

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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Out of the Mouth of the Leader:

The Political Ideology of Ayatollah 'Ali Hosseini Khamenei,

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Islamic Studies

by

Yvette Hovsepian Bearce

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Out of the Mouth of the Leader:
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Yvette Hovsepian Bearce

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Professor Leonard Binder, Chair

The political ideologies of Ayatollah 'Ali Hosseini Khamenei, Supreme Leader of Iran, are identified and analyzed based on 500 speeches (1989-2013), 100 interviews (1981-1989), his biography and other works published in Iran. Islamic supremacy, resistance to foreign powers, and progress are the core elements of his ideology. Several critical themes emerge that are consistently reflected in the formation of his domestic and foreign policies: America, Palestine, Israel, Muslim unity, freedom, progress, the nuclear program, youth, and religious democracy.

Khamenei's sociopolitical development is examined in three critical phases: In Phase I, prior to the revolution, he is seen as a political activist protesting for an Islamic government; factors shaping his early political ideology are evaluated. Phase II examines Khamenei's post-

revolutionary appointments and election to president; he governs the country through the eight-year Iraq-Iran war. After the death of the father of the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini, Khamenei enters into Phase III when he assumes the office of supreme leadership; internal and external issues test and reveal his political ideologies.

Research indicates that Khamenei continues to proclaim Khomeini's ideals from the 1979 Islamic Revolution which include supremacy of Islam, the isolation policy of "Neither East, Nor West," and enmity with the U.S. and Israel. His chief foreign policies are to free Palestine, spread the ideals of Iran's Islamic Revolution, and create a global Islamic power. His main domestic focus is progress which entails advances in knowledge, science and technology, and military and nuclear power. Despite severe economic sanctions and confrontations with the West, Khamenei claims that Iran is not producing a bomb.

While he clings to an ideology that began over 50 years ago—ideals rooted in a government where religious rule is interpreted within a political setting—Khamenei is faced with discontent Iranian youth who feel isolated from the global community. With few emotional ties to the revolution, they prefer a government separate from religion. For Khamenei, however, there is no compartmentalization. He maintains his predecessor's isolation policy of resisting colonization, oppression, domination, and opposition (CODO). Out of the mouth of the leader presents Khamenei's ideology in his own words.

The Dissertation of Yvette Hovsepian Bearce is approved.

Steven L. Spiegel

Michael G. Morony

Richard Hrair Dekmejian

Leonard Binder, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

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To ODETTE

for openness, diplomacy, engagement, transparency, trust, and education

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NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION OF PERSIAN FARSI WORDS

Transliteration Table

FARSI LETTER	ENGLISH SYMBOL	FARSI LETTER	ENGLISH SYMBOL
ء	'	ص	ṣ
ب	b	ض	ẓ
پ	p	ط	ṭ
ت	t	ظ	ẓ
ث	ṯ	ع	'
ج	j	غ	gh
چ	ch	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ک	k or g
د	d	گ	g
ذ	ẓ	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
ژ	zh	ه	h
س	s	و	v or u
ش	sh	ي	y

Long	ا	ā	Doubled	يَّ	iyy (final form ī)
	و	ū		وَّ	uww (final form ū)
	ي	ī			

Diphthongs	وَ	au or aw	Short	اَ	a
	یَ	ai or ay		اُ	u
				اِ	i

This work follows the transliteration rules for Persian Farsi words based on the IJMES transliteration system. Diacritics are not added to personal names, place names, names of political parties and organizations, or titles of books. There is some diversion from IJMES rules based on Committee recommendations, which include the italicizing of nearly all Persian Farsi words, including names of political parties and organizations so that they are clearly distinguished from English names.

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VITA

EDUCATION

B.A. California State University, Northridge, 1993

Masters of Arts in Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2007

EXPERIENCE

2001 – Present Persian Farsi, Dari and Armenian interpreter and translator for the Judicial Council, State of California; Judicial Council, State of Oregon

2004 – Present Linguist trainer, interpreter and translator exam writer and rater

2007 – 2012 Teacher's Assistant in Islamic Studies—Introduction to Islam, Fuller theological Seminary (FTS) (Fall 2007); Muslim-Christian Encounter, FTS, (Fall 2007); Current Trends in Islam, FTS (Spring, 2008); Introduction to Islam, FTS (Fall, 2008); Biblical Hermeneutics in a Muslim Context, FTS, (Fall, 2008); Introduction to Islam, University of California, Los Angeles, (Spring, 2012).

CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLISHED TRANSLATIONS

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Translated the biography of Mohsen Kadivar, October 2010, <www.en.kadivar.com>.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah 'Ali Hosseini Khamenei, is perhaps one of today's most controversial leaders. Scholars, policymakers and world leaders are perplexed that a low-ranking seminary-trained cleric has been able to grasp and maintain power for the past 24 years. No one in Iran or in the international community nor, indeed, Khamenei himself believed that he would be able to manage the Islamic Republic after the death of his charismatic teacher, Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini, the father of the revolution. Unsure that he, indeed, could do the job, Khamenei initially declined the position. But in the end, he not only surprised himself but also those at home and abroad, including then-seminary friend, Hashemi-Rafsanjani, who helped him claim the "throne." Today, Ayatollah Khamenei declares himself as "the leader of the Muslim world" and America as "the enemy of Iran and Islam."¹

Khamenei has skillfully sustained Iran in the face of several factors including domestic and international opposition, crisis over Iran's nuclear program and severe economic sanctions that nearly collapsed the country's economy. His goal is extending this power not only to the Islamic world but also to any non-Muslim nation that is willing to support the Iranian Republic and also willing to accept the three central ideals of the Islamic Revolution: freedom, independence and justice.

Need for the Study

Iran's domestic and foreign policies remain a source of conflict for America. Out of the mouth of the leader, there is no compelling reason to believe that his political and religious ideology in relationship to Iran, the Muslim world, and the West will be modified.

Neither internal instabilities and uprisings nor external existential threats by those he considers his two chief enemies—Israel and the United States—have caused him to waiver. Instead, he has tightened the grips of power and placed greater emphasis on recruiting the Iranian youth in support of his ideologies, youth who have little allegiance to an Islamic Revolution they never experienced. Through his so-called “Second Cultural Revolution,” Khamenei attempts to place the chief ideals of the Islamic Revolution into their hearts and minds. The core of these ideals includes ideologies he inherited from his mentor, Ayatollah Khomeini, which are resistance and hatred towards the West in general, and the United States of America in particular, and his added ideal of progress which is manifested through his nuclear policies.

In 2012, Forbes Magazine listed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei among the *World’s Most Powerful People* ranking him as the 21st most powerful person in the world. President Barak Obama was ranked number one.² Ten senior Forbes editors selected 71 heads of states—financiers, philanthropists and entrepreneurs—from the 7.1 billion members of the global community and evaluated the power of these candidates in four dimensions: 1) whether the candidate exerted power over a large number of people, 2) the financial resources controlled by the candidate, and in the case of heads of state, their country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 2) the influence and power of the candidate in multiple spheres, and, 4) whether or not the candidate actively used his or her power.³

Two other Muslim heads of states were listed: King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz al Saud of Saudi Arabia, who ranked No. 7, and President Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan of United Arab Emirates, who ranked No. 33. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel ranked No. 23, and North Korea’s Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un ranked 44.⁴ Five years earlier, in 2007, Times also listed Ayatollah Khamenei as the 40th most influential person in the world in its top 100 ranking.⁵

According to Forbes, Khamenei is “the America-hating, nuke-hungry country’s top decision maker.”⁶ However, Khamenei does not perceive himself as such. He credits the Islamic faith and the supremacy of Islam for his personal and political success as well as Iran’s clerical power, the “Neither East, Nor West” isolation policy, nuclear achievements, and loyalty to the ideals of Khomeini’s Islamic Revolution. His image as Palestine’s “foster” or “adoptive” leader provides a platform for him to exert power and influence in the Muslim countries beyond Iran’s borders.

