Soviet policy-makers since World War II. Stalin was forced to curtail Soviet activities in post-war Greece in part due to his inability to provide necessary operational support to the local communist movement.[100] In 1956 Moscow was powerless to prevent the Anglo-French operation against its newly acquired Arab protegé, Egypt. The Lebanese crisis of that same year, the Congo crisis in 1960, and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 all pointed to significant shortcomings in Soviet military capabilities. At some point in time during this sequence of setbacks--possibly as early as 1956 but certainly no later than 1962--a decision was made to commit the resources necessary for the development of a military capability to support distant operations.

Since his rise to power in 1964, President Brezhnev has been an active proponent of heavy defense spending on conventional forces.[101] Particular attention has been to the development of adequate airlift and amphibious capabilities which can support Soviet involvement in the Third World.[102] The importance of a "blue-water" navy was recognized, although it has been designed as a vehicle for supporting political

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[100] C. G. Jacobsen. Soviet Strategy--Soviet Foreign Policy. (Glasgow: 1972), p. 124.

[101] Robert H. Donaldson, "Global Power Relationships in the Seventies: The View from the Kremlin," in Cocks, Daniels, and Heer, p. 311.

[102] Laqueur, p. 151.

objectives rather than as an offensive military force.[103] By 1970 the Soviets had established a credible force with strategic mobility, a force which Moscow did not hesitate to employ in the October War, in Angola, and in Ethiopia.[104] Although the Kremlin has acquired a significant network of shore support facilities in the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean area, it does not have any bases per se there.[105] Furthermore, the Soviets have neither deployed an Indian Ocean fleet nor have they in fact maintained combatants in significant numbers in the area except during crisis situations.

As the above discussion has attempted to demonstrate, the modern Soviet state has translated traditional imperial adventurism into a sort of dynamic internationalism, consisting of leadership of the socialist world, cooperation with "progressive forces" in the developing countries, and active competition with the capitalist world.[106] It is a long-range policy which can be characterized as flexible, opportunistic, and pragmatic. Soviet foreign policy is capable of exploiting "favorable conditions" or deviating from established procedures "to achieve specific goals."[107] This is partly a result of the dynamic nature of the Soviet decision-making

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[103] Jacobsen, p. 131.

[104] Ibid., p. 123.

[105] A base, as defined here, is any territory over which the occupier has legal jurisdiction. Soviet facilities in India, Iraq, and PDRY are part of an indigenous military installation under local jurisdiction. Continued Soviet use of the facilities is at the discretion of the host country.

[106] A. Voronov, "Aims of Soviet Foreign Policy," Soviet Military Review, No. 3 (March 1974), p. 48.

[107] Hannes Adomeit, "Soviet Policy in the Middle East: Problems of Analysis," Soviet Studies, 27 (April 1975), p. 295.

process itself, which consists of interactions between leaders who represent various personal and institutional interests, thereby allowing for a continual shifting and re-alignment of the consensual basis on which policies are made.[108]

As far as Moscow's policy toward Iran in particular is concerned, it appears that the importance of Iran and the Persian Gulf region in Soviet strategy was re-emphasized following the October War and the subsequent decline in Soviet-Arab relations. Moscow apparently believes that the region is ripe for change, but is undoubtedly aware that change in this area can be a double-edged sword. When "progressive forces" serve as the vanguard of change, Kremlin interests are well served, as was the case in Afghanistan. However, the Soviets also realize that when the agents of change represent traditinal interests, as in Iran, the results are more ambiguous and the implications for Moscow of such change are less certain. This attitude apparently accounts for the Soviets' current wait-and-see policy in Iran. Some elements within the Kremlin hierarchy are undoubtedly concerned about the potential spill-over effect of the Islamic revolution in Iran into other areas of Soviet interest in the region such as Iraw, Afghanistan, Syria, and the PDRY, and among the Soviet Union's own Muslim population as well.

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[108] Donaldson, p. 310.

It has been the intent of these first two chapters to establish a more structured analytical framework for this study of Iranian-Soviet relations. It is a primary contention of this study that a purely historical analysis can not adequately address such aspects as attitudes, perceptions, bureaucratic mechanisms, and various constraints, all of which are essential features in the development of any nation's foreign policy. With these first two chapters serving as such a framework, the subsequent two chapters will scrutinize specific issues and events in Iran's 400-year relationship with the Russians in an effort to understand: (1) how and why certain historical events molded the image patterns of Iranians toward Russia; and (2) current Iranian foreign policy as a reflection of those historically ingrained perceptions.

IV. THE RAPE OF PERSIA: THE HISTORICAL IMPERATIVE OF IRANIAN POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA

Current Iranian policy toward the Soviet Union is, in large part, an outgrowth of over 350 years of cumulative Persian experience with Imperial Russia. During this era--which was characterized by a southward expansion, at Persia's expense, of the Russian empire from the mid-16th through the latter 19th century--Persia was persistently victimized by Russian aggression, exploitation, and intimidation. In the process Persia lost about 1/3 of its territorial holdings and was forced to acceed to numerous humiliating and degrading Russian demands for political and economic concessions. Lacking the requisite military strength necessary to prevent Russian expansionism, particularly during the latter years of the period, Iran attempted to appeal to Britain's natural concern with the impact of the Russian threat to Iran on British interests in the region as a check on Russian territorial ambition. Although Persian rulers had only limited success in manipulating the Anglo-Russian rivalry, the resultant experience has provided modern Iranian policy-makers with significant insight into the intricacies of Russian motivation, intentions, and policy-making in the region.

A. RUSSIAN EXPANSION TOWARD THE PERSIAN GULF: 1551-1876

Iran's first experience with Russian ambitions in Central Asia came not long after the founding of the Safavid dynasty in

Iran and the Muscovite state in Russia. During the mid-16th century the forces of Ivan IV moved south in an effort to subdue the Tartars of Kazan,Astrakhan, and the Crimea and thereby eliminate the threat from continual Tartar raids into the heart of Russia. Following a five-year campaign from 1551-1556, Russia conquered Kazan and annexed Astrakhan, located at the mouth of the Volga River on the Caspian Sea. When a subsequent Tartar counter-offensive failed, Russia mounted a drive to break the back of Tartar resistance by pushing deep into Caucasia. Russian troops penetrated the Caucasus for the first time in 1560 pursuing Tartar forces into Daghestan, an area of nominal Persian sovereignty. Russian timing proved excellent as the Persian forces of Shah Tahmasp, the second Safavi Shah, were hastily retreating from a more powerful onslaught, the army of Suleiman the Magnificent which was itself pushing east out of Anatolia into Azerbaijan. Shah Tahmasp was replaced in 1587 by Shah Abbas, the greatest of the Safavid monarchs, who first having halted an Uzbeck offensive in Transoxiana, launched a campaign to regain Azarbaijan which lasted until his death in 1629, by which time the region had been returned to Persian rule. For their part, the Russians were neither desirous of being caught in the middle of an Ottoman-Persian war nor were they fully capable of securing and maintaining their tenuous hold over the rebellious Daghestani's. When the Czar's army became involved in a more fruitful campaign against the Baltic states in the last decade of the century, the Russian

forces in Daghestan withdrew. A permanent Russian presence in the Caucasus was not established for another century and a quarter.

Recognizing the significance of this three-pronged external threat to Persian territorial integrity and political independence, Shah Abbas undertook several actions designed to both improve Persia's military preparedness and reduce the scope of the threat. For example, armed Kurdish tribesmen were relocated from Kurdistan to Khorasan to bolster Persian defenses in the northeast against the Uzbek threat. More importantly, Persia's tribal-based army was revamped. Drawing on the military resources of the seven prominent Turkish tribes in Azerbaijan--the Shambu, Ustajhi, Tekelu, Afshar, Qajar, and Zulqader--Shah Abbas created a new "tribe," the "Shah-Sevan," on whose allegiance and soldiers the Shah was better able to rely.[109] Shah Abbas also established Persia's first links with the European powers, including in 1622, a pact with the British for sharing control of the Persian Gulf.[110]

Persia in the early 18th century was at the nadir of Safavid dynastic rule which, although in existence for over 200 years, had been in a state of atrophy since the death of Shah Abbas in 1636. The coup de grace was performed in 1722 by the Afghan conqueror Mahmud who overthrew the

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[109] See Pio Filippani-Ronconi, "The Tradition of Sacred Kingship in Iran," in Iran Under the Pahlavis, ed. by George Lenczowski (Stanford: 1978), p. 79.

[110] Donald N. Wilber. Iran: Past and Present. 8th ed. (Princeton, N.J.: 1976), p. 79.

last Safavid Shah, Sultan Hussein. Once again Russia waisted no time in exploiting such an inviting opportunity. Under the direction of Russia's most famous conqueror, Peter the Great, Russian forces again penetrated the Caucasus, quickly capturing Derbend, Baku, Astarabad, Mazandaran, and Gilan. Unable to prevent the Russian advance but equally unwilling to witness the dismemberment of the Persian nation, Tahmasp Mirza, a son of the last Shah, negotiated an agreement with Peter's emissaries whereby Persia agreed to acquiesce to the Russian conquests in return for Russian support in ousting the Afghans and restoring the Safavi throne. Meanwhile Peter had signed an agreement with Istanbul recognizing the Porte's claims in Azerbaijan, and in 1727 Ottoman forces occupied most of Western Iran including Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Hamadan, and Kermanshah.[111] Like the proverbial best-laid plans of mice and men, the Russians, Tahmasp Mirza, and the Ottomans were soon to be collectively disappointed when a Persian army commander, Nadir Quli Afshar of Khurasan, not only rallied the Persian forces and defeated the Afghans in 1729, but also set out to reconquer the territories captured by Russia and the Ottomans. Furthermore, Nadir opted to rule Iran himself rather than to restore the throne to the effete Safavi's. Nadir's forces regained Mazandaran and Gilan in 1732. In the Caucasus, Persian troops recaptured Shiravan,

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[111] Ibid., pp. 42-45 passim.

Ganja, Tiflis, and Erivan. Persia's three-year Caucasian campaign ended with the Treaty of Ganja, in which Russia withdrew from all remaining Caucasian territory, including Derbend and Baku. Nadir Shah's simultaneous Turkish offensive was successfully concluded in 1736.

Any further Persian advance was forestalled by the assassination of Nadir Shah in 1747. His Afshar successors continued to rule in Khorasan until 1796, while southern Iran was ruled by a Zand tribal chieftan from Shiraz. Following Nadir Shah's assassination, the situation in northwestern Iran quickly degenerated into disorder and chaos as various tribes vied for control. Ultimately a khan of the Qajar tribe gained control and in 1779 established his headquarters in Tehran. Meanwhile the Christian Georgians, who had long chafed under Muslim rule, seized the opportunity to declare their independence from Persia. In 1783 Georgia's ruler, Heraclius, signed a pact with Catherine the Great, who had not only been watching developments in Iran with considerable interest, but who had also ordered the Russian army to capture the Crimea from the waning Ottomans. Like her predecessors, however, Catherine underestimated the tenacity and determination of the Persians. The Qajar forces of Aqha Muhammed Shah marched on Georgia and subsequently occupied Erivan, Shisha, Ganja, and Tiflis, massacring substantial numbers of Georgians in the process. The death of Catherine in 1795 gave the Persian's a brief reprieve.

With the accession of Alexander to the Romanov throne, Qajar control of the northwestern territories was again threatened. In 1801 Alexander unilaterally annexed Georgia while his army captured the Georgian capital of Erivan and occupied portions of Armenia and Azerbaijan as well. Persia was slow to respond to the Russian encroachment due to a lack of resources and the poor condition of its military forces. Meanwhile Fath Ali Shah was negotiating with the French for aid. An alliance was eventually signed in 1807 between Persia and France in which the Shah was assured that Napoleon would launch an invasion of India via Russia thereby eliminating the Russian threat to Persia. Unfortunately for Persia, Napoleon was unable to keep his bargain, and in 1812 a rejeuvenated Russian army defeated the Persians at the Battle of Aslandoz.

The war in the Caucasus officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Golistan in 1813. According to the terms of the treaty, Russia acquired Georgia, Daghestan (including Derbend and Baku), and Karabagh and Shaki in Azerbaijan. Persia also ceded to St. Petersburg the exclusive right to maintain warships on the Caspian Sea. Undoubtedly the most onerous of the treaty's stipulations, however, was the fourth article which granted Russia the right "to recognize the [Persian] Prince who shall be nominated heir-apparent."[112] By requiring that the Shah of Iran obtain

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[112] Jacob C. Hurewitz. Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, Vol. 1 (Princeton, N.J.: 1956), p. 85.

Russian concurrence for the investiture of the Crown Prince, Alexander obtained for himself and his progeny a "useful instrument for direct interference in Iran's internal affairs."[113] Not only did the treaty insure Russian control of the eastern flank of the Black Sea, it also provided for "strong political influence in Persia" and established a strong Russian presence "in the vicinity of Indian," factors which received considerable attention in London.[114]

Given the untenable nature of the terms of the Treaty of Golistan for Iran, further conflict with Russia was virtually inevitable. Hostilities broke out again in 1825 over a dispute involving jurisdiction over the district of Gakcha in Armenia. Fath Ali Shah's forces were again no match for the Russians. Under the command of General Ivan Paskevich, Alexander's army defeated the Persians at the Battle of Shamkar in 1826 and occupied Erivan, Nakhichevan, Abbasabad, and Tabriz. According to the provisions of the subsequent Treaty of Turkomanchai, which has been called "the most humiliating treaty Iran ever signed,"[115] Persia acquiesced to Russian retention of Erivan and Nakhichevan and agreed to an indemnity payment of 20,000,000 roubles. Furthermore,

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[113] Firuz Kazemzadeh. Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914. (New Haven, CT: 1968), p. 5.

[114] Ibid., p. 6.

[115] Rouhallah Ramazani. The Foreign Policy of Iran, 1500-1941. (Charlottesville, VA; 1966), p. 46.

a commercial protocol appended to the treaty granted several concessions to Russian merchants and consular officials.[116]

Russian territorial ambition in Central Asia was not limited to the Caucasus. At first St. Petersburg induced Persia into attempting the reconquest of Persian territory lost to the Afghans, particularly the city of Herat, thereby probing the British defenses in India. Persian attempts to that effect by both Muhammad Shah and his son Nasr al-Din Shah failed. Following their defeat in the Crimea, the Russians determined to succeed where the Persians had failed and fill what they perceived as a "power vacuum" extending "from Siberia to the Hindu Kush."[117] In a campaign which lasted from 1865 until 1876, a desert force under Generals Kaufman and Skobelev was dispatched by Alexander II to subdue the tribal khanates of Central Asia, including areas once a part of the Persian Empire. By 1866 Bukhara, Tashkent, and Samarkand in Turkistan had fallen. The campaign was carried to Transcaspia and Turkmenistan in 1869, the latter of which proved inconclusive except for the fall of Khiva in 1873. After the capture of Khiva, the Russians pushed east into the Firgana Valley and Tadjikistan with Kokand falling in 1876. Count Dimitri Miliutin, Minister of War under Alexander II, was the architect and principal director of the Central

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[116] Hurewitz, pp. 96-102.

[117] Kazemzadeh, p. 6.

Asian campaign, which bore "a certain resemblance both to colonial wars elsewhere and to the American westward movement."[118] Like Russia's expansion in the Caucasus, the Central Asian campaign was the cause of considerable apprehension among the British, Russia's principal rival in South Central Asia, particularly in Iran. London feared that Peter the Great's legendary admonishments concerning Russian designs on India were at the heart of St. Petersburg's foreign policy.

B. ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMPETITION IN IRAN: 1877-1921

Persia not only accepted, but in fact supported, the Russian conquest of Central Asis as a means of eliminating attacks by Central Asian Turkoman raiding parties, a threat which had continually plagued Persia during the 19th century. Nasr ed-Din, under whose reign Russo-Persian relations became quite amenable,[119] provided the Russian desert force with badly needed supplies. The Shah formally accepted Russia's acquisition of Central Asia, including the important Persian trade center of Merv in Turkmenistan, in the Treaty of Akhal-Khorasan in 1881. This treaty established the present Russo-Iranian border east of the Caspian. Nasr ed-Din was also aware of the need to modernize Persia's

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[118] Nicholas V. Riasonovsky. A History of Russia, 3rd Ed. (New York: 1977), p. 432.

[119] Wilber, p. 67.

inadequate military. In 1879 the Shah appointed LTC Alexsi I. Domantovich, a Russian officer, to organize and command a "Cossack" Brigade of Persian cavalry modeled along Russian lines. In addition Russian naval forces were permitted to use Persian port facilities at Enzeli (Pahlavi) on the Caspian. Perhaps St. Petersburg's greatest coup during this period, however, was the Railroad Agreement of 1890, by which Persia promised not to grant "a concession for the construction of railways to a company or other persons" of non-Russian (i.e. British) origin for a period of ten years, a move which squelched British plans to build a railroad from the Persian Gulf to Tehran.[120]

Russian ambitions in the region during the 19th century were motivated by several factors including: (1) the inability of Russia to expand further to the West or to gain control over the Black Sea; (2) the vulnerability of the politico-military "vacuum" existing between the Russian frontier and Britain's Indian Empire; and (3) the desire to supplant British influence in Iran, gain access to a "warm water port," and thereby transform the Persian Gulf from a British into a Russian "lake."[121] As for their military campaigns, it seems doubtful, in retrospect, that Russia seriously considered challenging the British position in India, but rather that "the conquests were motivated by a

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[120] Hurewitz, p. 207.