Scope of the Study

This study identifies and analyzes Khamenei’s key political ideologies based on his public statements, domestic and international press interviews, biographies, autobiographies and other literature published in Iran as well as his speech before the 42nd General Assembly at the United Nations in 1987. Several critical themes emerge: America, Palestine, Israel, Muslim unity, freedom and independence, progress, the nuclear program and the Iranian youth. This study also examines Khamenei’s interpretation of democracy, specifically “Islamic Religious democracy,” and its relevance to the political dynamics of the Iranian state. It also examines the export of Iran’s Islamic revolutionary culture and its relevance to the Muslim world as well as to the global community. Khomeini’s key revolutionary ideals of supremacy of Islam, progress, freedom and independence, and the chief foreign policy of “Neither East, Nor West,” create a link for Khamenei between his political ideologies and their relevance to the Iranian state, the Muslim world, and the Western “enemies” of Iran and their allies, especially the United States and Israel.

Background of the Study

The ideals of freedom and independence (*āzadī va esteqlal*) were at the center of Khomeini's Islamic Revolution. As demonstrators rushed to the streets of Tehran and major Iranian cities, they cried out for *āzadī va esteqlal*. While in exile, Khomeini had assured the nation that his proposed Islamic regime would be a democratic state and *vilāyat* (governance) would be with the people. He further claimed that his role in the government would be merely as a spiritual leader and that he would not be involved in politics. Instead, he would provide guidance to the leaders and the nation.⁷

Filled with revolutionary zeal and enthusiasm, Iranians took Khomeini's promises to heart. Thousands rushed the *Maydan-i Azadi* (Freedom Square) in Tehran shouting slogans against the so-called tyrannical Pahlavi regime because in their view, the Shah had enslaved Iranians through his pro-American policies (*siyāsathā-ye Amrīkadustī*). With thunderous voices and clenched fists elevated to the skies, these youth beat their chests and shouted *marg bar Shah, marg bar Amrīka* (death to the Shah, death to America).⁸ They demanded *āzadī, esteqlal, jomhūri-ye Islami* (freedom, independence, and an Islamic Republic).

For Iranians, *āzadī* meant freedom from the dictatorial and oppressive regime of the Shah who silenced their voices in the government's decision-making process. *Esteqlal* meant independence from domination and interference of foreign powers in their domestic affairs. They wanted Americans and all foreign elements exiled from their country so that they could reclaim their land for themselves and their future generations. They were exasperated by the repression of the Shah's *Amerīkayī* ("American-made king") secret surveillance agency, SAVAK, which controlled their private lives through harsh and strict policies. In their cry for *jomhūri-ye Islami* as a Shi'i Muslim nation, they sought to return to Islam and Islamic rule through a religious

government that upheld religious principles. Above all, they yearned for the democracy promised by their revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Khomeini.

While both Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and the Iranian nation were seeking common ideals of *āzadī va esteqlal* from foreign powers, their interpretations of those ideals, to some extent, seemed contradictory. For Khomeini, *āzadī* meant a sovereign Iranian nation absent from colonization, oppression, domination and opposition (CODO) and the “despotic rule” of Reza Shah Pahlavi. The very essence of *āzadī* guaranteed *esteqlal*. While most Iranians sought this form of *āzadī*, coupled with Khomeini’s promise of a democratic system, they seemed to have perceived a civil society with “unrestrictive” democratic rule.

Khomeini viewed his proposed democracy within the framework of an Islamic government differently. Its terms and conditions were established based on Qur’anic principles, the Sunnah of the Prophet and religious precepts, but only as interpreted by Khomeini and his lieutenants. Yes, Iranians were able to participate democratically by voting for their Islamic leaders in so-called “free Iranian elections,” but conflict over contradictory interpretations of the foundational principles of the Islamic Revolution resulted in internal struggles within the Islamic government. These conflicts were evident from the outset of the establishment of the Islamic Republic. Even the top lieutenants of the Islamic regime debated during the crafting of the Iranian Constitution. Disagreements centered on defining *vilāyat-i faqīh* (the Governance of the Jurisconsult) and defining freedom and democracy.

In his youth, Khamenei was among Khomeini’s militant revolutionaries who struggled for the establishment of an Islamic government. He endured hardships, poverty, hunger, detentions and torture for a cause he believed in as a young man. Though he was under continuous surveillance by the SAVAK, he freely expressed his views both privately and

publically. Privately, he attended anti-Shah meetings or held meetings at his home. Publically, he used the pulpit at the local mosques, both Shi‘i and Sunni, as his revolutionary platform and spoke in classrooms at local universities. He recruited revolutionary youth to join Khomeini’s cause and helped his teacher to form his militant youth organization. Through their unceasing efforts, the Islamic Revolution succeeded by overthrowing the monarchy for which Khamenei and his comrades earned the honorary title, “Founding Fathers of the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

Today, it is with this sense of ownership and revolutionary zeal that Khamenei governs the Islamic Republic of Iran. As reflected in his speeches, he credits the revolution’s success to these revolutionary leaders “who have sacrificed everything for the victory of the Islamic revolution.”⁹ Therefore, it is their divinely-assigned duty to safeguard the revolution and remove any *nakhodīs* (outsiders; opposition) who are an existential threat to the Islamic Republic.

For Ayatollah Khamenei, the Islamic Republic and Islamic Revolution are one. The two are intertwined with Islam at their core and they continue to manifest themselves through the domestic and foreign policies of the Islamic Republic. Thus, for Khamenei, the Islamic Republic continues on a revolutionary path, and its ideals, slogans and agendas in 2013 are the same as they were during the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The only difference is the intensification of these ideals over the course of the past 34 years. While the majority of the Iranian society has changed and moved beyond the Revolution, Khamenei remains fixed on ideologies he began developing nearly half a century ago.

Methodology

Nearly 500 speeches of the past 24 years from (1989 - 2013) have been translated from Persian Farsi and analyzed to identify and examine various themes of Ayatollah Khamenei’s political ideology. Four periods of his life are explored. In addition to analysis of his biographies

and autobiographies published in Iran, nearly 100 of his domestic and international press interviews conducted during his presidency (1981-1989) have also been examined.

A chronological and thematic survey of Khamenei's early life (1939-1979) reviews his religious upbringing, training, education and youthful political activism during Khomeini's revolutionary movement. The political activities of the leader are examined after the victory of the Islamic Revolution (1979-1981) followed by an analysis of his presidency (1981-1988) and development of his political ideology during his supreme leadership (1989-2013).

Questions Asked In the Analysis of Speeches

The following questions have been considered in the analysis of Khamenei's speeches during his supreme leadership (June 1989 - June 2013):

- What is the title of the speech and who is the audience: domestic, regional or international?
- Domestically, does the speech address the nation, leaders, students, military, intelligence, scientists, athletes, or a specific group?
- Internationally, is the audience foreign dignitaries, leaders of the Muslim world, or allies, and are they visiting Iran, or is Khamenei sending them a message or addressing Iran's enemies?
- What is the major theme(s)?
- Is the theme conjoined with other theme(s)?
- How is the theme related to domestic, regional or international events? Is he responding to a domestic, regional or international issue, crisis, or threat, or is he advocating a domestic or foreign policy?

- How often does he mention each theme? Does he mention it at a particular time or during a specific domestic, regional or international event, or is it randomly discussed?
- Does he talk about specific theme(s) when dealing with specific issue(s)?
- Which theme is related to which domestic, regional or international issue?
- Is the language theological or situational, domestic or international?
- Does the language change or does it remain the same?
- Is the logic and justification that he provides historical, religious, or policy?
- Does he talk about a specific theme in terms of Iran's ambitions or in terms of defending the country in a hostile world?
- Whom does he consider to be allies and enemies of the Islamic Republic? How does he define his enemies? What policies does he propose to Iran's allies?

Prior to the analysis of the speeches, a survey of the leader's early life, family life, religious studies, political activism and presidency was conducted in order to understand the development of his religio-political ideology, his worldview, and the development of specific themes. Phases were also identified.

Method of Gathering Information

Khamenei's speeches were gathered primarily from his Farsi Website at leader.ir. The speeches were analyzed chronologically beginning 1989 and continued to June 2013. Once specific themes were identified, searches were conducted on the website to gather speeches on each specific theme. Each theme was analyzed chronologically based on research questions. If more than one theme was addressed in the speech, that speech was marked accordingly and placed within each applicable theme. Also reviewed chronologically were interviews during

Khamenei's presidency based on the collection of books published in Iran that contain all of his domestic and international interviews from June 1981 to June 1989.

Limitations of the Study

This research is limited to the evaluation of Khamenei's public discourses through his sermons, interviews and speeches. No personal interviews have been conducted.

Results of the Study

The results of this study demonstrate three major phases: Phase I is the developmental phase when Khamenei's ideologies and religious faith in Islam are formulating chiefly from his father, his teachers and political leaders and reinforced as he witnesses victory in a politico-religious struggle against a monarchy. During this phase, Khamenei is merely a follower, a student and a political activist. His religio-political ideologies are learned from others and he imitates and follows their views. The second phase occurs as Khamenei is rewarded with political appointments and assumes the office of Presidency in June 1981. During this phase, his religio-political ideologies are reinforced and within the context of leadership, they begin to formulate as he moves from a political activist to a political leader. His third phase, as he becomes supreme leader in June, 1989, details his political shifts and conflicts during the terms of three presidents: 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani (1989-1997), Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005) and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013). While maintaining Khomeinism, he either formulates new ideologies or reinforces his existing ideologies.

Chapter Outlines

Phase I

Chapter 1 introduces the topic and summarizes research findings. Chapter 2 presents an historical overview of the rise of Shi‘i religious authority in Iran and its growing influence in Iran’s political sphere with an examination of the roots of Iranian nationalist ideals. The history of the 1979 Islamic Revolution of Iran is introduced in Chapter 3 detailing the events that led to the victory and the establishment of an Islamic government, including the religio-political tensions between Ayatollah Khomeini and the monarch, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, which led to Khamenei’s 15-year exile from Iran.

Chapter 4 introduces the concept of *vilāyat-i faqīh* (the Governance of the Jurisconsult) and the debates among the Iranian ‘ulama’ (legal scholars). The framework is provided by Mohsen Kadivar based on his Farsi article, “*Vilayat-i Faqih va Mardomsalari*” (“The Governance of the Jurisconsult and Democracy”), along with the views of other Iranian jurists who engage in the discussion. The article was translated in 2009 and is used by permission which Dr. Kadivar granted during my three-day field study at Duke University in North Carolina during the summer of 2010.

The early life of Khamenei from 1939 to 1979 is discussed in Chapter 5 and demonstrates the religious and political influences from childhood that led to his activism and subsequent involvement in Khomeini’s revolutionary movement. It is during this period that he adopts his teacher’s chief ideology of “political” freedom and independence from (CODO).

Phase II

Khamenei’s involvement in the newly-formed Islamic government is evaluated in Chapter 6 when Khamenei is awarded with several positions in the Islamic Republic (1979 -

1981). His leadership as the third president of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1981-1989) is overviewed in Chapter 7 along with the dual challenges he faced internally as he struggled alongside Supreme Leader Khomeini to calm oppositions against the Islamic regime, and externally as he shouldered the country through a war with Iraq.

Phase III

By Chapter 8, Khamenei succeeds to Supreme Leadership in June 1989, after Ayatollah Khomeini's death. An exploration of the process of the Islamic Republic in this appointment of Khamenei and the broad range of authority the constitution assigns to this office is presented. Chapter 9 introduces the current Iranian political system.

Themes central to Khamenei's political ideology are introduced within the context of the three presidents from 1989 to 2013 and demonstrate domestic or foreign affairs that either gave rise to specific ideologies or reinforced a particular ideology. During the eight year presidency of 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani (1989-1997) and his rapprochement policy towards the U.S., there is a confrontation between the president and the leader. This conflict is the focus of Chapter 10. A detailed history of Khamenei and Hashemi-Rafsanjani's relations (1989 - 2013) is provided in Appendix A. In Chapter 11, the leader's views of America and his perspectives on U.S. policies towards Iran, the Middle East and the Muslim world are presented based on his speeches in "*Amrika az Didgah-i Hazrat-i Ayatollah al-'Uzma Seyyed 'Ali Khamenei*" ("America in the View of His Excellency Grand Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamenei"), published by the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is a collection of his public statements on this topic. Khamenei's anti-American and anti-Westernization ideologies are further expressed in Chapter 12 along with his views on the unity of Iran and the unity of the Muslim world to form a Muslim force that becomes a "second global power."

Chapter 13 introduces the reform era in Iran during the Presidency of Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005) highlighting the tensions between the reformists and the conservative camp as President Khatami introduces his open door policy and extends his predecessor's, Hashemi-Rafsanjani's, rapprochement policy towards the United States. During this era of intellectual growth and the controversies over freedom of speech and freedom of the press, there are arrests, the killings of intellectuals, and the closing of a number of press organizations. Chapter 14 offers Khamenei's commentary of these events and outlines the public debates of the supreme leader and the president over freedom of speech. Khamenei's speeches in Chapter 15 place greater emphasis on Khomeini's chief revolutionary ideals of freedom and independence and the foreign policy of "Neither East, Nor West."

Like his predecessor, Khamenei interprets freedom in terms of the absence of foreign influence and domination versus liberal, secular, Western or American freedom. Selections are from "*Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei*" ("Freedom in the View of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution His Excellency Grand Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamenei"), compiled by the Islamic Republic of Iran. As a result of tensions over freedom and democracy, once again Ayatollah Khamenei emphasizes Khomeinism and introduces his interpretation of religious democracy in Chapter 16. Khamenei attacks the West, Westernization and Western liberalism or secularism and blames America for Iran's domestic problems.

Chapter 17 introduces the rise of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) to power during a time when Iran's domestic policy shifts to stark advances with its nuclear program. It also provides a brief background on the growing tensions between Ahmadinejad and the supreme leader. Iran's nuclear program from the Shah to the Islamic Republic is presented in

Chapter 18 along with the growing international concerns that result in sanctions. In Chapter 19, Khamenei declares his views on Iran's nuclear program and responds to the international community by equating the right to progress with the right to nuclear advancement. As international and domestic tensions intensify over Iran's nuclear program and discussions of freedom and democracy, so does the leader's effort to indoctrinate the Iranian youth. A brief response to the supreme leader and his allegations against the U.S. is provided. Chapter 20 concludes with Khamenei's call for an Islamic-Iranian coalition and outlines the existing tensions between the majority of the youth and the position of *vilāyat-i faqīh*. In the Conclusion, Khamenei's ideologies and their implications for Iran and U.S.-Iran relations are analyzed. Recommendations for U.S. policy-makers are suggested.