[121] Ramazani, p. 52.

desire to grab that which could be grabbed."[122] Similarly, Persia was perceived as being on the verge of total collapse, a development which would have threatened Russian security had the British been in a better position to pick up the pieces.[123] St. Petersburg was interested in a buffer, not in a colony.

By the turn of the century Russia had succeeded in replacing the British as the pre-eminent external power in Iran. In addition to its military campaigns and skillful diplomacy, St. Petersburg nurtured an independent base of support among the ulema to counter British influence with Amin as Sultan, Nasr ed-Din Shah's Grand Vazir. Russia's keen sense of timing was again displayed when the Czar capitalized on British involvement in the Boer War to dispatch a naval flotilla, including the gunboat "Giliak," in a good will visit to the Persian Gulf. Among the flotilla's ports-of-call was the Persian port of Bandar Abbas. Russian activities in the Persian capital continued even during the Russo-Japanese War as Czarist emissaries lobbied for more Russian advisers in the Persian army.[124]

Following their defeat by Japan in 1905, Russia opted for a temporary truce with the British in Iran, fearing a resurgence of hostilities in the Far East. The resultant

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[122] Kazemzadeh, p. 172.

[123] Ibid., p. 387.

[124] Ibid., p. 470.

Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 provided for the division of Persia into Russian and British "spheres of influence." According to the terms of the convention, Russia's sphere extended north "beyond a line going from the Afghan frontier by way of Gazik, Birjand, and Kerman ending at Bandar Abbas."[125] Britain's area included the southeast portion up to a line "starting from Qasr-i-Shirin [on the Iraqi border] passing through Esfahan and Yazd ending at a point on the Persian frontier at the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers."[126] In the area located between the two spheres, the convention granted both powers equal access. Significantly, however, the important urban areas--including Tehran, Esfahan, Tabriz, Yazd, and Mashad--all lay within the Russian zone, while the area along the gulf coast--including the area where oil was soon to be discovered--was either in the neutral or British zone. Needless to say, Persia was not a partner to the convention. Furthermore, Czarist propaganda was able to direct most of the subsequent anti-Convention sentiment in Iran against the British. With access to over 2/3 of the territory of Iran, and with London serving as the scapegoat for Persian criticism and hostility, the convention "gave Russia an unprecedented opportunity to intervene in Iran."[127]

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[125] Hurewitz, pp. 265-267.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ramazani, p. 89.

The revolution in Russia which resulted from the Russian defeat in 1905 sparked a similar uprising in Persia. Encouraged by the aspect of a small oriental nation defeating a large and powerful Christian state, Persians demanded an end to foreign influence and intrigue.[128] Secular nationalists were supported in their revolution by many members of the ulema and by Russia's arch-rival, the British. Under increasing pressure from the nationalists, Muzaffar ed-Din Shah begrudgingly acceded to their demands for a Persian constitution in 1906. Russia, fearing the consequences to its interests should a viable nationalist government come to power in Tehran, attempted to use its influence among the northern tribes and with the Persian army to oppose the nationalists. Meanwhile, when the ulema and other conservative elements failed to gain control of the Majlis (Parliament) and rejoined the ranks of the opposition, the Shah initiated a counter-revolution aimed at puting an end to the constitution, parliament, and the nationalists. With Russian encouragement, the Shah directed the Cossack Brigade Commander, Col. Liakhoff, to have his troops storm the parliament building and oust the nationalist deputies. Liakhoff naturally complied, and the Cossacks devastated the Majlis and ravaged much of the city. "While the Majlis was being destroyed, and shortly thereafter, Russian troops in Iran began unrestrained shootings, hangings, and torture.

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[128] John Marlowe. The Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century. (New York: 1962), p. 31.

Men were blown from canons, and women and children were butchered in the streets."[129] Nationalist forces retaliated by seizing control of the provinces of Azerbaijan and Gilan. Royalist forces beseiged the nationalist stronghold in Tabriz and would have starved them out had it not been for the intervention of the Russian army. St. Petersburg ordered a military force from the Caucasus to relieve the embattled and starving defenders of Tabriz. Although precise Russian motivation is still unclear, British diplomatic pressure may have been the deciding factor.

Once the seize of Tabriz was broken by the Russian intervention, the nationalists forces marched on Tehran and forced the Shah to restore the constitution. Russian reinforcements followed the nationalists into Tehran, and on 13 July 1909 the Shah was deposed and exiled to Odessa. With the Shah gone, it soon became evident that the Russians harbored an ulterior motive in their switch from supporting the monarchy to ostensibly supporting the nationalists. When the nationalist government requested the withdrawal of all Russian troops, St. Petersburg insisted that the presence of their forces would continue only until order and stability were restored. In fact, however, the Russians had no intention of leaving, a point which became more evident to the incredulous Persians with each passing day.

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[129] Ramazani, p. 106.

Russia soon tired of Iran's persistent demands that Czarist troops evacuate Persian territory, and in July 1911 Russian complicity in a plot to restore Mohammad Ali Shah to the Peacock Throne was uncovered as the former monarch landed aboard a Russian steamship at Astarabad with his brother, Sardar Arshad, and a handful of supporters. With the backing of St. Petersburg and the support of Turkoman tribesmen, Sardar Arshad attempted to stage a revolt in Kurdistan. Arshad's forces were defeated by a nationalist army organized by an american, Morgan Shuster, who was serving as the Treasurer General of the nationalist government. Outraged by Shuster's interference in their scheme to undo the nationalists, Russia retaliated by dispatching 12,000 troops to Iran, forcing the dismissal of Shuster and the dissolution of the nationalist parliament. Anti-Russian uprisings which subsequently erupted in Tabriz and Rasht were brutally suppressed. An additional five regiments were deployed to reinforce the Russian garrison at Tabriz, and another force of 4,000 troops occupied Enzeli, Rasht, and Qazvin. By January 1912 the Russian army controlled the entire northern half of Iran. "With the dispersal of the Majlis and Shuster's departure, Persia virtually ceased to exist as a state."[130] Symbolic of the savagery of the Russian occupation was their execution of the leading Shia mujtahid of Azerbaijan and shelling of the shrine of the

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[130] Kazemzadeh, p. 645.

Eigth Imam in Mashad. The shrine had been providing sanctuary ("bast") to several hundred nationalists.

With the outbreak of World War I came another conflict between Persian and Russian interests. Russian military occupation of northern Iran put St. Petersburg in a tactically advantageous position vis a vis Turkey. Iranian attempts to remain neutral, therefore, were jeopardized by the continued Russian occupation. St. Petersburg, however, hoped that its military presence together with a joint diplomatic offensive with its former rival but wartime ally, Great Britain, would persuade Iran to join the war on the side of the allies.[131] Iran's effort was doomed from the outset, and on 14 September 1914 Turkish forces invaded Iran, primarily in an attempt to prevent the diversion of Russian troops from the Caucasian to the European front. Compelled once more by concern for its interests in Persia as well as the security of India, London dispatched Major Percy Sykes from India to Bandar Abbas to organize and equip a tribal-based guerrilla force, the "South Persian Rifles." Even Germany, which had developed a considerable economic interest in Iran since the turn of the century, supported a tribal force near Shiraz led by Wassmuss, the "German Lawrence."

By the time of the Russian revolution in 1917, Iran was in a state of almost total chaos. The war devastated the

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[131] Sydney N. Fisher. The Middle East, 2nd ed. (New York: 1969), p. 465.

northwestern third of the country, and a famine ravaged the rest. Although British pressure in part prevented the Persian government from perfunctorily recognizing the Bolshevik regime, Lenin and his associates undertook a number of measures specifically designed to ingratiate the new regime in the capital of its southern neighbors. In December the Bolshevik's renounced the concessions previously granted to Russia in the Treaty of 1907. Trotsky, in a subsequent note to the Persian government, reiterated the "nullification of the preceding as well as the subsequent [Czarist] treaties which, in whatever form, limit and restrict the right of the Persian people to a free and independent existence."[132] Foreign Commissar Chicherin provided a more detailed explanation of Bolshevik intentions in a note dated 26 June 1918 in which he promised compensation for damages to Persian property during the war, renounced any claim to "payments of Persia, according to Tsarist obligations...any claim on the revenue from customs...former Russian governmental and private concessions and the Russian Bank d'Escompte of Persia."[133] Chicherin's note further acceeded to use of the Caspian Sea for "the navigation of vessels bearing the Persian flag" and renounced "all participation in the organization of military units on Persian territory."[134]

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[132] Hurewitz, vol. 2, pp. 34-35.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid.

In spite of the efforts of the Bolshevik regime to normalize relations with Iran, Persian hostility toward Russian had built up over the preceding decade to the point where the "ugly" Russian replaced the "ugly" Briton as the primary object of Persian disdain. The British, meanwhile, took maximum advantage of the situation, and by 1919 Lord Curgon's government had "tied the destiny of Iran to Great Britain."[135] The vehicle for formalizing this bond was the Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919 which promised financial and military assistance to Persia in return for an increased British role in the administration of the Persian government.[136] Opposition to the agreement in Iran was so great, however, that it was never ratified by the Majlis. In fact, announcement of the intended provisions of the agreement again plunged Iran into a state of turmoil, a condition which continued until the coup of 1921. As far as Russia was concerned, "the British attempt to establish control over Iran through the 1919 agreement was diametrically opposed to both the traditional imperialist and the new revolutionary aims of Russia in Iran."[137]

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[135] Ramazani, p. 150.

[136] Hurewitz, Vol. 2, pp. 64-68.

[137] Ivar Spector. The Soviet Union and the Muslim World, 1917-1958. (Seattle: 1959), p. 53.

Following the October revolution, Iran had been a primary focus of Comintern operations in Asia. Comintern agents, under the direction of Joseph Stalin, supported the efforts of Persian Marxists such as Sultan Galiev and attempted to infiltrate local nationalist movements in Azerbaijan, led by Sheik Mohammed Khujabani, and Gilan,led by Kuchek Khan.[138] The Jangali (forest) movement under Kuchek Khan, for example, was anti-British in purpose and Islamic nationalist in tone when it began in 1915. Initially supported by Germany and Turkey, the Jangali's did not turn to the Bolsheviks for assistance until they suffered back-to-back defeats at the hands of British forces under Dunsterville in 1918 and of Reza Khan's Cossacks in 1919.[139] In May 1920 elements of the Red Army landed at Enzeli, ostensibly in pursuit of White Russian forces which were using Iranian territory as a base of operations. The Jangali's proclaimed the establishment of the Soviet Republic of Gilan the following month, and by July Soviet and Jangali forces had expanded their holding to include Mazandaran and Astarabad. Iran protested the Bolshevik intervention at the League of Nations and appealed to London and Washington for support.

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[138] Sephr Zabih. The Communist Movement in Iran. (Berkeley, CA: 1966), pp. 2-6 passim.

[139] Nasrollah Fatemi. Diplomatic History of Persia, 1917-1958. (Seattle: 1959), p. 53.

Tehran also selected a White Russian officer to command a composite force tasked with restoring the central government's authority in Gilan. The make-shift army succeeding in re-capturing Mazandaran and Rasht in August, but stalled at Enzeli when Bolshevik reinforcements arrived from Baku. Meanwhile the Bolsheviks withdrew from Persian Azerbaijan but formed another Soviet Republic in Russian Azerbaijan.[140] Disillusioned with the radical and anti-Islamic nature of Bolshevik policies, however, Kuchek Khan resigned from the Gilani government and turned control over to more radical members of the movement such as Ehsanollah Khan and Javad Zadeh (Ja'afar Pishevari).[141]

Ultimately, the downfall of the Gilani Republic came about more as a result of mis-guided Bolshevik zeal than by the force of arms of the central government. In late 1920, a major rift occured between the Bosheviks and the Gilanis over the position taken by the Soviets at the Comintern's Congress of the People's of the East held in September 1920 at Baku. Chaired by Comintern President Gregory Zinoviev, the Congress was designed to inaugurate a major socio-political revolution in Asia. At the conference, Iran had the second largest delegation, which was led by Hadar Khan,

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[140] At Brest-Litovsk, Germany included a provision requiring Russian withdrawal from Azerbaijan as part of the armistice agreement. See Fatemi, pp. 136-137.

[141] Zabih, p. 25.

Sultan Zadeh, Ehsanullah Khan, and Ja'afar Pishavari.[142] Zinoviev and his fellow Bolsheviks, however, demonstrated a crucial lack of Islamic cultural sensitivity by condeming oriental monarchies, the "Sultan's clique, all sorts of Shahs, Emirs, and Khans."[143] Statements by other noted communists advocating the "Bolshevization of the Muslim World" further alienated most delegates from Islamic countries.[144] As many delegates were soon to learn from firsthand experience, the "Bolshevik menace" could pose as threatening a danger as had colonial imperialism. Moscow later attributed its early failures in Iran and other Islamic countries to "tactless leftist elements" which had mistakenly criticized the sole of Islam in eastern society.[145]

On February 20, 1921 the 130-year reign of the Qajar dynasty in Iran came to an end in a coup d'etat led by Zia al-Din, a prominent nationalist, and Reza Khan, a colonel in the Cossack Division. Great Britain's role in the coup has been the subject of some speculation, in spite of London's protest to the contrary, due in part to the presence of British military advisers with the Cossacks at the time of

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[142] Fatemi, p. 168.

[143] George Lenczowski. Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948. (Ithaca, NY: 1949), p. 7.

[144] Spector, p. 82.

[145] Ibid., pp. 91-92.

the coup. Six days later a Treaty of Friendship was signed between Iran and Russia. In addition to reaffirming the nullification of Czarist policies and concessions, the treaty confirmed the boundaries of 1881, cancelled former Persian debts owed to the Czarist regime, and provided for equal access to the Caspian Sea. In return Iran promised not to allow the use of Persian territory by "any organization or groups of persons...whose objective is to engage in acts of hostility against...Russia, or against the allies of Russia."[146] This provision was included to prevent the employment of Persian bases of operation by irredentist White Russian groups. Article VI of the treaty, the subject of considerable controversy both at the time and subsequently, provided that "if the Persian Government should not be able to put a stop to such menace [i.e. use of Persian bases by anti-Soviet forces] after having been once called upon to do so by Russia, Russia shall have the right to advance her troops into the Persian interior for the purpose of carrying out the military operations necessary for its defense."[147] Tehran held up ratification of the treaty, however, until all Russian troops were withdrawn, including those in Gilan. When the Russians finally withdrew in October, Reza Khan marched his Cossacks into Gilan, easily defeated the remnants of the Jangali forces, and re-established the central government's control over the province.

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[146] Hurewitz, Vol. 2, p. 91.

[147] Ibid.

The Bolshevik revolution and the subsequent Treaty of Friendship between the new regime and Iran brought to a close one era in Iranian-Russian relations: an era which witnessed the repeated loss of Persian territory to conquering Russian armies. Russian strategy during the period was designed to fill the Central Asian "power vacuum," prevent any further expansion of British influence in the region, and, if possible, gain access to a maritime outlet on either the Persian Gulf or the Arabian Sea.[148] It seems doubtful, in retrospect, the Czarist Russia ever seriously envisioned either the conquest of the Iranian plateau or the Indian sub-continent as viable objectives in the Asian strategy. What appears more likely is that Russia attempted to employ a military threat to British control over India and British parallel interests in Iran as a means of pressuring London into acquiescing to Russian control over the Turkish straits; the ultimate objective of Czarist policy in the Near East.[149]

On the other hand Iranian foreign policy during this period sought to manipulate the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Asia to Persia's advantage and thereby maintain at least the sovereignty of the Peacock throne, if not the territorial integrity of the entire empire. In order to limit the

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[148] Howard Hensel, "Soviet Policy in the Persian Gulf: 1968-1975," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia, 1976, pp. 11-14.

[149] Firuz Kazemzadeh, "Russia and the Middle East," in Russian Foreign Policy, ed. by Ivo J. Lederer (New Haven, CT: 1962), p. 497; and Hensel, pp. 8-9.

Russian advance in the Caucasus Persia could appeal to Britain's natural concern over the corresponding threat to its interests in the Persian Gulf. Similarly Iran could encourage Russia's conquest of Central Asia, including the sacrifice of territories nominally under Persian jurisdiction, as the best method of checking British ambitions in the region. Iran's ability to successfully employ such a strategy was greatly inhibited, however, by the lack of a modern military and the political decadence of the later Qajar rulers.

V. IRAN AND THE SOVIET THREAT, 1921-1959

News of the revolution in Russia was received in Iran with mixed emotions. Nationalists such as Zia al-Din were encouraged while others like the Anglophilic Prime Minister Vusuq al-Dawla were less than enthusiastic. Persia refused to recognize the Bolshevik government until all Russian troops were withdrawn and the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 was renounced.[150] From 1917-1920 several successive nationalist governments attempted to normalize relations with the Bolsheviks, but their attempts were consistently thwarted by Vusuq and the British. It was Vusuq's anti-Russian hostility which led to the Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919, a move which cost Vusuq his job and resulted in the landing of Bolshevik forces in Gilan.[151] The subsequent nationalist government of Mushir al-Dawlah refused to ratify the agreement, and, meanwhile, was instrumental in the negotiations with the Bolsheviks which led to the treaty of 1921.

In retrospect, it is understandable why some Persians like Vusuq were concerned about Bolshevik intentions in Iran, even though his efforts to protect his country's

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[150] Ramazani, p. 147.

[151] Ibid., p. 164.

interests by "offering Iran to Britain" were unacceptable then and mo more justifiable today.[152] Several factors, however, did work to underscore a continued Russian threat to Iran for which the Persian leadership had to exhibit a degree of caution in dealing with the new regime. Although the Bolsheviks initially envisioned the continuance of their revolution in a European/industrial setting, after the enunciation of Lenin's theory of imperialism in 1920, "The Soviet leadership looked increasingly to the colonies and semi-colonies [i.e. the Third World] for the spark which would produce revolution in the West."[153] As evidence of Moscow's new policy, the Baku Conference of 1920 was convened, as mentioned previously, and the League for the Liberation of Islam was established. Of direct concern to Iran was the formation that same year of the Persian Communist Party by Haidar Khan with a membership of about 6,000. Moscow's link with the PCP was in the person of one A. Sultazadah, an agent of the Russian People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs.[154] Communist cells soon appeared in Azerbaijan,

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[152] Ibid., p. 166.

[153] Hensel, p. 64.

[154] Ramazani, p. 142; see also Lenczowski, p. 97; and Xenia J. Eudin and Robert C. North, Soviet Russia and the East. (Stanford, CA: 1957), p. 99.

Mazandaran, Gilan and in Tehran, and by 1921 the PCP had organized eleven labor unions in Tehran alone with a membership if 8,250 workers.[155]

A. SOVIET TACTICS AND RUSSIAN STRATEGY IN IRAN

Lenin's reorientation of Russian and Comintern strategy in 1920 from a European to an Asian arena was accompanied by an enthusiastic outpouring by communists, both in Russia and in Asia, of support for the "political emancipation" of Asia. While liberation of British-controlled India was touted as the "principal objective" of this strategy, Persia was envisioned by some writers as "the door through which one has to go in order to invade the citadel of the Revolution of the Orient," adding that "the Persian uprising will be the signal for a series of revolutions that will spread through all of Asia and part of Africa."[156] As is readily discernable, Lenin's "new" strategy was not new at all, but merely a reiteration of the old Czarist strategy in this case recouched in Marxist-Leninist jargon to increase its palatability to other communists and to Asians.

The "raison d'etre" of Lenin's Asian policy was, like its Czarist predessor, designed to prevent a military threat from developing along Russia's southern periphery, whether in the form of an indigenous threat or through the

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[155] Ramazani, p. 143.

[156] From "Vostok i Revolutsia" by K. Troyanovsky, as quoted in Lenczowski, pp. 9-10.

use of such territories by hostile external powers. Another parallel between Bolshevik and Czarist strategy in Asia was that both were a microcosm of overall Russian policy. The Asian strategies of both regimes were designed to apply increasing pressure on the British interests in Iran and on Britain's colonial position in India as a mechanism for: (1) forcing London to accept a Russian presence in, if not complete control of, the Balkans and the Bosphorus; (2) causing the downfall of British rule in India and, via India, of the British colonial empire as a whole; and, (3) eliminating Britain as a major world power, thereby clearing the way for Russian domination of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean.[157] Conceptually such a strategy implies that, aside from the requirements associated with defending the state against regional threats, Russia's southern strategy historically has constituted only one facet of its relations with the other great powers, particularly Great Britain. Among western observers, this strategy is better understood by Soviet specialists than by their Middle Eastern counterparts. Works by such noted Sovietologists as Ulam,[158]

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[157] Compare the observations of Generals Skobolov and Miliutin, advisors to Alexander II, as quoted by George Curzon in Russia in Central Asia, pp. 322-323, and by Firuz Kazemzadeh, Russia and Britain in Persia, pp. 39, 41-42, 50-51, and 495-496, with Lenin's philosphy as examined by Alfred G. Meyer in Leninism, pp. 226-232.

[158] See Adam Ulam. Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1973, ed. (New York: 1974).

Aspaturian,[159] and Kolkowitz[160] consistently reflect an appreciation for this theme in Russian foreign policy. Among Middle East scholars, the thesis that Russian strategy in the Middle East has been an end unto itself seems to be more widely accepted. Fatemi, the Persian historian, notes that Russian strategy "rested upon a profound and reasoned belief that in Asia lay both the ends that must inspire Russian policy and the means to achieve World Revolution."[161] Similarly, based on the article of Troyanovsky noted above, Lenczowski concludes that the Czarist dream of conquering Persia and India as proposed by Peter the Great became a major objective of Soviet foreign policy.[162]

Although the Bolshevik regimes did not digress from the essence of the former Czarist strategy in South-Central Asia, a uniquely Soviet adaptation of that strategy involved the employment of a variety of political, economic, military, and clandestine means or tactics designed to establish and maintain a buffer or "security" zone along the southern periphery of the Soviet Union. Initially Soviet objectives in the region centered on the elimination of the British-supported White Russian forces which were operating from

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[159] See Vernon V. Aspaturian. Process and Power in Soviet Foreign Policy. (Boston: 1971).

[160] See Roman Kolkowicz, "Soviet Policy in the Middle East," in The USSR and the Middle East, ed. by Michael Confino and Shimon Shamir (New York: 1973).

[161] Nasrollah S. Fatemi. Diplomatic History of Persia, 1917-1923. (New York: 1952), p. 178.

[162] Lenczowski, pp. 9-10 and 314.

regional bases. Once the hostile military threat was eliminated, Moscow hoped to increase its own influence in the area via increased political (diplomatic) activities, trade, and where possible, the establishment of a Soviet military presence. The composition and size of the buffer zone was not fixed, but rather remained flexible depending on the geographical, political, and military factors involved in each area, and on the international political environment at any given point in time.[163] Like their Czarist predecessors, however, the Soviets continued to view its activities in South Asia, the Persian Gulf, and the Balkans as "complementary," to include the use of increased activity in one area in order to effect a change in another part of the region or as a vehicle for influencing the policies of another great power.[164] While Soviet policy continued to emphasize the inevitability of a world revolution along Marxist-Leninist theoretical lines as a theme of its foreign policy, such rhetoric never became a primary objective of Soviet strategy which was, like Czarist strategy, based on the goal of insuring the continued security of the state.[165]

B. IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND THE NEW SOVIET REGIME, 1921-1939

Iranian foreign policy during this period reflected a deep suspicion of the intentions of the new communist regime

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[163] Hensel, pp. 75-76.

[164] Ibid., pp. 79-80.

[165] Ibid., p. 84.

in Moscow, particularly by Iran's new Shah, Reza Khan, who ascended the Peacock throne in 1925. Reza Sha's concern was less with the threat posed by communism as an ideology than with the threat from a rejeuvenated zealous Russia which continued to rely on the same kinds of maneuvering, intrigue, and machinations historically employed by the great powers in Iran.[166] Articles 5 and 6 of the treaty of 1921 were evidence to which Reza Shah could point of the desire of the Soviets to continue the influential position in Iran acquired by their Czarist predecessors. When Russia attempted to neutralize the outhern threat in late 1925 by negotiating treaties of nonaggression and neutrality first with Turkey and later with Afghanistan, Reza Shah "saw his opportunity to conclude a new agreement in which the principle of non-interference would be concretized."[167] Following extensive negotiations, the resultant Treaty of Guarantee and Neutrality was signed in 1927. The treaty included a non aggression pact, provided for mutual neutrality in case of war, and assumed reciprical nonintervention in each country's internal affairs. Reza Shah's government was unable, however, to acquire a Soviet repudiation of articles 5 and 6 of the treaty of 1921, and in fact, article 4 of the new treaty went so far as to confirm the provisions of the earlier treaty.[168]

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[166] Ramazani, p. 238.

[167] Ibid., pp. 234-235.

[168] Hurewitz, pp. 154-155.

During the inter-war period, Iranian-Soviet relations could be characterized as "correct but not cordial."[169] Iranian attitudes were clouded by their continued deep suspicion of Soviet intentions, which were exacerbated by Moscow's persistent refusal to drop the offensive provisions of the treaty of 1921 in spite of the disappearance of the military threat from Iranian territory posed by the irredentist groups. Iranian leaders were also alarmed by Moscow's continued support of subversive groups in Azerbaijan and Khorasan.[170] A factor which significantly impeded Iran's ability to influence the Soviet Union on either of these issues was Iran's growing dependence on Russian markets for Iranian products. As early as 1925, 40% of Iranian exports went to the Soviet Union. In an effort to reduce this economic dependencey, Reza Shah established government trading companies for dealing with the Soviet state-run industries and began the construction of the Trans-Iranian Railway "to decrease and eventually eliminate the traditional dependence of northern Iran on Russian supplies and markets."[171]

Another Iranian development during this period which had an impact on Iranian foreign policy was the establishment by

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[169] George Lenczowski. The Middle East in World Affairs, 3rd ed. (Ithaca, N.Y.: 1962), p. 185.

[170] George Lenczowski. Soviet Advances in the Middle East. (Washington, D.C.: 1972), p. 24.

[171] Ramazani, p. 229.

Reza Shah of Iran's first standing army. At the time Reza Khan was appointed Minister of War in 1921, Iran's military forces consisted of the Cossack Brigade, the gendarmarie, a palace guard, and various tribal-based units. In their place, Reza Khan created a unified national army. Modern equipment was purchased from Czechoslovakia, Sweden and Germany, aircraft from Russia and Britain, and ships from Italy.[172] Army cadets were sent to the French military academy at St. Cyr and navy mid-shipment were trained at the Italian Naval Academy. Swedish and White Russian advisors and technicians assisted in the organization and training of the new army. In 1925 compulsory military service was instituted and in 1938 the law was revised to provide incentives to university and secondary school graduates. A further re-organization occurred in 1936 which "established new and purely Persian names for the ranks, revised the order of battle, regulated the basis of promotion, and established retirement pay, other pensions, and insurance for military personnel."[173]

A third development which significantly effected Iranian-Soviet relations during this period was Reza Shah's attempt to defuse the traditional Anglo-Russian rivalry in Iran by bringing a third great power, Germany, into the picture.

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[172] Amin Banani. The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941. (Stanford, CA: 1961), p. 57.

[173] Ibid., p. 56.

Such a scheme was not new in Iranian foreign policy, as previous Persian rulers had attempted similar maneuvers, first with France and later with the U.S. Germany, however, had longstanding political and economic interests in Iran. Pro-German sympathy in Iran during the war had been widespread. Furthermore, Reza Shah's German connections, which developed during the 1920's, was opposed in the early stages by neither the Russians nor the British. The latter in fact encouraged the relationship as a vehicle for reducing Russian influence. Although Reza Shah's "third-power policy was directed principally against Russia," Moscow, like London, did not oppose the policy.[174] The Soviets, who were more concerned with domestic than external affairs at the time, recognized that Reza Shah was providing Iran with a degree of political and economic stability rare in Persian history and encouraged his efforts at maintaining a neutral foreign policy.[175]

With Hitler's rise to power in Germany during the mid-1930's, Russian interest in Iranian affairs again intensified. Moscow witnessed a rise in Nazism not only in Europe, but increased Nazi activity in the countries within its southern "buffer zone" as well. Such activity

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[174] Ramazani, pp. 279-281.

[175] John C. Campbell, "The Soviet Union and the Middle East," Russian Review, 29 (April 1970), p. 145.

prompted the Kremlin to formulate the Litinov Protcol in 1933, a non-aggression pact which applied the provisions of the Kellogg-Briand Pact to Turkey, Iraq, and Afghanistan.[176] Russian anxiety over the Nazi threat was further aggrevated by what Moscow saw as an Anglo-Persian effort to take advantage of Soviet concern in Europe. Reza Shah's successful conclusion of the Saadabad Pact with Turkey, Iraq, and Afghanistan in 1937 ultimately was perceived by the Soviets as part of an Anglo-Persian conspiracy to undermine Soviet influence in a contiguous but vulnerable region.[177]

C. THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II ON IRANIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS

Realizing the delicacy of its position vis a vis the principle belligerents, Iran, as in WWI, attempted to remain neutral as war brokeout in Europe in 1939. Initially Iranian neutrality was supported by both Russia and Great Britain. In fact Stalin, not wanting to become embroiled in a second European war, had even gone so far as to conclude a non-aggression pact with Hitler in August 1939. Therefore, when news of the subsequent negotiations in Berlin between Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov and German Foreign

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[176] Ibid., p. 147.

[177] Spector, p. 186.

Minister von Ribbentrop reached Tehran, apprehension among Iranian leaders reached "near panic" proportions.[178] Iran was aware of Soviet concern over German intentions in the Balkans, a region which fell within another Russian "buffer zone." Iran's Prime Minister, Ali Mansur, attempted to clarify a rumor that Hitler had offered Stalin a "free hand" in Iran and the Persian Gulf in return for Soviet acceptance of German hegemony in the Balkans.[179] What Ali Mansur did not know, and was not able to find out, was that when Molotov went to Berlin to emphasize Soviet interest in the Balkans and the Dardanelles, von Ribbentrop had presented Molotov with a draft of two secret protocols.[180] The first proposed that "the Soviet Union [declare] that its territorial aspirations center south...of the Soviet Union, in the direction of the Indian Ocean."[181] In the second protocol, von Ribbentrop agreed to a revision of the Montreux Convention of 1936 in order that "the Soviet Union would be granted the right of unrestricted passage of its navy through the Straits at any time."[182] In a reply dated 25 November, Molotov "substantially amended" the

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[178] Ramazani, pp. 288-289.

[179] Ibid., p. 289.

[180] Campbell, p. 150.

[181] For text of treaty see Ralph Magnus, Documents on the Middle East. (Washington: 1969), pp. 53-57.

[182] Ibid.

German proposals, reaffirming Soviet interests in the Baltic (i.e. Finland), the Balkans, and the Turkish straits. It was obvious to the Russians that Berlin was attempting to "divert" Moscow's attention away from Europe, where German and Soviet interests might clash, to an area of limited interest to both nations. The Kremlin, which was "not much interested in visions of access to the Indian Ocean," did not fall for the German ploy.[183] Instead Molotov submitted a counter-proposal demanding "the establishment of a base for land and naval forces of the USSR within range of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles by means of a long-term lease."[184] Molotov also "redefined" the "center of aspirations of the Soviet Union" vis a vis its southern flank from "in the direction of the Indian Ocean" to "the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf," thereby reasserting "traditional Russian interest in Iran."[185] What Iran and the West did not learn until later was that Germany, for reasons which soon became obvious, did not accept the Russian proposal and no agreement delineating German-Russian interests in Europe or elsewhere was reached, thereby sealing the inevitability of war between the two powers, a point which Stalin failed to realize at the time.

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[183] Campbell, p. 150.

[184] Magnus, pp. 53-57.

[185] Ibid.

The secret protocols did not represent, as was feared by Persia and assumed by numerous writers and observers since then, a "blueprint of Soviet strategy in the Middle East."[186]

Even after Hitler's army invaded Russia in June 1941, Reza Shah attempted to remain neutral in the hope that if the Soviets were forced to capitulate, the victorious Germans might be persuaded to restore to Iran those areas in the Caucasus and Central Asia seized by Czarist Russia.[187] As the German arny pushed deeper into the Soviet Union, however, Moscow became increasingly concerned with Nazi fifth column operations in Iran and with securing a main supply route over which equipment from the U.S. could pass before the North Atlantic route began to ice up in the winter. In addition, Britain was angered by the granting of asylum by Reza Shah to the pro-German Mufti of Jerusalem and former Iraqi Prime Minister Rashid Ali. London was motivated also by the Allied need to insure continued access to Persian oil, particularly should the Soviets become cut off rom their oil fields in the Caucasus.[188] On August 25, therefore, British and Soviet troops invaded Iran employing much the same strategy as before: the Russians, invoking

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[186] Campbell, p. 151; see also A. S. Becker and A. L. Horelick, Soviet Policy in the Middle East. (Santa Monica, CA: 1970), p. 14.

[187] Wilbur, p. 131.

[188] See Ramazani, pp. 290-294.