Literature Review

Prominent Western scholars have written works on Iran and the Islamic Revolution and have analyzed the domestic and foreign policies of the Islamic Republic. Among these scholars is Karim Sadjadpour, author of *Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader* (2009) who provides, perhaps, the most detailed work on Khamenei with valuable insights about his political views. In this article, Sadjadpour focuses on a brief historical background of Khamenei's life and evaluates the following themes based on his speeches: Islam and justice, independence and self-sufficiency, America, Israel, Iran as a model for the Islamic world and Iran's nuclear program. He also provides policy recommendations for U.S. policymakers.

Said Amir Arjomand, author of *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors* (2009) examines the state of the Islamic Revolution after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini. He raises the question whether Khomeini's revolutionary ideals ended in the hearts of Iran's presidents and

leaders after his death or whether his successors continued these ideals and if so, to what extent. While Arjomand provides excellent historical background, his approach does not include a thematic study of Khamenei's ideologies.

Numerous scholars have evaluated the Islamic Republic from different perspectives regarding Iran's foreign and domestic policies such as democracy, nuclear activities, export of revolutionary ideals, U.S.-Iran relations and internal power structures. One of the most prominent Middle Eastern scholars, the late R.K. Ramazani, also known as "the Father of Iran's Foreign Policy," answered most of these questions in his works on Iran's revolution and Iran's foreign policy from the Safavid era to 1975. In *Iran's Revolution: The Search for Consensus* (1990), he introduces several prominent Western scholars and defines the rationale behind the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic, which are the ideals of the Islamic Revolution—struggle against the global powers, absolute sovereignty from both East and West, independence of the Iranian nation, maintaining Islamic religious principles, unity and solidarity, supporting the Muslim nations of the world, seeking justice, and supporting the poor and the disadvantaged in the society.

Ray Takeyh, author of *Hidden Iran: Paradox and Power in the Islamic Republic* (2006), provides insights about the failure of the United States to accurately understand Iran, and he discusses specific strategies. He argues that the internal conflicts of the Iranian regime, especially towards the U.S., are the reasons for its bold international posture. In his numerous journalistic writings he focuses on the two critical ideals of the Islamic Revolution: freedom and independence, or the "Neither East, nor West" policy.

Anoushiraven Ehteshami's book *After Khomeini: The Iranian Second Republic* (1995) provides insights into Iran's political succession after Khomeini and the current political

structure of the Iranian government. In his writings, he also focuses on Iran's foreign policy through the eyes of the Iranian presidents.

Vali Nasr and Ali Gheissari explore Iran's continuous quest for democracy, freedom and independence in their work, *Democracy in Iran: History and the Quest for Liberty* (2006). Ray Mottahedeh discusses politics in revolutionary Iran from Cyrus the Great to Ayatollah Khomeini in his work, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran* (2000).

Research corporations such as RAND Corporation have published numerous works on the Iranian government. In *Khamenei: The Nuclear Decision-Maker* (2012), Alireza Nader analyzes Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei's policies on Iran's nuclear program. In his work, *The Clerical Establishment in Iran* (1989), Nikola Schahgaldian analyzes Iran's clerical institution and the prospects for its durability. Schahgaldian approaches the issue by analyzing the hierarchy of power and different factions within the regime. In *Mullahs, Guards, and Bonyads* (2010), the authors explore the existing dynamics in the Iranian leadership and the relationship between the two offices of the Supreme Leader and the President. RAND's research, *Understanding Iran* (2009), primarily focuses on the features of the Iranian political system.

Iranian scholars such as Mohsen Kadivar, Islamic Studies professor at Duke University, and Ata Hoodashtian, Professor of Philosophy and Political Science in Montreal, Canada, provide analysis of Iran's political system and primarily focus on Iran's domestic issues such as democracy, freedom, presidential elections, women's rights, human rights, and their nuclear program. Abbas Milani, director of Iranian Studies, writes journalistic articles on Khamenei's policies on various political issues. Hamid Algar, professor of Persian and Iranian studies at Berkeley, has primarily focused on Khomeini and the history of the Islamic Revolution. He has translated several works and numerous speeches of Khomeini, including his comprehensive

work, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini* (1981), which is an analysis of his speeches, lectures and interviews. Hooman Majd is an Iranian-American journalist, author and commentator who often writes on Iranian affairs. In his work, *The Ayatollah: Begs to Differ* (2008), Majd gives an overview of the workings of Iranian society and politics. Mehdi Khalaji at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and author of *The New Order of the Clerical Establishment in Iran* (2011) is currently writing the political biography of Ayatollah 'Ali Khamenei, which has not yet been published.

Contributions to the Field

This work is unique because it identifies the ideology of Supreme Leader Khamenei and analyzes each ideology systematically and thematically through his public discourses with a biographical dimension. The analysis is framed within a historical context that considers aspects of Iran's domestic, regional, and international policies. Together, the themes reflect the leader's domestic and foreign policies. Separately, they underscore the central ideologies that give birth to his political posture towards domestic and foreign issues.

Selected key themes throughout his presidency and supreme leadership are identified and analyzed. The goal is to provide a more detailed analysis and understanding of the development of Khamenei's ideology and correlate them with Iran's internal and external struggles. This research concludes with recommendations for U.S. analysts and policy-makers and recommendations for future research.

Qualifications to Conduct this Research

My qualifications to conduct this research are based on a combination of skills: linguistic abilities, educational research, academic scholarship, and personal experience. In America, I

served the Persian community as a professional linguist for over 15 years providing translation and interpretation both in the United States and in Germany, and I also conducted research and translations for academia. I am fluent in the Persian Farsi language (reading, writing, listening, speaking) and I have seasoned analytical skills. My understanding of the Persian-Iranian socio-cultural setting and language, familiarity with Shi'i Islam and Islam as a whole, familiarity with the Iranian political system, understanding of the Islamic Revolution, and knowledge of Iran's politico-cultural environment are additional qualifications.

I have made significant contributions using my analytical and linguistic abilities. During my studies at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, I combined Judeo-Christian studies with Islamic studies, primarily Shi'i Islam. As a research assistant, I conducted 18 months of research with Dr. Dudley Woodberry, Dean Emeritus and Sr. Professor of Islamic Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California (October 2006 - June 2008) conducting a statistical analysis and comparison of 850 questionnaires on "Worldview Changes of the Muslim Community in Respect to Spirituality." The goal of the study was to research the impact of recent Middle-Eastern political events on spirituality. Questionnaires were gathered from several countries: Bahrain, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia, Nigeria, Indonesia, Malawi, Algeria, Iran, Pakistan, Lebanon, Jordan, Ethiopia, France, Germany, England and the United States). I examined responses by conducting a statistical analysis using factors involved in spiritual change and compared and contrasted them between different countries and ethnicities. I then transferred the data for statistical analysis of various factors based on country information.

In conjunction with the previous research, I conducted a study March – August 2007 with Dr. Evelyne Reisacher, Professor of Islamic Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary. This project

focused on factors that contribute to changes in the worldview of Iranian Muslim women after the Khomeini Revolution. The data was collected through surveys and interviews of 60 Iranian women: 30 completed surveys and 30 were personally interviewed.