Article 6 of the treaty of 1921,[189] occupied the north in a two-pronged attack through Azerbaijan and Khorasan; the British seized control of the south, with one force pushing east from Iraq and another force from India landing at several points along the Gulf coast and then driving inland. The Iranian military was caught almost completely by surprise, and within 48 hours the fighting was over. Humiliated by the lack of resistance from his pampered and highly touted army, Reza Shah abdicated, turning over the country's administration to the Crown Prince, Mohammad Reza, and a newly installed pro-Allied government.

In January 1942 the Allies concluded the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance with Iran, in which they guaranteed "the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of Iran," receiving in return the right to transport war materials and supplies across Iran, and to utilize such logistical and communications facilities as deemed necessary for the prosecution of the war.[190] The Allies also assured Iran that all Allied forces would be withdrawn "not later than six months after all hostilities..have been suspended."[192] This last provision proved to be a point of considerable

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[189] The Soviets claimed that Iran had allowed Germany to use Iranian territory as a base for infiltrating Nazi agents and "terrorist groups" into the Soviet Union. For the text of Moscow's note to Tehran dated 25 August 1941 see Leland M. Goodrich and Marie J. Carroll, eds. Documents on American Foreign Relations, (Boston: 1942), pp. 674-676.

[190] Hurewitz, pp. 232-234.

[191] Ibid.

tension between Iran and the Soviet Union, for in the northern sector the Red Army had by 1942 "virtually annexed Azerbaijan."[192]

Moscow viewed the Allied take-over of Iran as a golden opportunity to establish their long sought after "buffer zone" in Iran. Once the Red Army had consolidated its hold on the northern provinces, communist agents and propagandists set about establishing regimes of "healthy forces" at the local and provincial level. Central government control in these provinces virtually ceased to exist. The Soviets confiscated lands and crops, and insured that representatives to the Majles from the northern provinces were either communists or sympathizers.[193] Marxists and socialists infiltrated the Iranian labor movement in large numbers, and in 1942 the Peoples Party, later to become the Tudeh (Masses) Party, was organized with Soviet support. Communist provacateurs were active not only among Turkish, Armenian, and Kurdish minorities in the north, but among minority groups in the British sector as well. An Irano-Soviet Society for Cultural Relations was founded in 1943, and immediately became the principle organ for the dissemination of Soviet propaganda in Iran. Moscow also published several Persian language newspaper and journals, while Tass, the Soviet News Agency, pressured Persian independent and

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[192] Spector, p. 197.

[193] See Lenczowski, Russia and the West..., pp. 195, 197 and 198.

government-run news media. such as the Journal de Tehran and Radio Tehran, into disseminating pro-Soviet articles and broadcasts.[194]

Following the Red Army's heroic stand at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942 and their defeat of the German army at Kursk the following summer, Moscow was able to devote even more attention to its activities in Iran. In the fall of 1943 and in the spring of 1944, the Soviets became concerned over British concessionairy rights in Iran, in this instance involving moves by Royal Dutch Shell to acquire such rights in Baluchistan. On this issue Soviet and Persian interests in fact coincided, since like Moscow, Tehran was opposed to "having the entire southern coast of Iran tied up under British concessions."[195] Where the Soviet and Iranian interests collided, however, was over the reception by Iran of offers by Standard Oil and Sinclair, two American companies, for similar concessions. When Tehran appeared on the verge of accepting the American bids, Moscow demanded exclusive rights to oil exploration in the northern provinces. The Russian demand was promptly rebuffed by the Persian government, explaining that it had decided to postpone the issue of oil concessions until after the war.[196] Although the

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[194] Ibid., pp. 199-203.

[195] Rouhollah K. Ramazani. Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-1973. (Charlottesville, VA: 1975), p. 97.

[196] Ibid., p. 98.

Kremlin launched a fierce propaganda campaign against the Iranian government, particularly Prime Minister Sa'id, it is doubtful that the Russians were as concerned about getting their own concessions as they were about preventing any expansion of British concessions and any granting of an American concession. The Soviets were hostile especially to any action which might lead to Western penetration of northern Iran. In a cable to the State Department, George F. Kennan, then the charge of the American Embassy in Moscow, noted that "the oil of Northern Iran is important not as something Russia needs, but as something it might be dangerous to permit anyone else to exploit."[197]

D. THE COLD WAR YEARS

Following the surrender of the Japanese in September 1945, Soviet involvement in Iran took on still another dimension. That same month a group of Kurdish nationalists under Qazi Muhammad, a religious leader from Mahabad, formed the democratic Party of Kurdistan. The objectives of Qazi Muhammad's KDP included the establishment of an autonomous Kurdish state within Iran and the use of Kurdish as the official language within that state. Earlier a similar organization with similar objectives had been formed among the Azeri community in Azerbaijan under the leadership of Ja'far Pishihvari, a key figure in the Gilani movement

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[197] Ibid., p. 107.

during WWI. The real "mastermind" behind these movements, however, was the Soviet consul general in Tabriz.[198] Although the ranks of the two movements were swelled by "volunteers"from Azeri and Kurdish communities in the Soviet Union and Iraq, the aims of both groups were essentially nationalistic as compared with the more doctrinaire communist ideology espoused by the Tudeh Party.[199] The popular militias established by the ADP and the KDP would have been no match for the forces of the central government in Tehran, however, had the Red Army not intervened. This action by the Soviet forces enabled the two movements to announce the formation of the Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan and the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad in December 1945. That same month Moscow informed the U.S. that since the Soviet Union had committed its forces to Iran under the provisions of the treaty of 1921, a decision to evacuate Soviet forces would be made based on the security interests of the Soviet Union and not solely on the provisions of the Tripartitie Agreement.[200]

Under the circumstances, Iran had little choice but to seek outside help. In January Tehran appealed to the U.S. and Great Britain for assistance, and presented its case before the newly formed United Nations Security Council.

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[198] Ibid., p. 114.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Ibid., p. 125.

Moscow retaliated by increasing the size of the Red Army force in Iran.[201] While Iran continued to press for a Soviet withdrawal at the UN, Prime Minister Qavam went to Moscow to negotiate directly with the Kremlin leadership. Little progress was made during these negotiations until March, at which time, according to Adam Ulam, a speech delivered by Winston Churchill at Fulton Missouri in which he encouraged the U.S. to employ force if necessary to prevent further Russian encroachments, caused the Soviets to have second thoughts about their involvement in Iran.[202] Although the exact nature of the U.S. response remains unclear, Moscow was undoubtedly not anxious for a showdown with the U.S. over Iran.[203] Later that month the Soviets agreed to withdraw from Iran; in return Tehran agreed to: (1) negotiate in good faith with the Azeri and Kurdish Republics the exact nature of the relationship with the central government; (2) appoint Tudeh Party members to the Cabinet; and (3) form with the Soviet Union a Joint-Stock company for developing petrolem resources in northern Iran.[204] Tehran accepted the Russian proposal, and the Soviet evacuation began on March 24.

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[201] Ibid., p. 138.

[202] Adam Ulam. Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1973, 2nd ed. (New York: 1974), pp. 423-425.

[203] Campbell, p. 153.

[204] Lenczowski, Russia and the West..., pp. 299-303.

Once the Russian military forces were gone, however, Iran demonstrated that it felt no obligation to fulfill terms of an agreement made "under duress." Ostensibly under the guise of supervising parliamentary elections, Iranian troops re-occupied Azerbaijan and Kurdistan in December. Lacking the protection of the Red Army the two republics quickly collapsed. Prime Minister Qavam also formed a new cabinet "sans" the Tudeh representatives and ordered the arrests of several party members. The following year when the Soviet oil concession was presented to the overwhelmingly pro-government Majlis, it was not ratified. Moscow lodged a formal protest, increased anti-government propaganda, and imposed a boycott on Iranian goods. Iran's new Prime Minister, Ibrahim Hakimi, retaliated by arresting 300 Tudeh members.[205] The escalating tension between Tehran and Moscow came to a head in 1949 when, in the wake of an attempt on the Shah's life by a member of the Tudeh party, Iran declared martial law, outlawed the Tudeh party, and jailed most known communists and their sympathizers. As a result, Moscow recalled its ambassador and closed its consulates in four Iranian cities. In March Tehran accused the Soviets of violating Iran's border by dispatching Russian troops into Azerbaijan and subsequently capturing several Iranian soldiers. Iran countered by threating to abrogate the treaty of 1921, a threat which was prudently dropped.[206]

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[205] Ibid., pp. 312-313.

[206] W. B. Ballis, "Soviet-Iranian Relations during the Decade 1953-1964," Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the USSR, 12 (November 1965), p. 9.

Iranian-Soviet tension continued until 1950 when the Iranian government, under Prime Minister Ali Razmara, agreed to establish a joint commission with the Soviet Union for settling several territorial disputes in the northern provinces.

This crisis in Iranian-Soviet relations was soon overshadowed by other events: the Kremlin's attention focused on the conflict in Korea while Iran became embroiled in the oil nationalization issue. Moscow was interested in the nationalization issue, however, because it recognized in it an opportunity to strike a blow against British influence in Iran. For this reason, the Soviets supported Dr. Mossadiq and his drive to nationalize the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Initially Mossadiq was supported also by the Tudeh Party, which resurfaced during the crisis. The Tudeh eventually had a falling-out with Mossadiq, however, over the latter's insistence on the need for negotiating a settlement and on his reliance on the U.S. as a mediator.[207] Similarly, Moscow was critical of what it perceived as Washington's attempt to ensure that control over Iranian oil simply passed from British into American hands.[208] Soviet convictions in this regard hardened as the crisis deepened in 1952/53. In April 1952 Mossadiq accepted the U.S. offer of military assistance to Iran, and the following

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[207] Ramazani, 1941-1973, pp. 233-234.

[208] Ibid., p. 235

year the flamboyant prime minister refused to renew a fisheries agreement with the Soviet Union. If the Kremlin needed any further evidence of U.S. intent, it was provided by U.S. complicity in the counter-coup in August 1953 which overthrew the Mossadiq regime. Moscow's inability to influence this course of events in its favor was due to two factors. In the first place, Stalin's death in March 1953 created a leadership crisis in the Kremlin and had a numbing effect on Soviet foreign policy for several years thereafter. Secondly, Moscow's domestic ally in Iran, the Tudeh Party, proved to be ineffective as a revolutionary vanguard since it was itself highly factionalized.[209]

In the aftermath of the oil nationalization/Mossadiq crisis, Iranian-Soviet relations continued to be based on mutual suspicion and enmity in spite of the change of regimes in the Kremlin. As the post-Mossadiq regimes in Tehran leaned even more heavily on the West for security against Soviet machinations, Moscow became more bellicose, a response which only served to heighten Persian trepidation about Soviet intentions. Under the circumstances, the Western call for a regional security pact fell on receptive ears in Tehran. The only positive note in Iran's relations with the Soviets came in 1954 when the two countries concluded a trade agreement which included a provision for the return by Moscow of 11 tons of gold and eight million dollars in goods which Soviets had confiscated during the war. This brief

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[209] Campbell, p. 248.

respite was soon annulled by Tehran's discovery the following year of a Soviet spy ring involving 600 Iranian officers operating within the Iranian army.

In addition to its apprehension over Kremlin attempts to subvert Iran, Tehran was concerned with the activist foreign policy emanating from Cairo in the wake of the coup of 1952. Iran's desire to maintain regional stability conflicted with Nasser's drive against Zionism, imperialism, and Western security alliances. As the charismatic "spokesman for Arab nationalism," Nasser sought to foster Egypt's leadership position within the Arab World by championing the attack against the "reactionary" monarchies of the Persian Gulf.

By the mid-50s, as Khruschev began to emerge as the central figure in the post-Stalin regime, Kremlin policy in the region began to display subtle changes in its traditional strategy of confrontation and revolution. Regional states adjacent to the Soviet Union like Turkey and Iran became aware of the Kremlin's effort to undermine Western influence in the area by developing linkages with progressive regimes in the area which could serve as a counter-balance to the pro-Western regimes in Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan. The first evidence of Moscow's new approach in the region came in late 1953 when the new Kremlin leadership signed a trade agreement with the Nehru government in India. So successful was the agreement in improving Soviet-Indian relations that

Moscow's support for the hard-line Indian Communist Party, to which Soviet foreign policy under Stalin had been totally committed, began to wane as the post-Stalin leadership developed a greater appreciation for the political benefits accured from cooperating with ruling non-communist regimes, a doctrine which eventually became the mainstay of Khruschev's policy toward the Third World.[210] By 1955 the ramifications of Khruschev's policy became clearer still as the Soviets concluded arms sales agreements with the "progressive" regimes of Prime Minister Daoud in Afghanistan and Nasser in Egypt.

This turn in Soviet foreign policy led to a significant change in Iranian foreign policy. As Muhammad Reza Shah began to play a more direct role in the formulation of Iran's foreign policy in the aftermath of the Mossadiq crisis, Iranian policy became less concerned with external influence in Iranian affairs than it did with the need for strengthening Iran's security posture, both as the best method for preventing such intervention as well as for solving many of Iran's domestic problems.[211] As a result, the Shah abandoned the "third-power policy"--previously adhered to by both his

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[210] See Oles M. Smolansky, The Soviet Union and the Arab East under Khrushchev (Cranbury, N.J.: 1974), p. 291; see also Robert H. Donaldson, Soviet Policy Toward India (Cambridge, MA: 1974), pp. 112, 112-132.

[211] See Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, Mission for my Country (New York:), pp. 290-296.

father and himself--in favor of security ties with the West, or as the Shah put it, "positive nationalism."[212] Toward this end, the Shah re-established diplomatic relations with London in December 1953--broken off by Mossadiq in October 1952--and concluded an agreement with a Western oil consortium in August 1954. The cornerstone of Iran's new strategy was the Baghdad Pact (later called CENTO), which Iran joined in 1955. Iran's vision of the Pact as the best mechanism for improving its overall security was soon shattered by Washington's decision not to join the organization as a full partner. Although Iran recognized the inherent limitations of a security alliance which lacked a complete American commitment, the Soviet Union viewed the Pact as a direct threat to Russian national security.

When Moscow's intense campaign to forestall Iranian involvement in the Baghdah Pact failed, the Kremlin's initial response reflected Soviet anxiety over the organizations anti-Russian basis. Anti-western propaganda increased, and Moscow threatened to invoke Article 6 of the treaty of 1921 if Iran allowed foreign bases within its territory. Once the Kremlin realized that such a response was counterproductive, it changed its tactics in the hope of minimizing Iranian participation in the organization. Iran was offered a non-aggression pact and economic aid in return for assurances that Tehran would neither allow the construction of

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[212] Ibid., Chapter 6; and Ramazani, 1941-1973, pp. 258-260.

U.S. missile bases on Iranian soil nor actively participate in the military aspects of the pact. At one point, Moscow even offered to re-negotiate the treaty of 1921 as a quid pro quo for Iranian withdrawal from the pact, a condition unacceptable to Iran.[213]

A similar scenario to that which led to Iranian participation in the Bahgdad Pact unfolded in the late 50's. In 1958 the Iraqi branch of the Hashemite monarchy was overthrown in a bloody coup which resulted in the brutal murder of the entire royal family. Although not implicated initially, Iraqi communists played a major part in the country-wide bloodbath which followed the coup. Iran was able to use the Iraqi coup, together with the Eisenhower Doctrine and the implications of its ongoing negotiations with the Soviets for a non-aggression pact, to extract a bi-lateral security agreement with the U.S. Following the announced signing of the agreement in March 1959, Moscow broke diplomatic relations with Tehran. Such a drastic move by Moscow was probably not limited solely to the U.S.-Iranian agreement, but was due, at least in part, to the Shah's unilateral declaration three days before the bi-lateral pact was signed that Iran no longer considered as valid Articles 5 and 6 of the treaty of 1921, a move which the Soviets have never recognized.

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[213] Lenczowski, Soviet Advances, p. 30.

VI. THE ASCENDANCE OF IRAN AND ITS IMPACT ON IRANIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS

The severance of diplomatic relations with Tehran by Moscow as a result of the former's conclusion of a bilateral accord with the U.S. marked the nadir of Iran's post-war relationship with the Soviet Union. Both parties realized, however, the dangers inherent in the prolongation of such a state of affairs, and that a relationship which continually manifested such enmity was in the best interest of neither country. Abreak in the crisis came in August 1960 with the fall of the virulently anti-Soviet government of Prime Minister Iqbal, which was occasioned by the return of Moscow's ambassador to Tehran. Eqbal's interim successor, Sharif-Imami, immediately entered into discussions with the Soviets in an effort to improve their relations.[214]

Although Iranian-Soviet relations during this period were at an all-time low, Iran also was developing a deeper appreciation for the limits of the Western commitment to Iranian security. As early as 1956, the West had failed to support the Hungarian uprising, and the U.S. turned against its formost European allies, France and Great Britain, in their attempt to ensure continued Western control over the Suez Canal. During the Iraqi coup of 1958, Iran found its Western allies unwilling to intervene to save the Hashemite

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[214] Ramazani. Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973, p. 302.

throne, this in spite of the successful operation to preserve the Pahlavi throne in Iran five years earlier. Iran was disturbed further by the U.S. refusal to include provisions for American assistance to Iran to combat either internal subversion or non-communist external threats within the parameters of the bilateral pact. In addition, the open criticism by the newly innauguerated Kennedy administration of Iran's guns-for-butter defense expenditures did little to enhance Iranian confidence in the consistency of the American commitment.[215] Doubts in Tehran about the new administration's resolve to combat communism presumably were exacerbated even further by Washington's handling of the Bay of Pigs fiasco.