Both studies and analyses prepared me for my next research project at UCLA with Edward J. Kulakowski, Diplomat-in-Residence with the U.S. Department of State. My research included a study of U.S.-Iran relations and proposals of public diplomacy tools (soft power) for then-incoming Obama Administration (December 2008). My key recommendation was for the State Department to use information technology to reach out to the Iranian youth and the everyday Iranian by making programs available on the Internet in Persian Farsi to overcome the language barrier (only English was provided at that time). I also recommended that the information should be culturally friendly and developmentally-appropriate. Whether my recommendations were implemented has not been confirmed, but coincidentally the U.S. State Department launched its Farsi language twitter feed on February 14, 2011 in order to connect with users in Iran.

In addition to the above, my personal family background is rooted in the Iranian culture. I was born in Iran during the Shah's regime and experienced the events that led to the 1979 Islamic Revolution as a preteen. I lived through the U.S. Embassy hostage crisis and Iraq-Iran war. I also experienced life in a "Westernized Iran" during the Shah's regime and witnessed the socio-political changes after the victory of the Islamic Revolution. Because of my interest in participating in diplomacy and interfaith dialogue, I continue to maintain close relationships within the Muslim community.

I present Khamenei's ideology based on his own words with the hopes that it may provide a valuable tool for students, educators, researchers, U.S. analysts and policy-makers who

are interested in becoming familiar with the supreme leader's political ideologies and in understanding their influences on his policy-making decisions.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

**THE RISE OF SHI‘I RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY IN IRAN
AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT**

BY SHI‘I ‘ULAMA’

CHAPTER 2

THE RISE OF SHI'Ī POLITICO-RELIGIOUS HIERARCHY IN IRAN

According to the modern Iranian national myth, the quest of the Iranian nation for freedom and independence is deeply rooted in its historical nationalist ideals beginning with Cyrus the Great (*Kurush Bozorg*), commonly known as Cyrus of Persia, the founder of the Persian Empire under the Achaemenid dynasty (576-530 BC).¹⁰ From the time of Darius I (*Daryush*) or Darius the Great, Emperor of the Achaemenid dynasty (550-486 BC), the king or the Shah became “the defender of both religion and the kingdom.”¹¹ This claim by the king to heavenly blessings guided Iranian history and culture, and is the reason that the king demands absolute loyalty from his subjects.¹² The sacredness of the king was reinforced by Ardashir I (AD 224-39), founder of the Sassanid dynasty who “claimed divine qualities” and believed that there should be no separation of religion and state. He promoted Zoroastrianism and regulated the state based on the ideological principle that the ruler has been given divine and incontrovertible power over the affairs of state. Thus, religious concepts and authority of religion entered the political realm of the Iranian nation.¹³ This political attitude and culture of Iranian leaders continues today as demonstrated in the Islamic Republic.

Autonomy and autocracy became two lasting characteristics of Iranian governance. Leaders used religion to legitimize and to consolidate political power domestically and to justify wars, primarily against the Roman Empire and Byzantium. It was Iranians’ “sense of cultural identity,” defined as one religion and one language that helped them survive numerous invasions and occupations by Arabs, Turks and other peoples.¹⁴ This resilience is evident in the valiant

epic of the Persian poet Ferdawsi (940-1020), who exclaimed that “may he not live should Iran cease to exist.”¹⁵

The role of religion in Iranian politics peaked during the Safavid Empire (1501-1722), which adopted the Twelver School¹⁶ of Shi‘a Islam in Iran as the official ideology of the Empire, affirming the close ties between kingship and religion.¹⁷ As a result, Iran experienced a significant increase in the level of influence Shi‘i clerics exercised over Iran’s political system.

The Shah as the Representative of the Hidden Imam During the Safavid Period

The politico-religious hierarchy within Twelver Shi‘ism under the Safavids grew and gained influence as Shi‘ism was adopted as the official state religion. The Safavid Shi‘ite King Isma‘il’s rise as the *shahanshah* (King of Kings) of Iran in 1501 became a gateway for the growth of Shi‘ite rituals and practices in predominantly Sunni Iran. Upon his coronation, Shah Isma‘il (1501-1524) proclaimed *Ithnā ‘ashariyya* (Twelver Shi‘ism)¹⁸ as the official religion of the new Persian state. This gave Shi‘ism a tremendous political boost.¹⁹ Shah Isma‘il claimed to be the descendent of the seventh Imam,²⁰ “and was acknowledged as head of a mystical (dervish) order.”²¹ As the representative of the Hidden Imam,²² the Shah held “the highest religious authority of the Shi‘a” and was thus “imputed with infallibility (*iṣma*).”²³ With aspirations of making Iran a predominantly Shi‘ite state, the Shah made Shi‘ite religious practices mandatory for all Muslims. For instance, veneration of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib and the remaining eleven Shi‘ite Imams, and the cursing of the first three Caliphs,²⁴ became a mandatory ritual for all Muslims. The Shah enforced this directive by sending his armies into town to execute anyone who refused to proclaim allegiance to ‘Ali and the Twelve Imams. In his conversion of Iranians to Shi‘ism, the Shah was challenged by the lack of Twelver juristic literature in the Persian language, which was later accomplished by his son.²⁵

As the successor of his father, Shah Tahmasp I (r. 1524-1576) likewise made great efforts to further Shi'ism to achieve religious unity in Persia. However, Shah Tahmasp took more aggressive measures than his father. He began his propaganda of Twelver Shi'ism and made every effort to "build a religious cadre without ties to any of the domestic factions."²⁶ As a result, he invited scholars from Arab lands to migrate to Persia to help shape the faith in return for financial and material provisions or high level political and religious positions, including the office of *ṣadr* (chief who managed religious and military affairs).²⁷ The 'ulama' (legal scholars) occupied multiple state-run politico-religious offices that were governed by the leadership of a *ṣadr*. Examples of these posts include *Shaykh-al-Islam* who was assigned to enforce *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) in every large city. The first *Shaykh-al-Islam* during the Safavid era was Mohammad-Baqir Majlisi (1627-1699/1700) who became the first *Shaykh-al-Islam* of Isfahan, the Safavids' capital in 1697.²⁸ Next, the *Qādī al-Qūdāt* (Chief Justice) held the judiciary post administrating contracts and personal law.²⁹ Additionally, Shah Tahmasp replaced his father's designated *ṣadr* with his own pupil and assigned him great authority over all the religious institutions in the empire. His new *ṣadr* 'Ali ibn 'Abd al-'Ali al-Karaki (d. 1533), in cooperation with the Immami 'ulama' of the Hilla school, was able once again to revive and reintroduce the triple principles and methods of the school: *ijtihād* (independent intellectual exertion), *taqlīd* (to follow someone), and *kalām* (theology). The Shi'ite scholars were viewed with higher authority and respect, which through decades translated into superior social and political influence, such as Friday prayer leaders (*Imam-i jom'eh*), legal experts (*muftī*) and judges (*qādī*).³⁰ Under Tahmasp, Friday prayers and paying taxes were obligatory for all Muslims. Tahmasp also succeeded in translating Shi'i theological texts into Persian. Despite these radical efforts, Iran was far from becoming a Shi'i state. The Sunni resistance and influence was still strong.³¹ After Tahmasp's

death, his son Shah Isma‘il II (r. 1576-78), who only ruled a short fifteen months, adhered to Sunnism and excluded prominent Shi‘i clerics from his circle. It is well known that the Sunni scholar Mirza Makdum Sarifi played a major role in converting Isma‘il II to Sunnism, and was promoted by the latter to the revered post of *ṣadr*.³²