This uncertainty about Western, and particularly American, resolve to defend Iranian interests, together with the depressed state of Iranian-Soviet relations, led to another change in Iranian foreign policy. Termed by the Shah an "independent national policy," it was designed primarily to "normalize" relations with the Soviet Union while simultaneously decreasing Iranian dependence on American support.[216] According to the Shah, Iran's new foreign policy would be:

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[215] Chubin and Zabih. The Foreign Relations of Iran, p. 105.

[216] Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. Mission for my country. (New York: 1961), pp. 10-12.

> based on the principles of the pursuit of peace; on peaceful coexistence with all nations and societies irrespective of different ideologies and systems of government; on support of every effort to establish and assure social justice on national or international scales and of every attempt to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor; and, on international cooperation in the struggle against illiteracy, starvation, disease, and other contemporary social ills.[217]

Although, in retrospect, Iran's independent national policy did little to alter Tehran's posture vis a vis the U.S., it had a significant impact on Iranian-Soviet relations.

A. IRANIAN-SOVIET RAPPROCHEMENT

As was stated earlier, both Iran and the Soviet Union were, in the aftermath of the crisis surrounding the signing of the U.S.-Iranian bi-lateral agreement, exploring ways for normalizing their relationship. Toward this goal, a compromise was eventually reached in 1962 whereby Iran agreed to withdraw its demand for a nullification of the objectionable articles in the treaties of 1921 and 1927 in return for a similar concession by the Soviets to shelve their demand for Iranian withdrawal from CENTO. This compromise set the stage for the subsequent formal accord which marked a turning point in post-war Iranian-Soviet relations. Through a series of notes between Tehran and Moscow exchanged in September 1960, Moscow agreed to: (1) curtail its anti-Iranian propaganda activities, (2) construct a steel mill in Iran,[218] and (3)

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[217] Iran, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iran's Foreign Policy: A compendium of the Writings and Statements of His Imperial Majesty Shahansha Aryamehr (Tehran: ND), p. 13, as quoted by Ramazani, p. 314.

[218] The Shah had been trying for some time and without success to finance the construction of such a plant through European and American financial institutions.

assist in the development of Iran's oil and gas resources. As a quid pro quo, Tehran pledged not to allow the deploy=ment of foreign missiles on Iranian territory. This pledge by Iran reflected the shift in Kremlin strategy under Khruschev to defense against nuclear rather than conventional threats.[219] For Moscow, therefore, the agreement provided the necessary reassurance of the limited nature of Iran's security link with the West. It demonstrated that membership in a Western alliance per se need not preclude a country from engaging in normal diplomatic and economic relations with socialist states. In this respect, the Iranian-Soviet accord probably encouraged those in the Kremlin who advocated such an approach for encouraging a de facto nonaligned or neutral position by states along the southern periphery of the Soviet Union. From an Iranian perspective, the accord was evidence of a realization that membership in a Western security alliance was not a panacea for a broad range of security problems, but was both limited in scope and dependent for its viability on the resolve of its great power sponsor.[220]

The fruits of the Tehran'Moscow rapprochement were not long in coming. In 1963 a transit agreement was concluded which provided for reduced rates for Iranian goods shipped to Europe via the Soviet Union and for Soviet goods shipped

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[219] See Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-1973, pp. 317-318.

[220] Chubin and Zabih, p. 7.

from Iranian ports on the Persian Gulf. A joint shipping company was later established to handle the shipment of goods through both countries. Moscow also agreed in 1963 to construct a hydro-electric facility on the Aras River, which forms part of Iran's northwestern boundary with the Soviet Union, and to share equally the power output of the installation with Iran. A three-year trade agreement was signed in 1964 and extended by a five-year agreement in 1967. These agreements provided for a 3.5 fold increase in Iranian exports to the Soviet Union. According to a 1970 supplementary agreement, the Soviets promised to purchase nearly 3/4 billion dollars in Iranian goods from 1970-1975, making Russia "the largest single market for Iranian manufactured products."[221]

Iran's most significant agreements with the Soviets both from an economic and a politico-military standpoint, came in 1966. The first agreement provided for Soviet technical assistance and financial support for the construction of a steel mill, a gas pipeline, and a machine tool plant in Iran. The costs of these projects was covered by an initial Russian loan of $300 million repayable at a very low rate of interest. That same year Iran became the first member of a western alliance to purchase Soviet arms when Tehran purchased $110 million in weaponry and other military hardware from Moscow. Iran arranged to pay for the arms and repay the

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[221] Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-1973, pp. 317-318.

loan with shipments of natural gas via the pipeline which Russia would help construct connecting the Iranian gas fields at Ahvaz with Soviet Azerbaijan. The pipeline was completed and gas transfers begun in 1970. Manifestations of Iranian-Soviet cooperation were not limited to the early 1960s. Prior to the completion of the steel mill in Esfahan, Iran arranged for an additionaly $300 million Soviet loan in order to double the output of the mill. Construction was finally completed in 1973. In 1972 Iran signed a 15-year Treaty of Economic and Technical Cooperation with the Soviet Union which provided for the further expansion of trade and cooperation between the two nations, and for the promotion of regional cooperation and trade as well.[222] Since the opening of the gas pipeline in 1970, Iran has agreed to increase its gas shipments to Russia in order to enable Moscow to increase its own gas sales to Western Europe. In addition, the Soviets have been purchasing, since 1973, about 2 MMT of Iranian oil per year.[223] Moscow also granted Iran $325 million in economic credits in 1977 through 1980, by which time the value of the two countries trade is expected to reach $2.5 billion. In line with Iran's policy of diversifying

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[222] Ibid., p. 337.

[223] Robert W. Campbell, "Some Issues in Soviet Energy Policy for the Seventies," Middle East Information Series, 26-27 (Spring/Summer 1974), p. 99.

its military expenditures, Tehran has continued to purchase some military equipment from the Russians, estimated by one source to be valued at over $500 million since 1973.[224]

As this discussion shows, the Iranian-Soviet rapprochement has been limited primarily to cooperation in economic rather than political affairs. The Pahlavi regime's close ties with the West, particularly its military ties with the U.S., posed a difficult obstacle for any significant progress in Iranian-Soviet political relations. The lack of progress in the political realm, however, is mitigated somewhat by the scope of developments in the two countries economic relations. As one source noted, "one of the most dramatic developments in Moscow-Tehran relations in the post-revolutionary [post-1917] period has been the depth and range of economic ties established during the last decade."[225] Improved economic relations may yet serve as a vehicle for similar developments in the political area, particularly given the apparent demise of the monarchy and the as yet uncertain nature of future Iranian foreign policy.

So far this chapter has described those external factors behind Iran's so-called independent national policy of the

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[224] Interview with Date Tahtinen, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C., 20 April 1978.

[225] Bettie M. and Oles M. Smolansky, "Soviet and Chinese Influence in the Persian Gulf," in Soviet and Chinese Influence in the Third World, ed. by Alvin Z. Rubinstein (New York: 1975), p. 145.

early 60's, to include Mohammad Reza Shah's motivation and rationale for replacing Iran's former third-power policy. Before continuing with an assessment of more recent developments in Iranian foreign policy and Iranian-Soviet relations, it is necessary to pause and reflect briefly on developments in the international arena which eventually led to changes in Soviet foreign policy. Challenges to Moscow's position in the international system during the '60s effected its policy toward the Middle East, including its relationship with Iran. Both the Berlin and Cuban missile crises unequivocally demonstrated to the entire world weaknesses and shortcomings in the Soviet system. Khruschev's foreign policy, which emphasized a forward posture for the Kremlin in the Third World, stalled during the early '60s as "progressive" regimes in Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Algeria, and Indonesia collapsed in rapid succession. Although the Soviet toehold in the Western hemisphere proved more resilient, efforts to use Cuba as a spring-board to the rest of Latin America persistently failed, as in the Dominican Republic in 1965, in Bolivia in 1967, and more recently in Chile in 1973. As if these difficulties were not sufficiently vexing, Peking emerged in the late '50s as a malignant threat to Moscow's leadership of the communist bloc. Peking's border war with India in 1962 seriously challenged Russian interests in Asia.

In the Middle East, the Soviet position also began to develop signs of stress. Moscow's decision in 1963 to "underwrite" Nasser's campaign in Yemen proved to be a disaster as the conflict dragged on for five years at considerable expense to, and with little or no benefit for either the Russians or the Egyptians. For Iran, however, Nasser's Yemen adventure served as conclusive evidence of a long range Egyptian strategy, supported by the Kremlin, to acquire a share of the peninsula's vast petroleum resources. The following year the pro-Soviet Qasim regime in Iraq was overthrown by the highly nationalistic Ba'th. Israel's blitzkrieg against the Arabs in 1967 further undermined Soviet policy in the region. Moscow's humiliation over the totality of the Arab defeat was so great that by 1970 the Kremlin had taken the unprecedented step of committing Soviet troops to the defense of Egypt during the "War of Attrition."[226] This crisis clearly demonstrated the limited nature of the Soviet commitment to the Arab cause given the Kremlin's dogged refusal to risk further direct involvement in any future Arab offensive.

These setbacks, both in the Middle East and elsewhere, led Moscow to adopt a less flamboyant and more pragmatic approach toward the Persian Gulf region during the '60s. At the 22nd Party Congress the importance of improving Soviet-Iranian relations was stressed. Soviet leaders gradually developed an appreciation for the limited nature of the threat

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[226] See Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "Moscow and Cairo: Currents of Influence," Problems of Communism, 23 (July 1974), p. 20.

posed by Iranian membership in CENTO and by Iran's bi-lateral accord with the U.S. Khruschev in particular realized that the shift in Iranian foreign policy toward a more balanced position could have positive impact on Soviet-Iranian relations. The Kremlin attempted to respond to this favorable shift in the Iranian position "by altering their strategy from one of confrontation and maintenance of a high level of tension to one of cooperation and amelioration."[227]

Tehran's rapprochement with Moscow continued to prevail relatively intact for several years. By the late '60s, however, issues arose and events occured necessatating policy modifications, and resulting in increased tension and suspension between the two states. Iran tended to relate these tensions to a more assertive Soviet posture in the region as an outgrowth of leadership change in the Kremlin. While the impact of Soviet leadership and policy changes on Soviet-Iranian relations was significant, it was certainly not the only factor involved. Of equal importance in this equation were environmental and domestic changes which effected Iran in the late 60s. Like the developments which resulted in a revised Soviet foreign policy, these stimuli led to a de facto change in Iranian policy. The Iranian policy which emerged in the late 60s was at best in competition with, and at worst a direct challenge to, Soviet interests in the area.

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[227] Hensel, p. 178.

A discussion of those factors which led to successive changes in Iranian foreign policy and, concomitantly, to heightened tensions in Iranian-Soviet relations will be the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

B. THE IMPACT OF DETENTE ON IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Initially, Iran was encouraged by the prospect of detente between its principal antagonist, the Soviet Union, and its primary ally, the U.S. Iran was a beneficiary of the detente process as early as 1962 when the Iranian-Soviet missile base agreement inauguerated Tehran's rapprochement with Moscow.[228] This agreement in fact preceded the first superpower accord, the test ban treaty, which was not signed until 1963. For the most part, much of the impetus for the improved atmosphere in which Iranian-Soviet relations were conducted throughout most of the 60s can be attributed to the East-West dialogue. By the late '60s, however, Iran became increasingly concerned that detente was in fact enhancing the Soviet politico-military posture at the expense of the U.S., and was promoting increased Soviet activity in the Middle East/Persian Gulf region.[229] Viewing events in a basically zero-sum framework, Iran perceived detente as having allowed the Soviet Union to achieve nuclear parity with the U.S. at the expense of

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[228] Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973, p. 317.

[229] Shahram Chubin, "Iran's Foreign Policy 1960-1976: An Overview," in Twentieth-Century Iran, ed. by Hossein Amirsadeghi (New York: 1977), p. 201.

American strategic superiority.[230] More importantly, however, was Iran's concern with the expansion, under the Brezhnev/Kosygin regime, of Soviet conventional forces. Elements of the Soviet navy began to deploy in strength into the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean area about this same time.

Iran can point to several examples of Soviet involvement in the region during the early to mid-60s which demonstrate the duality which was emerging in Soviet foreign policy, i.e. a continuous dialogue with the West to reduce East-West tensions while simultaneously maintaining a forward posture in the Third World. As was mentioned earlier, the Kremlin's support for Nasser's adventuresome policy created suspicions in Tehran about Soviet attempts to employ their Egyptian surrogates to eventually gain a foothold on the Arabian peninsula. Even closer to home, Moscow's close relations with the Qasim regime in Iraq were viewed as a contributing factor in that government's attempt in 1961 to forcibly annex Kuwait. Quick action by the British stimied Qasim's plan. Although Iraq's pro-Soviet strongman was overthrown by the Ba'th, as was pointed out earlier, the new government lasted only a few months and was itself ousted by the Arif regime, which promptly re-established ties with Moscow.

Another example of the inability of detente to temper Soviet activities in the region was Kremlin support for an

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[230] Chubin and Zabih, p. 11.

irredentist group in southern Arabia known as the Dhofar Liberation Front.[231] Moscow's initial involvement was limited, possibly as a result of the earlier failure of its effort in North Yemen to establish a presence on the peninsula. When the British-sponsored Federation of South Arabia collapsed in 1967, however, an Egyptian-backed pro-Soviet group emerged from the subsequent power struggle. As a result, more Soviet aid was funneled to the Dhofaris through Moscow's new allies in Aden. Reverberations from the resultant escalation in the Dhofar conflict were felt as far away as London and Washington. Oman, whose control over Dhofar was threatened by the conflict, was able to drum up sufficient support--initially from Britain, but later from Iran, Jordan, and the U.S.--to mount a counter-insurgency operation. For Iran, these experiences represented conclusive evidence that Soviet involvement both in the Gulf region and in the Third World as a whole would be deterred only by a strong regional and Western response and not by any reliance on the rhetoric of detente.[232]

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[231] Later called the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG), and subsequently the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO).

[232] Interview with Dr. Assad Humayun, Political Officer, Embassy of Iran, Washington, D.C., 18 April 1978.

In addition to the inability of detente to forestall Soviet adventurism in the Middle East, Iran was concerned with another shortcoming of detente: the inapplicability of detente as a framework for reducing tension and conflict in the region. As one of the principle architects of Iranian foreign policy, the late Amir Abbas Hoveyda noted, "detente is a commodity...much in demand in...Asia and the Middle East, for we believe that peace can only prove durable when it's indivisable."[233] Detente had not, according to Iran, contributed to the solution of the area's most intractable dispute: the Arab-Israeli conflict. Iran, therefore, was critical of the policies of both superpowers because: (a) their arms transfers to the belligerents had exacerbated rather than reduced the scope of the conflict, and (b) both the U.S. and the Soviet Union were (prior to the October War) inexorably committed to states on opposing sides, thereby preventing either superpowers from playing a constructive mediating role. Iran felt that its own policy toward the conflict--which combined de facto recognition of Israel with political support for Palestnian rights and (after the Six-day War) the return of occupied territory--served as a better example of constructive external involvement.

Perhaps even more disconcerting to Iran than the inherently limited scope of detente was the effect detente

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[233] Premier Abbas Hoveyda to a CENTO conference of ministers, excerpts of which appeared in Kehan and Ettela'at on 16 and 20 June, 1973, respectively; quoted by Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973, p. 342.

was having on the foreign policy of its major ally, the U.S. Iran was concerned that while Moscow viewed its Middle Eastern adventures as extraneous to detente, Washington, on the other hand, pursued the opposite interpretation, i.e. that all facets of superpower relations were included within the framework of detente. Based on this perception, American foreign policy, epitomized in the Nixon Doctrine, was viewed by Tehran as a retrenchement by the U.S. from areas of non-vital American interest, such as the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. For Iran, Washington's failure to assist Pakistan in its wars with India in 1965 and 1971 vividly demonstrated the U.S. unwillingness to intervene directly in Third World conflicts.[234] In the case of Pakistan, the U.S. had proved that it was willing to sacrifice its commitment to a Third World ally in order to preserve its image of detente. Following the '71 war, an article appearing in the semi-official newspaper Kayhan noted that "Pakistan, an ally of the United States through two multilateral [CENTO and SEATO] and one bilateral treaty, has been attacked and dismembered without as much as a ripple of serious protest. There is no reason why Pakistan's plight should be treated as an isolated case that could not be repeated else where in the region."[235]

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[234] Interview with Dr. Humayun.

[235] As quoted by Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973, p. 355.

C. IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE WAKE OF THE BRITISH WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PERSIAN GULF

Although British involvement in Iran and the Gulf has been criticized extensively by Iranians and other littoral residents, Iran was deeply concerned by the Labor government's announcement in 1968 that all British military forces "East of Suez" would be withdrawn by 1971. Britain's willingness to come to the aid of Gulf states endangered by externally supported radical elements--as when British forces prevented the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq in 1961 and when British officers were seconded into the service of the Sultan of Oman in 1968--was a factor which Iran recognized had contributed significantly to the maintenance of security and stability in the Gulf. Tehran was prepared for an eventual British withdrawal from the region, but had not anticipated that it would happen at that early date. At this point, however, Iran was neither politically nor militarily prepared for a British withdrawal.[236] As a result, it was some time before a coherent Gulf policy emerged in Tehran.

Iran's initial and largely "negative" reactions reflected surprise and a rising fear that the British move would create a "power vacuum" in the area, a vacuum which would invite Soviet intervention. Iran opposed the British effort to form a confederation among the Arab sheikdoms of the Gulf, voiced a historical claim to the island sheikdom of Bahrain (which Britain proposed to include in the confederation), and

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[236] Chubin and Zabih, p. 215.

insisted that security of the Gulf was solely the responsibility of the littoral states. This attitude on the part of Iran adversely effected Iranian relations with the Arab states of the gulf and with other Middle Eastern states. The renewal of Iran's claim to Bahrain aroused considerable anxiety among several other gulf sheikdoms whose territories included lands formerly a part of the Persian Empire. In addition, the Iranian position on Bahrain was the object of anti-Iranian propaganda from Egypt, Syria, and Iraq.[237] The Bahraini issue continued to hinder the development of a cohesive and pragmatic gulf policy in Tehran until it was settled in May 1970, at which time Iran agreed to recognize Bahrain's independence.

It was not only surprise over Great Britain's withdrawal announcement and its own bellicose handling of the Bahrain issue which complicated Iranian foreign policy from 1968-1971. Soviet foreign policy emerged in 1968 with several significant modifications to Khruschev's strategy in the region. By 1968, the new Kremlin leadership had been massaging a revised foreign policy for four years, and with the Czech invasion, the Brezhnev-Kosygin team consolidated its leadership position, and Soviet foreign policy reflected an additional degree of self-confidence and assertiveness.[238]

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[237] Ibid., p. 220.

[238] See Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Moscow's Options in a Changing World," Problems of Communism, Vol. 1, No. 4 (July/August 1972), pp. 2-3.

Moscow's Third World policy under Brezhnev and Kosygin had two basic objectives: (a) establish and maintain friendly relations with the states along its southern periphery, and in so doing "contain" and "encircle" the PRC, and (b) normalize relations with all Third World nations, whether progressive" or not, thereby "broadening" Moscow's base of international support and avoiding involvement in regional conflicts. The Soviets assumed that if such a strategy was successful, Moscow's international prestige would be greatly enhanced, particularly given the radicalization of Chinese policy during the cultural revolution (1966-1969), and the impudence of U.S. foreign policy as characterized by America's continued involvement in Vietnam.[239] As far as a Persian Gulf strategy, Moscow realized that even without a strong Western presence its ability to establish a strong presence was limited by the lack of both regional bases and a truly "blue water" navy.

For the most part, Iran remained unaware of the rationale behind the Brezhnev-Kosygin strategy. Iran recognized that a post-Khruschev change in Soviet strategy had occured, but mistakenly assumed that Moscow's objective was to replace London as the high sheriff of the Persian Gulf. Subsequent Soviet activities were interpreted by Tehran as part of a Russian effort to gain control of the gulf by enveloping its flanks, as opposed to the traditional Russian strategy of

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[239] Hensel, pp. 202-205.

piercing the Caucasus and Iran.[240] Moscow's support to Egypt, Iraq, and the PDRY certainly fostered and exacerbated this perception. It was several years before Iranian foreign policy reflected an appreciation for the real objectives of the Brezhnev-Kosygin strategy in the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean region. This perception was a reflection of a natural Iranian tendency, born of a centuries-old adversarial relationship with its northern neighbor, to succumb to recurring spells of "Glubbitis," a form of paranoia afflicting several Western as well as Middle Eastern regimes in which the victim attributes every political setback, military defeat, economic crisis, and natural disaster to a Russian conspiracy.[241]

By 1971 Iran had developed a more cohesive policy toward the Persian Gulf. As noted previously, the major obstacle preventing the formation of such a policy, Iran's revanchist position vis a vis Bahrain, was diplomatically overcome in 1970. Although Iran had supported the concept of a multilateral gulf security pact, such a concept failed to germinate due to Western "sponsorship" and Arab uncertainty over Iranian intentions. Another factor hampering Arab-Iranian cooperation

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[240] Interview with Prof. Rouhollah K. Ramazani, Woodrow Wilson Department of Government and Foreign Affairs, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 19 April 1978.

[241] See P. J. Vatikiotis, "The Soviet Union and Egypt: The Nasser Years," in The Soviet Union and the Middle East, ed. by Ivo J. Lederer and Wayne S. Vucinich (Stanford: 1974), p. 2.

was the Iranian demand that, as a quid pro quo for Iran's acceptance of a federation of Arab gulf states, the other littoral states would not oppose Iran's occupation of certain gulf islands strategically located near the Straits of Hormuz.

Shortly before Britain's scheduled withdrawal, Iranian military forces seized Abu Musa and the Tumbs. This action epitomized the essential thrust of Iran's gulf policy: the Shah and his government had determined that Iran should become "the logical heir to Britain's former position of pre-eminence."[242] Although Iran had reached an agreement with the Sheik of Sharjah--who claimed sovereignty over Abu Musa--prior to the move, whereby Iran agreed to compensate Sharjah for the "occupation," no such agreement was made with the claimant of the Tumbs, Ras al-Khaymah. Forces from Ras al-Khaymah resisted the Iranian landing, and three Iranian and four Arab troops were killed in the brief battle which resulted.[243] Iran's action generated a hostile response from several Arab quarters. Iraq broke off diplomatic relations with both Iran and Great Britain, whom Baghdad blamed as a co-conspirator in the Iranian take-over. Libya seized the opportunity to nationalize all of British Petroleum's holding within its territory. Iraq, Libya, Algeria, Ras al-Khaymah, and the PDRY all recommended Security Council action. In an effort to asuage Arab criticism of its action,

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[242] D.C. Watt, "Persian Gulf--Cradle of Conflict?" Problems of Communism, 21 (May/June 1972), p. 32.

[243] Shapour Nemazee, "Islands return to Iran," Keyhan International, 1 December 1971, p. 1.

Iran recognized the Union of Arab Emirates on 9 December 1971.[244] A stronger response from the U.N., the U.S. and perhaps even the Soviet Union was mitigated by a greater concern with the international implications of the simultaneous renewal of the Indo-Pakistani conflict.

As Iran's reliance on force of arms to resolve its claim to the gulf islands clearly indicates, the primary ingredient in the post-1968 gulf strategy of the Shah was the build-up of the Iranian military. The Shah assumed for Iran the burden of providing security for not only the maritime and petroleum activities in the gulf but also for preserving the conservative Islamic (i.e. monarchial) character of gulf politics. Subsequent Iranian military support to the Sultan of Oman against the Dhofari rebels exemplified the militaristic character of the Shah's strategy. The Shah personally affirmed this aspect of Iranian foreign policy during an "interview' with an Iranian newspaper reporter in 1973.[245]

Further evidence of the nature of Iran's gulf policy is provided by a look at the character of Iran's military equipment purchases from 1968-1972. Following Britain's withdrawal announcement in early 1968, Iran received permission from the Johnson administration to purchase the F4 Phantom fighter-bomber, an aircraft of such sophistication

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[244] See Chubin and Zabih, pp. 229-230.

[245] See Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973, p. 352.

that, at the time, it had not been released to any country outside of NATO, including Israel. Iran took delivery of 32 Phantoms just prior to the seizure of the islands in the Straits of Hormuz. From the time of London's announcement until the island operation, Iran also purchased 40 additional (16 had been purchased previously) C130 long range transport aircraft and 26 additional (91 were purchased in 1965) F5A fighters. In order to deploy ground forces quickly across the gulf, Iran purchased 126 Agusta-Bell helicopters and ten British hovercraft during the same time frame. In addition, Iran organized a marine brigade to serve as a quick reaction force in the gulf.[246] Elements of this unit transported in hovercraft and helicopters seized the two island groups in December 1971.

D. IRANIAN-SOVIET COMPETITION IN THE PERSIAN GULF AND BEYOND

As Iran was in the process of developing a Persian Gulf policy, a simultaneous parallel effort was under way to revise Iranian foreign policy in general to reflect the changes in the international, regional, and domestic environment which had occured during the '60s. In this manner Iran hoped to bring its newly emergent gulf policy into closer alignment with its overall foreign policy. It would appear, in retrospect, that the Iranian effort to develop a more realistic and timely foreign policy included a reassessment of its basic policies toward the superpowers. Subsequent Iranian diplomacy, for example, reflected a more objective

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[246] All arms sales data extracted from the SIPRI Arms Trade Register (Cambridge, MA: 1975), pp. 46-50.

appreciation of Moscow's actual interests in the region, particularly as far as China was concerned. Iran also attempted to balance its increased military and economic ties with the West by demonstrating increased sensitivity to Soviet interests, as exemplified by its opposition to the U.S. base in Bahrain.[247] By weaving these two efforts together, Iran hoped to "neutralize" the Soviet position in the region.

One of the fundamental objectives of Iran's post-1970 policy was the normalization of relations with the PRC. As early as 1969, the Shah had confirmed this goal of Iranian policy when he stated that "although we do not recognize the People's Republic of China, we believe that China must be admitted into the United Nations."[248] Later in 1971, prior to the outbreak of the third Indo-Pakistani conflict, the Shah's sisters made separate trips to China to explore first-hand the possibility of establishing full diplomatic relations between the two Asian powers. When that final step was taken just before the British withdrawal from the gulf, Iran added a China card to its collection of diplomatic accouterments. An airline agreement was signed by the two countries in 1972 followed by a trade agreement the following year. During the visit of the Chinese foreign minister to Tehran in June 1973, China announced its unqualified support for Iranian policy

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[247] Chubin and Zabih, p. 263.

[248] Reported in Keyhan, 6 Sept. 1969, as quoted by Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973, p. 430.

objectives in the region.[249] Of even greater significance was the Tehran visit last year of the architect of China's post-Mao policy, Party Chairman Hua Kuo-feng.[250] This move by Iran, which was essentially a return to Iran's previous policy of seeking a third power to counter-balance its relationship with the Soviet Union and the U.S., may yet prove, as several observers have noted, an effective mechanism for preventing the further polarization of the Persian Gulf/ Indian Ocean area.[251]

Another goal of Iranian foreign policy after 1971 was the reconstitution of the regional balance which Tehran believed was upset hy the dismemberment of Pakistan in the third Indo-Pakistani war.[252] Increased Soviet arms sales to India in the late '60s and early '70s was seen in Tehran as a significant factor in the resumption of hostilities between New Delhi and Islamabad. In 1967 India became the first country outside of the Warsaw Pact to be licensed by Moscow to produce the MIG-21 fighter. Between 1968 and 1971, Moscow also delivered 150 SU-7B fighter-bombers to India.[253] Because New

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[249] Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973, p. 432.

[250] See Geoffrey Godsell, "Hua visit spotlights Irans key role," The Christian Science Monitor, 30 August 1978, p. 1.

[251] See Chubin and Zabih, p. 298; and Alexander MacLeod, "Shah of the Indian Ocean?" Pacific Community, Vol. 7, no. 3 (April 1976), p. 424.

[252] See C. L. Sulzberger, "Belief in 'Crude Reality,'" New York Times, 22 April 1973.

[253] SIPRI, pp. 34-35.

Dehli signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Moscow prior to the outbreak of war, Iran viewed the treaty as another indication that Moscow would attempt to implement its policy objectives in the region indirectly by working through indigenous surrogates. Iran refrained from openly criticizing the Soviet role in the conflict, however, due to Moscow's staging of a military show of force along the Soviet-Iranian border, after hostilities had begun, in an effort to prevent Iran from aiding Pakistan.[254] As it happened, the Soviet maneuver was unnecessary since the U.S. prohibited Iran from transferring arms to Pakistan.[255]

Iranian concern with Soviet intentions in the region was intensified the following year when Moscow signed a formal treaty with Iraq. Realizing that the treaty could hamper Soviet-Iranian relations, Moscow went to great lengths to assure Iran that: (a) the treaty was the result of an Iraqi, and not a Russian, initiative, and (b) the increased military aid which Moscow would provide to Iraq under the terms of the treaty was not intended for use against Iran. The subsequent Soviet-Iranian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation discussed previously was part of the Kremlin effort to assuage Iranian sensitivities. Perhaps in an effort to further convince Iran of its non-hostile intentions, Soviet arms deliveries to Iraq from the signing of the treaty in April

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[254] Chubin and Zabih, p. 84.

[255] Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973, p. 354.

'72 until the October War were limited to a handful of additional MIG-21s, the Styx anti-ship missile system, and 24 SA-3 SAMs.[256]

Events in 1973 further exacerbated Iranian apprehension of a surrogate offensive by Moscow in the area. Soviet-made weapons were discovered in the Iraqi embassy in Islamabad in February. According to Pakistani officials, the arms were destined for the Baluchi Liberation Front, a group seeking to establish an independent Baluchistan from the Baluchi areas of Pakistan and Iran. Five months later the conservative monarchy in Afghanistan was overthrown by a former prime minister, Sardar Daud Khan. Initially, Iran viewed the Daud coup as a de-stabilizing factor since: (1) during his previous tenure as prime minister Daud had played a key role in improving Afghan-Soviet relations; (2) Daud had been a principle advocate of the incorporation of all Pushto speaking areas under an Afghan authority (Pakistan has a large Pushto population); and (3) in the wake of the '71 Indo-Pakistani war, Iran had attempted to improve its relations with Afghanistan, an effort which Tehran feared might be jeopardized by the coup in Kabul.[257] For the time being, however, Iranian apprehension over the situation in Afghanistan proved to be unfounded.

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[256] SIPRI, p. 51.

[257] See Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973, pp. 433-434.

By 1972 Iran had developed a new outlook on regional affairs. Regarding its relationship with the Soviet Union, Iran was determined to avoid actions which might unduly arouse the ire of the Kremlin, while simultaneously "socializing" the Soviets through increased technical cooperation and economic relations. As the Shah is reported to have stated in late 1971, "the Russians have for centuries wanted to find a way to the Persian Gulf, but now they have abandoned subversive methods [because] we have provided them with a way to realize their dreams--through roads, railways, and the oil pipeline; in other words, through business and mutual profits."[258] Iranian strategy vis a vis the Soviets also called for a diplomatic and economic offensive to "neutralize" Soviet influence in the region. In the area of Iranian-American relations, Tehran hoped to balance its growing military and economic dependency on Washington by assuming a more neutral posture in international forums such as the U.N. and OPEC while diversifying, when possible, its weapons purchase from non-U.S. sources. In regard to this latter objective, from 1971-1973 Iran purchased helicopters from Italy and France, transport aircraft from the Netherlands, and SAMs, frigates, and tanks from Britain.[259] Tehran's gulf policy after 1971 continued, as before, to emphasize Iran as the regional successor to the British role as the gendarme of the

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[258] From an article by Eric Rouleau in the Manchester Guardian Weekly, 11 Dec. 1971, as quoted by Chubin and Zabih, p. 263.

[259] SIPRI, pp. 47-50.

area. As such, Iran persisted in its appeal for the depolarization of the gulf, and continued its program of military expansion.

One significant change did occur, however, in Iranian strategy after 1971. The Shah announced in November 1972 that the national interests of Iran extended "far beyond its own immediate region." reaching into the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea beyond the Straits of Hormuz.[260] Accordingly, the Shah promised to further increase the "striking power" of the Iranian military, particularly its naval capability. A subsequent editorial in Kayhan explained that the Shah's decision was necessitated by regional instability and by increased Soviet activity in the area. While acknowledging that the Soviet Union was "neither in a position nor urgently interested in getting involved in a nineteenth century style power struggle in the Indian Ocean," the article surmised that Kremlin strategy was designed to "encircle China while also holding Western trade interests in ransom." The article concluded by predicting that future Iranian strategy in the region would "seek a position from which it will be able to operate much further afield."[261] Iranian arms purchases after 1971 directly supported the extension of Iran's interests into the Arabian Sea, including 10 ASW helicopters,

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[260] Text of Shah's statement in Kayhan, weekly English ed., 11 Nov. 1972, as quoted by Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973, p. 428.

[261] Editorial in Kayhan, weekly English ed., 18 Nov. 1972, as quoted by Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973, p. 428.

15 maritime surveillance aircraft, 60 ship-launched missiles, 4 frigates, 3 destroyers, and 6 missile patrol boats.[262] Realizing that the extension of Iranian naval and air operations into the Arabian Sea would require additional land based support facilities, Iran arranged for naval facilities on Mauritius and developed a plan to construct a joint naval and air base at Chah Bahar on the Gulf of Oman.