Under Shah ‘Abbas I (1578-1629) the Shi‘i ‘ulama’ held higher religious power because of the growth of their “regional spiritual authorities” and were assigned the responsibility of administrating religious endowments.³³ Shah ‘Abbas I was the first to appoint an official of clerical background as grand *vizier* (Minister or high-ranking political advisor). He used this opportunity to enhance the legitimacy of his dynasty. He soon began suppressing any Shi‘i or Sufi³⁴ groups who questioned his authority.³⁵

In 1597 Shah ‘Abbas I moved the capital from Qazvin to Isfahan and began the process of building theological colleges (*madrasas*) throughout Iran, but particularly in Isfahan. He then recruited various scholars to study theology in Iran. This brought about significant changes in the education of the ‘ulama’ in the early 11th/17th century. The Isfahan school of philosophy included many prominent Muslim scholars and numerous outstanding religious figures. As a result, Isfahan became the principal center of Shi‘i scholarship. Since ‘Abbas I made no claims to a “semi-divine nature or to be the representative of the Hidden Imam, this began the process of a separation between” political and religious leadership.³⁶

Shah ‘Abbas II adhered to the strict interpretations of the faith. As a result, there was a growing anti-Sufi sentiment. A deviation between religion and politics is noticed during his era. High-ranking ‘ulama’ began advocating more active governing roles for the religious leaders, and openly called for “direct clerical governance,” while declaring “the rule of the Shah illegitimate.”³⁷ Further, religious law (*Shari‘ah*) and customary law (*urf*) existed side by side,

with customary law gaining greater influence especially in criminal cases. Here the class of jurist-intellectuals (*mujtahids*) gained a great measure of power.³⁸

Opposition: Akhbārī School vs. Usūlī School

While Shi‘i doctrine was blooming, in the early 11th/17th century, Shi‘ism faced grave challenges from various groups and scholars such as the traditionalist (*akhbārī*) scholars. Uṣūlīs, a branch of Twelver Shi‘ism, which advocated the use of *ijtihād* (independent intellectual exertion), debated with Akhbārīs “over the nature of authority and qualifications of interpretations that arose in the absence of a living Imam.”³⁹ Akhbārīs argued that only the Qur’an, the Sunnah (the practices of the Prophet) and the *ḥadīth* (the sayings of the Prophet) were legitimate sources of authority. They rejected *ijtihād* and *‘aql* (principles of reasoning), and believed authority belonged solely to the Prophet, the Qur’an and the Imams (together with Traditions). They were against the institutionalization of *ijtihād*, a position Uṣūlīs supported.⁴⁰ They further asserted that each believer has direct access to the truth and is able to reach their salvation by consulting religious sources, the Qur’an and the Sunnah. Uṣūlīs on the other hand claimed that such authority remained only with a *mujtahid*. It was this very position of the Uṣūlīs that led to the development of the institution of *marja‘ al-taqlīd* (source to follow or religious reference), which meant believers were to follow a learned scholar in religious matters. Akhbārīs rejected both the Usūlī principles and the Mu‘tazilī (rationalistic) basis of Shi‘i doctrine. In practice this meant a move towards the Sunni principles of jurisprudence.⁴¹

The Akhbārī movement began in 1623 and it became very active during the late Safavid era. Although Akhbārīs experienced major triumphs during the late Safavid and post-Safavid periods, they witnessed their demise by Uṣūlīs during the Qajar dynasty. This debate greatly

contributed to the science of fundamentals of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). Wahid Bihbihani (d. 1790-1) and Shaykh Murtada Ansari (d. 1864-5) perfected it.⁴²

The Increased Power and Influence of the ‘Ulama’ Under the Safavids

The 12th/18th century marked the era of the victory of the Usūlī school over the Akhbārī school and the rise of the ‘ulama’ to political power. Under the Safavid rule and especially the last ruler Shah al-Husayn (1694-1722), the influence and independence of the Shi‘i ‘ulama’ radically increased as the dynasty weakened. The Iranian *mullahs* (clergy) succeeded in imposing Shi‘ism as defined by their own ‘ulama’ and jurists. Under the Safavids, the Shi‘i ‘ulama’ gained their independence in three ways: 1) The establishment of “the role of supreme spiritual leader” in the year 1712 under Shah al-Husayn. 2) The exile of the dissenting Shi‘i ‘ulama’ to the holy Shi‘i cities. 3) The victory of the Usūlī school over Akhbārīs.⁴³

One of the critical figures and the most influential of the Shi‘i ‘ulama’ was Mohammad-Baqir Majlisi (d. 1699), who played a significant role popularizing Shi‘ism. Majlisi’s goal was to firmly establish Shi‘ism in the hearts, minds and souls of every Muslim. As a prolific writer, he was the first scholar to write Persian books of Shi‘i theology, history and doctrine that the average Iranian could understand. While promoting Shi‘ism, without ceasing, he suppressed Sufism, Sunnism⁴⁴ and other religious groups in Iran. This marked an end of brotherly tolerance between Sunnis and Shi‘is, which began in the period of the Mongols. Once again there was a growing hatred and hostility between the two sects.⁴⁵

The emergence of an independent body of ‘ulama’ that showed no reservation in taking a political stance against the state gave birth to a separation of religion and state. Finally, Twelver Shi‘ism was no longer an Arab phenomenon, but an Iranian creed. With the center of religious learning located at the heart of Iran, Twelver Shi‘ism became an Iranian religion.⁴⁶

The next prominent scholar emerging after Majlisi was Vahid Bihbahani (d. circa 1792), who was known as “*Mu’assis* (the founder of the Usūlī School).”⁴⁷ Bihbahani considered Akhbārīs as “*kuffār*” (infidels or unbelievers) and he made every effort to exclude them from the fields of theology and jurisprudence. He condemned those who were against *‘aql* and *ijtihād* as sources of law, which increased the power and influence of the *mujtahids*. Bihbahani’s latter contributions became the gateway to the development of the concept of *marja’ al-taqlīd* (religious reference) during the Qajar dynasty. Moreover, his accomplishments became a guiding light for the direction and development of present day Shi‘ism.⁴⁸

During this period Iran witnessed “a remarkable revival of intellectual activity especially in the religious and philosophical science.”⁴⁹ Two movements emerged: Shaykhi, initiated by Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa’i and Babi, which became the foundation for the Baha’i movement.⁵⁰ Consequently, Shi‘ism was spreading throughout the sub-continent and the influence of the Safavid thinkers of the School of Isfahan was felt deeply among Indian Muslims and even some Hindus. Two major figures Mir Damad (d. 1631) and Mulla Sadra (d. 1640) known as the “masters of metaphysics with whom Islamic philosophy reached a new peak” influenced Islamic philosophy during this period.⁵¹ The next major figures include Baha’ ad-din Mohammad ibn Husayn al-‘Aamili (1546-1622), Muhsin-i Fayd Kashani (1598-1679) and Mulla ‘Abdu’r-Razzaq Lahaji (d. 1661), who are considered to be among later foremost Shi‘i theologians.⁵² Lastly, Mohammad-Baqir was reputed as the author of “the most voluminous compendium” of Shi‘i sciences, called the “*Bihar al-anwar*” (“Seas of Lights”), which is “a comprehensive collection of Prophetic Traditions.”⁵³