While Iran's strategy beyond the Persian Gulf signaled the emergence of a more complex, scopious, and assertive foreign policy, it also rivaled Soviet policy objectives in the region. Within the gulf area itself, Kremlin strategy was fairly simple and straightforward: (1) reduce Western (particularly U.S.) influence in the area[263] by supporting efforts designed to: (a) "demilitarize" the gulf,[264] (b) transfer control of gulf resources from Western to indigenous companies,[265] and (c) develop friendly relations between Moscow and the littoral states; (2) prevent any Chinese penetration of the gulf;[266] and, (3) promote Soviet-gulf trade and technical cooperation.[267]

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[262] SIPRI, pp. 47-49.

[263] See Oles M. Smolansky, "Soviet Policy in the Persian Gulf," in Soviet Naval Policy, ed. by Michael Mec Gwire et al (New York: 1975), p. 279.

[264] See Hensel, pp. 724-726.

[265] Ibid., pp. 726-727.

[266] See Watt, pp. 32-40; see also Bettie and O.M. Smolansky in Rusinstein, pp. 145-150.

[267] Hensel, p. 728.

Outside of the confines of the gulf itself, however, Soviet strategy took on more of a confrontational character. Foremost in this regard was Moscow's determination to prevent the deployment of U.S. strategic forces in the Indian Ocean.[268] The second objective in Soviet strategy was the continuance of amicable relations between Moscow and the progressive regimes in the region. Of particular interest to Moscow, in this regard, was the preservation of the Soviet position in India. The Kremlin resented Iran's successful post-1971 campaign to promote Indo-Iranian regional cooperation through such mechanisms as a common market, joint armament production, and joint patrolling of the Indian Ocean.[269] Moscow viewed the ascendence of a Western-backed Iran embarking on a grandiose plan to become "the Japan of the Near East" as a potential threat to Soviet interests in the region. Soviet anxiety was exacerbated by the scope of the Iranian military

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[268] Smolansky in Mc Gwire, pp. 478-479.

[269] See Mohan Ram, "Indian anxious over impact of turmoil in Iran," The Christian Science Monitor, 28 December 1978, p. 4. More recently, Moscow blamed the downfall of the pro-Soviet Gandhi government on interference from "western" governments. Soviet anxiety was increased further when the Desai government restructured Indian foreign and defense policies in an effort to put more distance between Indian and the Soviet Union. India has subsequently concluded an arms deal with London for Jaguar and Harrier aircraft, rebuffing a Soviet offer for MIG 23s on better terms. Prime Minister Desai's government has also been very critical of the invasion of Cambodia by Moscow's allies in Hanoi.

buildup, especially after the Nixon administration granted the Shah a virtual carte blanche in 1972 to purchase any U.S. non-nuclear weapons system. Even before the Shah's post-73 buying spree, Moscow recognized that Iran's acquisition of such sophisticated weaponry as the F14, Boeing air-refueling tankers, and British "SAAM" class frigates gave Iran a capability to project power beyond the Arabian Sea, much less the Persian Gulf. Tehran's port facilities agreements with Mauritius and South Africa only confirmed Soviet suspicion that Iran was intent on becoming a major military power in the region, and therefore a potential challenge to Soviet interests.[270] Some elements within the Soviet elite also may have seen in the Iranian push into the Indian Ocean an American strategy designed to "beat" Moscow at its own game, i.e. to use the Shah and his military as a surrogate instrument of U.S. foreign policy much the same as the Kremlin had attempted to do with Castro in Latin America (and more recently in Africa), with Nasser in the Middle East, and with Hanoi in East Asia.[271]

While the Soviets felt no immediate threat from Iran's buildup from 68-73, the ability and willingness of the Shah to expend the resources necessary to develop Iran into a

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[270] See Fred Halliday. Iran: Dictatorship and Development. (New York: 1979), p. 262.

[271] Shahram Chubin, "The International Politics of the Persian Gulf," British Journal of International Studies, Vol. 2 (October 1976), p. 221.

significant regional actor over a 50 year period certainly challenged the Kremlin's regional strategy. Moscow's goal of a Finlandized Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean could be countered just as effectively by the rise of a powerful regional actor as by a large Western presence in the area.

E. IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND THE POST-74 SOVIET OFFENSIVE IN THE THIRD WORLD

No apparent evidence exists to indicate that Iran either intended or realized that its regional strategy might be interpreted by the Kremlin as a potential threat to Soviet interests. On the contrary, existing evidence indicated that Iran assumed that its China policy and regional strategy would be viewed by Moscow as logical and necessary steps by Tehran to achieve a more neutral position vis a vis both superpowers.[272] Iran relied primarily on trade and limited technical cooperation to engender a benign attitude from Moscow. As far as its military buildup was concerned, Iran continued to view Soviet security interests in a traditional framework, i.e. that since (a) Russia had been concerned historically with a land based threat from the region, and (b) even a modernized Iran would never pose a significant land threat to the Soviet Union, therefore (c) Moscow would be irritated with, but not threatened by, Iranian arms purchases.

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[272] See Chubin and Zabih, pp. 297-298.

Where Iranian policy ran afoul of Kremlin strategy was in failing to appropriately interpret and assess Soviet regional objectives. Moscow identified the regional threat in terms of the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean, not in terms of a land-based threat. In addition, Soviet strategy called for the "demilitarization" of the PG/IO area, a call which the Shah, with U.S. and Chinese support, was not only ignoring, but in fact actively countering. Furthermore, Iran viewed Soviet interests in the region as a unique aspect of Kremlin foreign policy, probably due at least in part to Moscow's persistent refusal to allow its activities in the Third World to become linked to detente. In reality, however, Soviet strategy in the region was linked to other considerations: not to detente, but rather, as the following discussion will show, to Soviet objectives in Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean sub-region of the Middle East.[273]

The burgeoning oil revenues which resulted from the 400% rise in oil prices in the aftermath of the October War created a powerful economic dimension to Iran's regional strategy. Increased oil revenues, which skyrocketed from $2.4 billion in 1972 to $17.4 billion in 1974, provided Iranian leaders with an economic mechanism never before available. Iran bolstered its stature in Europe by heavily investing in several European industries, increased its purchases of European goods and services, and even negotiated loans to

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[273] See Smolansky in Mc Gwire, pp. 478-479; and Hensel, pp. 717-718.

European governments. Within the PG/IO region, Iran concluded an arrangement with India which provided Iranian oil on credit terms in return for assurances from Mrs. Gandhi that India would assume a less hostile posture toward Pakistan,[274] a deal which concomitantly lessened the importance of Soviet oil shipments to India. Through the use of foreign aid, Iran also enhanced its relationships with Afghanistan, Egypt, and Somalia.

On the diplomatic front, Iranian foreign policy reflected, after 1973, a level of sophistication and realism heretofore unknown in the annals of Iranian diplomacy. Perhaps the most notable achievements in this context were the intervention in Oman from 1973-76 and the successful negotiation in 1975 of an end to Iran's long-standing feud with Iraq. Tehran also continued to explore ways of improving regional cooperation. Although the Arab states remained unenthusiastic about Iranian proposals for a gulf security pact, considerable interest was created in the development of a regional arms industry.[275] Iran also leant its diplomatic weight to U.S. efforts to bring about a settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute, and to multilateral efforts to deal with the Lebanese quagmire.

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[274] Chubin, "Iran's Foreign Policy 1960-1976," p. 354.

[275] See Roger Mitchell, "Country Keen to Develop Arms Industry," Tehran Journal, 28 March 1978, p. 3; see also Shahram Chubin, "Iran's Security in the 1980's," International Security, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Winter 1978), p. 63.

The seven-plus-fold increase in Iranian oil revenues in 1974 resulted in a "the sky is the limit" attitude in Iran towards arms purchases. Subsequent orders included several systems capable of substantially increasing (qualitatively as well as quantitatively) Iran's long range strike capability. Included within this category of weaponry were orders for: four Spruance class destroyers, six Lupo class frigates, six 209 class submarines, twelve fast patrol boats with Harpoon missiles, 177 additional F4E fighter/bombers, seven additional Boeing refueling tankers, thirty-nine additional P-3C maritime reconnaissance aircraft, and an advanced airborne warning system (AWACS).[276] At one point, Iran even considered the future purchase of up to three aircraft carriers for use in the Indian Ocean. Aside from the exponential increase in weaponry itself, Tehran demonstrated a greater willingness after 1973 to put its new and expanded military into actual use. In 1973 the Shah admitted for the first time that Iranian forces were operating in Oman against the Dhofari rebels. Not long afterward, the size of the Iranian force in Oman was substantially increased, to the point where by 1976 the rebellion had been effecitvely crushed. The Kurdish uprising against the Iraqi Ba'thists in 1974 presented Iran with another opportunity for military intervention. Although in this instance regular ground and air forces were not involved, Iranian paramilitary and CIA personnel were supporting the Pesh Merga. In addition, Iranian artillery and air

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[276] Data extracted from SIPRI, The Military Balance, 1978-79, (London: 1979), p. 37.

defense units operating near the Iraqi border provided coverage for Kurdish forces in Iraq.

Soviet machinations in the region during the post-73 period were of sufficient magnitude--had the Iranian leadership been receptive to these attempts by Moscow to telegraph its displeasure with Iranian policy--as to have indicated clearly a need for a less assertive Iranian strategy in the region, given Tehran's desire to refrain from actions which might be interpreted by Moscow as a challenge to its interests. For example, when a second cache of Soviet-made arms was discovered in Pakistan in 1974, again linked to the Baluchi insurgents, Iran viewed the event solely in terms of an Iraqi effort to stir up trouble for Iran in Baluschistan in order to pressure Iran into withdrawing its support to the Kurds.[277] Had Iran been more sensitive to Moscow's interests, it might have deduced that the Soviet weapons, which were easily captured by the Pakistanis, were intended as a warning from the Kremlin that Iran's support for the Kurds placed the Kremlin in a very tenuous and embarassing position, since Moscow had been attempting to mediate between the Ba'ath and the Kurds for some time.[278]

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[277] R. M. Burrell and Alvin J. Cottrell, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan: Tensions and Dilemmas (Beverly Hills, CA:1974), p.8.

[278] See "Goodwill Visit by Soviet Delegation," Pravda , 3 Dec. 1973, as trans. in CDSP, Vol. 25, no. 48, pp. 20-21.

When Iran expanded its support to Oman's Dhofar campaign, Moscow--which had previously refrained from criticizing Iran directly--unleashed a media campaign, using PFLO and Arab reports, against the Iranian intervention.[279] In 1975 the Kremlin staged a major Indian Ocean exercise, including a force of 15 combatants. Although possible in response to Iranian and Western intervention in Oman, the naval maneuver was clearly a manifestation of Moscow's concern over increased U.S. activity in the area and the "blue water" implications of Iran's military expansion program.

If one crucial weakness in Iranian foreign policy was its inability to appropriately interpret Soviet actions, another deficiency was the failure of Iran's policy-makers to properly examine Soviet regional interests vis a vis Soviet policy objectives as a whole, and in particular the linkages between Soviet policy in the Eastern Mediterranean and Africa, the PG/IO, and the Far East. Iran's post-73 foreign policy, for instance, failed to account for the chaotic state of Moscow's policy in all three regions in the wake of the October War. Washington's step-by-step diplomacy relegated Moscow from a role of active participation to one of outside observation, a fait acompli which the Kremlin greatly resented. Furthermore, Washington's post-war hysteria about a Soviet threat to Western oil interests in the Persian Gulf threatened to spark a full-scale superpower buildup in the Indian Ocean, something which the Soviets had long sought to avoid. The

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[279] Hensel, p. 887; see also "The People of Dhofar Fight On," New Times, No. 18119 (May 1974), pp. 25-29.

U.S. expanded the naval and air facilities on Diego Garcia and, following the CENTO naval exercise in November 1974, deployed an aircraft carrier task force from the Philippines to the area on a regular basis. When Egypt unilaterally abrogated its treaty with the Soviet Union in 1976, the Kremlin lost its only naval and air facilities in the Eastern Mediterranean. In East Asia, Moscow's hopes for the Russification of Indochina in the aftermath of the American withdrawal were soon shattered when the pro-Chinese Khemer Rouge gained control of Cambodia in 1975.

In retrospect, it would appear that 1975 was a crucial year in Soviet foreign policy. At some point the Kremlin apparently decided in favor of the old military addage which states that "the best defense is a good offense." The issue-area which Moscow selected for its Third World counter-attack was Angola. Banking on a general American apathy for African issues--further atrophied by Vietnam and Watergate--yet still hesitant to commit Soviet combat forces directly, the Kremlin willingly championed the installation by their Cuban surrogates of a pro-Soviet regime in Luanda. Closer to home, Soviet-Turkish relations were boosted as a result of the U.S. aid cut-off to Turkey, which went into effect in February 1975. In the Persian Gulf, Moscow reacted to the increased U.S. and Iranian activity in the Indian Ocean by attaching a protocol to its treaty with Iraq giving the Soviets "unlimited" access to the Iraqi naval base at Umm

Qasr.[280] Soviet naval capabilities in the Arabian Sea also were greatly enhanced by the construction in Berbera, Somalia of "the most elaborate sea and air facilities outside the Warsaw Pact."[281] Although subsequent Iranian and Saudi petro-dollar diplomacy played a significant role in weaning Somalia away from the Soviets, Moscow's successful venture in Ethiopia following their ouster from Somalia in November 1977 resulted in a tit for tat exchange.[282] In fact, Moscow's position in Ethiopia today is stronger and more extensive than its former arrangement in Somalia.[283] In April of last year (1978), the Tariki coup in Afghanistan was a giant step forward toward the achievement by the Soviets of a Finlandized southern flank.[284] So crucial is Afghanistan in the Kremlin's southern strategy that Moscow has responded with uncharacteristic vehemence to reports that Iran, China, and

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[280] Lawrence Whetten, "The Military-Strategic Balance," in The Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean in International Politics, ed. by Abbas Amirie (Tehran: 1975), p. 97.

[281] Ibid.

[282] See "Iranian Interests in the Horn of Africa," Iran Political Digest, 29 January 1978, pp. 2-9, in JPRS Near East and North Africa, no. 1769, 14 March 1978, pp. 49-54.

[283] See David K. Willis, "Soviets firm up toehold in Horn," Christian Science Monitor, 21 November 1978, p. 3.

[284] See Kevin Rafferty, "Afghanistan: the Soviet Union's highway to the Indian Ocean," The Manchester Guardian, 119:2 (9 July 1978), p. 8.

Pakistan are supporting an Islamic guerrilla campaign in the rural areas of the country.[285] At this time it also appears that the Chinese threat to Moscow's position in East Asia has been effectively eliminated by the Kremlin's Vietnamese allies. By 1979, therefore, the Kremlin had made considerable progress toward redressing the foreign policy setbacks of the early 70's.

Regarding Soviet concern over the potential for a future clash of Russian and Iranian interests in the region, Moscow refrained from directly challenging Iran's PG/IO strategy. Soviet restraint was due probably to the Kremlin's perception that such action would engender an overwhelming American response, particularly in light of Washington's often demonstrated paranoia concerning possible threats to its petroleum interests in the region.[286] Moscow could not, however, remain apathetic about Iran's interference in Soviet activities in southern Arabia, the Horn, and Afghanistan. Although no evidence has as yet surfaced implicating Moscow directly in the recent Iranian revolution, the two Arab entities who have been the focus of Moscow's keenest attention in the Arab World over the past five years--the Palestinians and the Libyans--were both involved up to their kefiyyas in aiding the various anti-regime forces in Iran. Palestinian support to Iranian dissidents, particularly training, dates

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[285] "Soviets lash at Afghanistan's Muslim foes," The Christian Science Monitor, 20 March 79, p. 3; and David K. Willis, "Soviets fret over Muslim neighbors," The Christian Science Monitor, 11 April 79, p. 5.

[286] See Joseph C. Harsch, "Soviet military machine: huge but hamstrung," The Christian Science Monitor, 5 January 79, p. 22.

from the early seventies. In January of this year Ahmed Jibril, the leader of the PFLP-GC, confirmed that his organization had been aiding Iranian activitists since 1970.[287] Although Jibril did not elaborate, most of his organization's support probably went to the Fedayeen-e Khalq. Like the Jibril faction, the Iranian Fedayeen are Marxists, and their involvement in the Iranian revolution bespoke of a higher degree of training and organizational cohesiveness than other revolutionary groups. Although the Palestinians provided the manpower and the expertise for training the Iranians, Jibril's operations were financed by the two Arab countries with the closest ties (at this time) with Moscow, i.e. Iraq and Libya.[288] In addition to the longstanding ties between the Palestinian and Iranian radicals, support from the more moderate Palestinians of Al-Fatah to the Islamic forces of Ayatollah Khomeni, the Mujahideen-e Islam, apparently began sometime in 1977 following a meeting in Lebanon between the Ayatollah and Yasir Arafat.[289]

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[287] See Ned Temko, "Arms aid for Iran's opposition admitted by Palestinian leader," The Christian Science Monitor, 24 Jan 79, p. 6.