Despite the instabilities of this period, major developments occurred in Shi‘i Islam between the fall of the Safavid Dynasty and the rise of the Qajar dynasty: 1) The ‘ulama’

increased in power and independence from the rulers which separated state and religion. 2) The victory of the Usūlī school of thought over the Akhbārīs resulted in greater authority and leadership for the ‘ulama’. 3) Baghdad instead of Isfahan became the main center of Shi‘i scholarship.⁵⁴

Shi‘ite Orthodoxy Under the Qajars (1796-1925)

As Mohammad Khan Qajar established his dynasty in 1796, he too assumed the title of *shahanshah* (King of Kings). Unlike the Safavid rulers, the Turcoman Qajar Shah could not trace his lineage back to the Imams, thereby preventing him from proclaiming himself the representative of the Hidden Imam. This role was now delegated to the Shi‘i ‘ulama’. Ultimately, the ‘ulama’ moved towards establishing a religious hierarchy within their religious system. As a result, the ‘ulama’ with the highest authority held absolute competence or *ijtihād-i muṭlaq*. In turn, the legal scholars became the legitimate source of *taqlīd* or *marja‘ al-taqlīd* (religious reference). *Taqlīd* became not only obligatory for the ordinary believers, but for the *mullahs* as well.⁵⁵

Under Fath ‘Ali Shah, Tehran became Iran’s capital. “He deferred greatly to the Shi‘i ‘ulama’,” perhaps because of the Qajar dynasty’s desperate need to establish its legitimacy in Iran.⁵⁶ Fath ‘Ali Shah committed himself to further the Shi‘i religion in Iran. He personally went on several pilgrimages (hajj) to Mecca and made large monetary contributions to the ‘ulama’. He built several mosques and *madrasas* (religious schools), and most importantly, he rebuilt the *Madrasa Faydiyya*, the foremost seminary in Qom. After designating Tehran as his capital, he invited several prominent Shi‘i ‘ulama’ to reside in Tehran with hopes of increasing its prestige amongst religious leaders. Despite his efforts, Tehran never became the Isfahan of the Safavid

era as the prominent religious center, mainly because of the separation of religion and state at this point of Shi'i history.⁵⁷

The religious and political influence of the clergy under Fath 'Ali Shah became a source of power, only second to the dynasty. The emergence of 'ulama' in politics at a state level began during his reign. Together, as the representatives of the Hidden Imam (Mahdī), the Shah and the 'ulama' exercised both religious and secular powers. Cooperation between the two strictly depended upon the piety of the Shah. As long as the Shah abided by the principles of *Sharī'ah* (Islamic law), there was harmony among them.⁵⁸

The 'ulama's influence over domestic and foreign policy increased as Shi'ism established strong roots in Iran in the early 19th century. Religious leadership became one of two prominent powers in Iran's authority structure, the second being the monarchy. The political events of the 20th century brought about new challenges to the Shi'ite hierarchy, while reinforcing their religio-political power. As Iran was swept by secularism, modernization, and state-building, the 'ulama' resisted the Shah's decision to reform the Iranian state and model it after Europe. This brought about a clash between the state and the 'ulama'. Despite its challenges, the first Iranian Parliament (*Majlis-i Shura*)⁵⁹ placed a tighter leash on the powers of the government economically and internationally. In addition to limiting the Shah's power, the Majlis paved the way for a greater exercise of authority from the people.⁶⁰ The 'ulama' further struggled against the Shah during the Russo-Iranian War (1826-1828) and resisted declaring war on Russia. They even threatened to declare a *fatwā* (decree; verdict) of a *jihād* (struggle) against the Shah should he disobey their wishes. This power play marked the significant influence of the 'ulama' in Iran's history.⁶¹ From then forward the 'ulama' were involved in state policies as evidenced by several historical events. Examples included the 1872 British concessions to build

railways and roads in Iran, the 1890 British Tobacco concession where *mujtahids* fought against the tobacco monopoly, the 1905-6 Constitutional Revolution (*Enqelab-i Mashruteh*) or (*Mashrutiyyat*) in Iran which gave birth to nationalist ideals, and established the first parliament in Iran. The latter paved the way for the *mujtahids* to gain more direct political power in the government.⁶²

The events of the 20th century and especially the Constitutional Revolution gave birth to a new honorific title for its most high-ranking ‘ulema’. Shi‘ites began calling their Imamate scholars “*Ayatollah*” (Sign of God).⁶³

As Qom emerged the main center of Imamate theology in the early 20th century (1920s and 1930s), it gave birth to the increased number of ayatollahs, mainly due to the efforts of ‘Abd-al-Karim Ha’eri Yazdi (1859-1937).⁶⁴ The most respected amongst these ayatollahs was called *Ayatollah al-‘Uzmā* (Grand Ayatollah); a title interchangeably used for *marja‘ al-taqlīd* (source to follow). Ayatollah Mohammad-Hosayn Borujerdi (1875-1961) was the first to earn this title in 1947.⁶⁵ After his death the question of who amongst the high-ranking ayatollahs had the qualifications to guide the Imamate community by providing answers to issues of a modern life led to the decentralization of the office of *Ayatollah al-‘Uzmā*. Thereafter, a multiplication of the posts of *marja‘ al-taqlīd* and *Ayatollah* is noticed.⁶⁶

The Pahlavi Dynasty and the ‘Ulama’ (1925-1979)

In 1925, Reza Shah Pahlavi (1878-1944), more commonly known as Reza Khan (1925-1941), overthrew the last Shah of the Qajar dynasty and established the Pahlavi dynasty. Realizing the political and religious influence of the ‘ulema’ in Iran, initially Reza Khan made every attempt to gain their support. He established a system of government based on the principles of the 1905-6 Constitutional Revolution which imposed limits on the Shah’s power.

The crown was no longer the right of the Shah but a provision given to him by the people.⁶⁷ To utilize the ‘ulama’'s power to his advantage, Reza Khan assured the *mujtahids* in Qom that they had his full support and that his beliefs were in line with theirs. After establishing his government and winning his final victory over the Qajar dynasty, he began a rather liberal socio-economic reform process that once again attempted to model the Iranian system after Europe. In his efforts to suppress any opposition on behalf of the ‘ulama’, Reza Shah limited the social and political influence of the clergy in Iran. He repressed the *sharī*‘ (religious) courts and removed religious judges from legal affairs. By centralizing the religious endowments (*awqāf*) through a government agency, the Shah controlled the income and funds of the clergy. He reformed the education system and replaced the old *maktabs* (religious schools)⁶⁸ with modern education; a stark deviation from the religious focus. To further suppress religion and promote modernization, the Shah prohibited the veiling of women (*hijāb*) and pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj). As a result of the Shah’s attempts to modernize Iran, the ‘ulama’'s political power weakened for the first time in the 20th century. Interestingly, in the 1930s, the clergy as a group, did not voice any opposition against the Shah, since most of the ‘ulama’ still held liberal views. However, when the British and Soviet troops moved into Iran in retaliation for the Shah’s attempts to limit their influence in Iran, the Shah’s powers were weakened. The ‘ulama’ saw this as an opportunity to win back several of the powers they had lost, and in 1948 several *mujtahids* issued a *fatwā* (decree) banning women to appear in public without a veil. After the abdication and exile of Reza Shah by the British, his son Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi took the throne.⁶⁹