[288] For a breakdown of financial support to the various Palestinian groups see William B. Quandt et al, The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism (Los Angeles: 1973), p. 66.

[289] See "A real base for the PLO?," The Middle East (March 1979), p. 30.

Nothing in the discussion above was meant to convey an impression that Moscow somehow "engineered" the Iranian revolution. On the contrary, all available evidence indicates that (a) the revolution was essentially a popular rejection of the authoritarianism, repression, and corruption of the Pahlavi regime, and (b) that the Soviets have been as concerned as the U.S. about the foreign policy implications of the revolution. What this section attempted to do, however, was demonstrate that: (1) Moscow had reason to view with favor any element in Iranian politics which, like the Soviets, objected to Iran's self-assumed role as the regional gendarme, (2) it is inconceivable that the Kremlin was not aware of radical Arab support to Iranian opposition forces, and (3) tacit Soviet support to the Iranian revolutionaries may have taken on a more positive character as the Shah began to take direct steps to counter Soviet policy in Oman, India, Somalia, and Afghanistan. Furthermore, Moscow's initial low-profile approach to the Iranian revolution should not be construed as an adoption by the Kremlin of a laissez faire attitude toward the present situation in Iran. A new communist movement in Iran, the National Communist Party, is filling an ideological void among younger Iranians necessitated by the widespread rejection of the old party, the Tudeh, for its past subservience to Moscow.[290] It is as yet too early

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[290] See Geoffrey Godsell, "In Iran, malaise challenges authoritarian rule," The Christian Science Monitor, 25 April 79, p. 10.

to determine whether the NCP is truly a "national" party on a Eurocommunist model or an actual Soviet-linked front organization. The rise of such a group is, as Professor Ramazani recently noted, however, indicative of increased Soviet activity among the leftist factions of the Iranian revolution.[291]

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[291] Rouhollah Ramazani, "Security in the Persian Gulf," Foreign Affairs, 57:4 (Spring 1979),p. 824.

VII. CONCLUSION

Iran's foreign policy of the past decade and a half has been systemically and substantively different from its traditional predecessors. As the first chapter of this study notes, traditional Iranian foreign policy was conducted in a framework which balanced the monarch and the traditional elites--the aristocracy, tribal leaders, bureaucrats, and the religious hierarchy--in mutually supporting roles. These traditional policy makers viewed external issues and events through a complex image pattern which incorporated both geopolitical and socio-cultural frames of reference. The end result was an Iranian perception of an outside world which was essentially hostile and an Iranian foreign policy which was primarily defensive in nature. Under the last two rulers, however, the monarchy acquired an unprecedented degree of power within Iranian society. By developing a large standing army equipped with increasingly sophisticated equipment, the Pahlavi Shahs were able to break the traditional dependency of the monarchy on support from the tribes and the aristocracy. The so-called White Revolution of Mohammed Reza Shah was an attempt to eliminate the landlords and the ulema from their traditional positions of influence in policy-making. Failure to develop secular institutional replacements for these social institutions, particularly the socio-economic functions of the Shia Islamic institutions, alienated both the ulema and

the masses as well. At the same time that the monarchy was attempting to restructure the foundation of Iranian society, it was continuing in its effort to consolidate its control over the coercive mechanisms of the state. This consolidation of power under the monarchy enabled the Shah to exercise absolute control over the distribution of the country's growing oil wealth. As a result the Shah and his advisors became increasingly isolated from the intense hostility developing within Iranian society.

In addition to systemic changes in the traditional Iranian policy-making apparatus, Iran's foreign policy was also affected by changes in the international environment. Iran's historically based third-power policy--which had attempted to temper the adverse effects of the Anglo-Russian great power rivalry in Iran by developing ties with a third power, such as France, Germany, or the U.S.--was ill-suited to the bi-polar nature of post-WWII international relations. Iran, therefore, opted for formal membership in a Western alliance as the best means of preventing a Soviet take-over, a threat which had manifested itself twice in this century. By the early 60s the international system was again subjected to centrifugal forces as the bi-polar character of the Cold War was diluted by the Sino-Soviet rift and the rise of the Third World as a major force in international relations. For its part, Iran became increasingly dis-satisfied with the limited nature of the Western commitment to Iranian security, particularly regarding

internal and non-Soviet threats. Therefore in 1963 Iran attempted to develop a more neutral foreign policy which would, it was hoped, reduce both its dependence on the U.S. and, concomitantly, the Soviet threat. At the same time, Iran increased its defense expenditures in an effort to improve the regime's ability to defend itself against domestic and regional threats. Although Iran's independent national policy hardly went far toward moving Iran into a nonaligned status, it did represent a significant departure from previous Iranian foreign policy. In addition, in terms of its philosophical objectives, it exemplified a degree of sophistication and realism seldom observed in developing nations. Once again, however, the independent national policy was overtaken by events in the late 60s and early 70s which forced Iran into a closer re-alignment with the West and into playing a more active role in regional affairs.

As a result of the British withdrawal from the region and the third Indo-Pakistani war, Iranian foreign policy became even more assertive, particularly in the Persian Gulf. At first, Iran concentrated on developing a military force capable of filling the shoes of the British after their departure in 1971. Iranian foreign policy in the gulf prior to 1975, therefore, reflected a tendency to rely on military rather than diplomatic measures for handling problems in the area. Iran did develop rather quickly, however, the capability to defend its interests in the gulf, and to police the gulf air and sea routes as well. After 1971, Iran began

to look increasingly to areas beyond the gulf--such as the Indian subcontinent, the Arabian Sea, and the Horn of Africa--as being within an expanded Iranian sphere of interest. Iran's policy clashed with Moscow's strategy in six areas: (1) Iranian support to the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq, (2) the Shah's intervention in Oman, (3) Iranian economic intervention in the Horn of Africa, (4) the Shah's support for anti-regime activities in Afghanistan, (5) Tehran's overtures to Peking, and (6) the long range implications of the Iranian military build-up.

Although Moscow was concerned about Soviet-Iranian competition in the region, there were several considerations which recommended a cautious approach in Iran:

(1) the likelihood of any opposition movement succeeding appeared higly improbable;

(2) the Kremlin's historical protege in Iran, the Tudeh Party, had been rendered virtually ineffectual, both by its own well-known subservience to Moscow and by the dilligent efforts of the Shah's security apparatus;

(3) The embryonic opposition movement in Iran was heavily embued with an Islamic-reformist character which, if it were successful, could "spill over" into other areas, including the Muslim republics of the Soviet Union;

(4) domestic upheaval in Iran could interrupt Soviet gas and petroleum imports;

(5) at the first sign of Soviet involvement in any move to unseat the Shah, the U.S. would most certainly become involved;

(6) even if the opposition succeeded in either reducing the powers of, or replacing, the Shah, Moscow had no guarantees that a successor government would adopt a foreign policy any more advantageous to the Soviets than that of the Shah's regime.

On the other hand, other elements within the Kremlin hierarchy, such as those represented on the Middle East Committee discussed in chapter III, probably encouraged the PLO connection with the Iranian dissidents, arguing that:

(1) given the situation in (2) above, Soviet support for anti-Shah forces was essential if Moscow hoped to have in the future a viable political base in Iran;

(2) socio-economic conditions in Iran were ripe for revolution; opposition to the regime was more widespread than at any time since 1953;

(3) the Islamic overtones of the opposition movement were more emotional than political, due to the nature of the Iranian brand of Islam; the potential for "spill over" into non-Persian and non-Shia areas would be minimal;

(4) interruptions in Soviet trade with Iran would not be prolonged, given the need for any Iranian government to maintain its revenue earning base;

(5) the U.S. would not intervene militarily unless the Soviets were directly involved, hence the need for the PLO link; should a popular revolution be successful, the U.S.

and the West would be forced to deal with the new government in order to insure continued access to Iranian oil;

(6) although a post-Shah regime might not be openly pro-Soviet, the revolution would destroy the U.S. position in Iran, which would in turn upset the balance of power in the entire region, a situation which Moscow would be more capable of exploiting than Washington;

(7) the initial post-revolutionary government in Iran will be a weak transition government which will eventually be replaced by a more progressive regime; this regime will in turn adopt a foreign policy in line with Soviet objectives in the region.

The situation in Iran in late 1978/early 1979 was so fluid, with events moving so rapidly, that the cumbersome decision-making apparatus in the Kremlin never had time to decide on a particular policy before the revolution erupted in full force. Moscow watched with considerable interest, however when--as the Shah's increasingly autocratic and repressive policies alienated more and more Iranians--the ranks of the dissident movement swelled to the point where non-communist activities constituted the majority of the rank and file and gained control of the leadership of the movement as well. The movement coalesced around the figure of the Ayatollah Khomeni, the 78-year old leader of the Shia community and a long-time opponent of the Shah. The Soviets at first maintained a

cautious approach, but as the strength of the revolutionaries became more apparent, Moscow stepped up its anti-regime propaganda and intensified its efforts to establish ties with the various opposition elements. For the Soviets, as for most of the rest of the world, the collapse of the Pahlavi regime came sooner than most thought possible. Given the anti-communist doctrine of the new Islamic government, however, the Kremlin has continued its go-slow approach. A great deal of uncertainty remains in the minds of the Soviet leadership concerning the viability of the Islamic Republic of the Ayatollah Khomeni and the foreign policy implications of his post-Pahlavi regime.

If the Islamic Republic as envisioned by Ayatollah proves to be a viable concept, the Soviets can expect several favorable developments in Iranian foreign policy. Iran announced its withdrawal from CENTO in March. Future Western involvement in Iranian military and economic affairs will be drastically reduced. Oil revenues will be channeled into economically productive areas such as agriculture, health and welfare, light industry, and transportation, thereby curtailing defense expenditures. By refusing to play a dominant role in the Persian Gulf, Iran will attempt to encourage the formation of a joint security arrangement by all the littoral states. Within the context of the Arab-Israeli dispute, Iran will support the establishment of a Palestinian state and will reject the Camp David concept of negotiating peace. On most international issues (North-South and East-West) Iran

will attempt to solidly establish its credentials within the nonaligned bloc. A source of contention between Iran and the Soviet Union will continue to be Iran's willingness to use its financial resources to oppose, and when necessary combat, communist encroachment in any form within the region. Where vital Soviet interests are at stake, as in the case of Afghanistan, Moscow may feel compelled to retaliate by supporting more actively the various secular forces which have recently emerged in opposition to many of the policies of the present government in Tehran.

Moscow should think twice about supporting a movement to replace the Khomeni government with a more secular regime. While the present government may be perplexing and at times annoying to the Soviet, it is at present only a thorn in Moscow's side not a dagger in its heart. While the Soviets are concerned about "fallout" from the Iranian revolution, their apprehension is primarily related to the potential for similarly based revolutions in those regional countries ruled by "progressive" regimes, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and PDRY. Moscow appears much less concerned with the impact of the Iranian revolution on its own Muslim population.[292] While suppressing the Islamic religion, the Soviet authorities have actually encouraged Islamic cultural expression within the Muslim republics, as in the arts, literature, and

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[292] See David K. Willis, "Soviets see no Muslim threat," Christian Science Monitor, 31 May 1979, p. 4.

music.[293] Furthermore, the Soviets have consistently selected talented individuals from the Muslim republics for service in key Soviet diplomatic, trade, and intelligence activities in the Middle East.

In the final analysis, the rise of a secular nationalist regime might prove an even greater enigma to Moscow. Such a regime could take one of three forms: (1) a return to one man rule, (2) a parliamentary government controlled by a social democratic party, similar to that of the present National Front, or (3) a government controlled by a truly national communist party, like the Euro-communist parties of Italy and Spain.

Should the political situation in Iran deteriorate to the point of total chaos or civil war, such as by the threatened break-up of the Iranian nation into independent ethnic and tribally-based units, Moscow might well find itself faced with the emergence of a secular authoritarian ruler who brings stability to the Iranian domestic scene, but who adopts a foreign policy similar to that of the Shah. Such a leader would undoubtedly be supported by the West and would in turn re-establish close political and military ties with the West. The Iranian military would be re-conditioned to assume its former role as the gendarme of the region. In addition, Western advisors and arms would return to Iran in significant

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[293] For an interesting, although slanted, comparison of the treatment of Muslims in China and the Soviet Union see Victor Louis, The Coming Decline of the Chinese Empire (New York: 1979), pp. 88-96 and 1978-183.

numbers. Under such leadership, Iran would resume its use of petro-dollar diplomacy to combat radical change in the area with renewed vigor.

If a social democratic government comes to power at some future date, the Soviets might well find its foreign policy almost as distasteful as that of the current regime. Such a government, for example, would be more nationalistic (in a Persian rather than Islamic sense of the meaning) and therefore more likely to support a leadership role for Iran in the Persian Gulf. Accordingly, defense expenditures, while reduced from their exhorbitant pre-revolutionary levels, would continue to support the largest military force in the gulf. Arms purchases would proceed on a more limited scale from a wider variety of Communist-block and Western sources. Purchases of Soviet-made weaponry would probably expand, particularly for ships, missiles, and transport aircraft. A tokenpurchase of Chinese weapons probably would be made as well. In addition, Eastern European, Chinese and Soviet advisors would fill many formerly American advisory positions. Meanwhile, a large (perhaps 10,000) contingent of Western technicians and advisors would return to Iran. A major project of a social democratic government in the defense sector would be the development of an indigenous armaments industry.

Much to Moscow's chagrin, a social democratic regime in Tehran would adopt an assertive foreign policy. Although such a government would not oppose any change per se in the political

character of regional states, as did the Iranian monarchy, it would continue to oppose any externally imposed or supported change, as in Afghanistan, which could; (a) affect the stability of the region as a whole, or (b) adversely affect Iran's nonaligned position in international affairs. Iranian opposition to the present regime in Kabul would not be on ideological grounds, but rather Iran would use its considerable economic clout to pressure the Tariki government into: (1) reducing significantly the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, (2) returning to a more neutral posture in foreign affairs, and (3) building a broader domestic base of support for the regime.

In addition, a social democratic government would work to eliminate any non-littoral presense in the PG/IO region. Although the probability of such an effort succeeding would be limited, this stand would improve Iran's credentials among the non-aligned states, and would draw Iran, India , and China closer together. Iran would be more successful at promoting Indo-Iranian cooperation in the areas of defense, industrialization, trade, and nuclear research. In addition, a social democratic government would use its economic resources to reduce further India's dependency on the Soviet Union.

In spite of what may seem to be highly improbable at this time, the eventual emergence of a communist controlled government cannot be discounted. Such an eventuality is usually ruled out by analysts observing events in Islamic countries, due to the generally accepted incompatability of

communism and Islam, which are viewed as antipethetical ideologies. This observation, which as assumed an almost theoretical dimension, is based on the juxtaposition of the terets of Islam with the precepts of Marxism-Leninism. Coexistence between the two philosophies is impossible because both (in theory) demand the total allegiance of the individual and (again in theory) establish total control over all the institutions of society. National communism, as practicsed by the Eurocommunists, operates from a non-Leninist (and in the case of Italy a non-Marxistist) theoretical base, is (in some instances) compatible with religious doctrines, and is (in theory) tolerant of the simultaneous existence and participation of other non-communist political organizations. In Iran the writings of the late Dr. Ali Shariati may provide the theoretical basis for the development of a national communist movement in Iran. Although little is known in the West about either the man or his writings, it has been reported that his work received wide circulation during the revolution. In one underground tract entitled "The Science of Islam" Shariati alledgedly was able to blend the theories of several European socialist and communist writers together with the doctrine of Shia Islam into a powerful Iranian revolutionary manifesto. Shariati's writings have reportedly created a sizable Shariati following among Iranian young people and even among key members of the current regime. The most conclusive evidence that Shariati's theories may serve as the ideological basis of a new communist movement in Iran

is the recent emergence of the National Communist Party of Iran. Should this, or a similar, party eventually come to power, the impact on Iranian-Soviet relations would be significant. While a national communist government in Tehran would be a thorn in the side of the West, it would be a dagger in the "soft underbelly" of the Soviet Union. For the Soviets, national communism--whether of the Titoist, Maoist, Eurocommunist, or Shariati-ist variety--is ideologically anathema. It is, for Moscow, nothing less than a heresy. It rejects the dialitical materialism of Marx, the democratic centralism of Lenin, the totalitarianism of Stalin, and the neo-imperialism of the current regime. While the foreign policy of a national communist government would not differ significantly from that of a social democratic government, it would, like the Eurocommunists, be more openly critical of Soviet policy, and therefore the source of considerable frustration for Moscow. The Soviets would be wise, therefore, to proceed with caution in Iran so that they do not find themselves at some future date in a position similar to that of the U.S. vis a vis the Mossadiq regime in 1953. According to an Iranian rumor popular at the time, the CIA spend $5 million to get Mossadiq into office and $50 million to get rid of him.

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