Reza Shah Pahlavi (1941-1979) followed his father’s footsteps and established an “authoritarian regime,” which once again contradicted the Islamic ideals of freedom and independence. Although during his rule, Reza Shah successfully established Iran’s international

boundaries, the extension of the British oil concession weakened his regime and negatively affected Iran's economy. The British dominated Iran's economy until the 1951 nationalist-democratic movement by Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq (1882-1967). This movement led to the nationalization of the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC).⁷⁰ Mosaddeq interpreted the Islamic ideals of independence and freedom as independence from *foreign slavery* and the *dictatorial rule* of the Shah. In the face of the nationalization crisis and the efforts of British agents to influence Mosaddeq's government, the Shah turned to the United States for help. With the Shah's approval, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) instituted Operation Ajax to remove the democratically elected Mosaddeq from power and reinstated the Shah. Having significant interests in Iranian oil and after the successful 1953 coup d'état, the U.S. required removal of the AIOC's monopoly from Iran and in turn, received the consent for the withdrawal of Iranian oil by five American oil companies.⁷¹ Reza Shah agreed and used the soaring proceeds from the oil industry to arm Iran with the vision of making his nation "one of the five leading conventional military powers of the world."⁷² As a result, in 1964, the Shah signed the Status-of-Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the U.S., which gave the U.S. rights and privileges of employing personnel in Iran. Ayatollah Ruhollah Mostafavi Mousavi Khomeini (1902-1989), the leader of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, called this treaty *the document for the enslavement of Iran*, which became one of his most popular revolutionary slogans: *the American Shah* or *the son of America*.⁷³ Consequently, the CIA helped the Shah to launch his domestic security and intelligence service called SAVAK (*Sazeman-i Etela'at va Amniyat-i Keshvar*), in order to establish his power and suppress opposition.⁷⁴

The White Revolution (*Enqelab-i Sefid*) of 1963 furthered Iran's modernization and gave birth to nationalist ideals. The economic and social reforms prompted by Reza Shah Pahlavi in

efforts to modernize Iran and transform it into a global economic and industrial power, led to the referendum of 19 measures within Iran's political and social systems, chiefly family law and land reforms. Reza Shah Pahlavi submitted his proposed measures to a national referendum in January 1963: land reform, profit-sharing, nationalization of forests, sale of government factories, amendment of the electoral law, establishment of a Literacy Corps, and women's right to vote.⁷⁵ These democratic reforms created antagonism among the clerics and landlords. The clergy accused the Shah of compromising Shi'ite traditional values and decreasing the role of religion. This tension gave rise to the nationalist ideals of *vaṭan* (nation) and *millat* (people), and the activism of the Shi'ite clergy.⁷⁶ The Islamic notions of freedom and independence from the West further emphasized the concept of liberty and its compatibility with justice. The clergy began to question the compatibility of *qanūn* (man-made laws) to *Sharī'ah* (Islamic law). The ideals of nation and love of the country, and at the same time, love of religion, seemed to be compatible with the ideals of the Prophet Mohammad who taught "*ḥub al-vaṭan mīn al-īman*" ("the love of nation is an article of faith").⁷⁷

CHAPTER 3
THE RISE OF AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI:
THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION AND
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

The battle between the Constitutional Revolution and *Sharī'ah*-based constitutionalism of 1905-6 is considered to be one of the most significant religious and political events during Khomeini's childhood.⁷⁸ Shi'ī clerics and religious leaders were at the forefront of this so-called, *first religious revolution* in Iran. Although for a short time the Shi'ī leaders seemed to be victorious in forcing the Shah to establish a constitutional government, they soon found themselves excluded from power in Iranian politics. According to several Grand Ayatollahs (*Ayatollah al-'Uzmā*), such as Ayatollah Musavi Shirazi (1892-1984) and Ayatollah Khomeini (1902-1989) himself, constitutionalism became the very cause and source of tensions in Iran.⁷⁹ In his view and in the view of the clerics involved in the movement, the foreign powers used constitutionalism to weaken Iran's political system by dividing religion and monarchy. Khomeini vigorously fought against foreign influences in Iranian politics after Iran's *second religious revolution* (or the 1979 Islamic Revolution). Khomeini was determined to prevent the fall of his second Shi'ī Revolution, given the failure of the first.⁸⁰

Khomeini's Pre-Revolutionary Activism in Iran

As a Sufi philosopher and a religious teacher, Khomeini resented the clerics' loss of power due to the modernization and secularization of the government under the rule of Reza Shah and his progeny, Mohammad Reza Shah. He believed that the chief domestic goal of Mohammad Reza Shah was to eliminate Islam as a driving force in the political, social, cultural

and educational structure of Iran. Khomeini viewed the greatest threat to Iranian society not to be political upheaval, but Western cultural infiltration. He argued that the ethics and morals of Iranian society were being compromised by the Shah and his Western allies. He resented Western influences that resulted in unveiling women and coeducational schools. Khomeini advanced a traditional political view, one in line with his religious and cultural views.⁸¹

Moving into the public sphere in the 1940s, Khomeini published his first book in 1945 called "*Kashf al-Asrar*" ("The Unveiling of Secrets"), which was considered his first public statement of a political nature. Khomeini heartily defended traditional Shi'i practices while criticizing modernists and Pahlavi rule. He also defended the practice of *taqlid* (to follow a religious reference), which was under fierce attack by the reformists. Khomeini insisted that if Islam was left without guardians (or suitable religious references), the Shi'i hierarchy would face its obliteration by being left in the hands of inept laymen.⁸²

Khomeini first entered the national political sphere in 1963. His reputation grew among the clerics and the public on two levels: authority on religious matters and his staunch political opposition to the Shah's regime. He condemned the Shah's White Revolution and recommended the requirement that judges be Muslim men because he believed non-Muslims should not "decide on the affairs concerning the honor and person of the Muslims."⁸³ Khomeini began to preach sermons from *Faydiyya Madrasa* in Qom, which captured the attention of many Iranians nationwide. In his speech on 'Ashura', Khomeini called the Shah a "wretched miserable man" and an "infidel Jew."⁸⁴ In response in March 1963, the Shah responded with attack on the *Madrasa*, which resulted in the death of a number of students. This response further endorsed Khomeini's beliefs that the Pahlavi regime was an anti-Islamic regime.⁸⁵ The combination of these events marked Khomeini's long-term struggle against the regime and promoted the vision

of Islam's restoration in Iran. Khomeini continued his public denouncements of the regime, claiming that the Shah was a puppet of the U.S., who collaborated with the Zionist regime, Israel.⁸⁶

Khomeini's Ramadan speech in June 1963 pronounced the end of the Shah's regime and was arrested at his home two days later. An unexpected two-day massive public demonstration in several major cities erupted: Qom, Tehran, Mashhad, Kashan and Isfahan. This event is commonly known as 15 Khordad (June 5, 1963), which later became a critical day in the history of the Islamic Revolution. Khomeini's actions once again revived the power of Shi'i clerical class in Iran's political life and established him as a politico-religious public figure. For Iranians, he was a religious leader who was unafraid to boldly speak against the policies of a tyrannical regime. It was this very uprising of Iranians that foreshadowed the Islamic Revolution of 1979. According to 'Ali Baqeri, June 5, 1963 (15 Khordad) became the cornerstone of Khomeini's movement and mobilization of his revolutionary youth. The achievements of this day became the basis for the 1979 victory. For Khomeini and his revolutionary camp, 15 Khordad was a struggle against domination and colonization and 22 Bahman (February 11, 1979) marked its final victory.⁸⁷

Due to public pressure and demands for Khomeini's release, the Shah ordered his discharge upon the conditions that he would refrain from making provocative statements about the regime. Khomeini refuted the proposition and continued his anti-Shah regime's slogans. The situation became more intense in October 1964 when the Shah granted immunity to U.S. personnel who had allegedly committed offenses on Iranian territory. This infuriated Khomeini and he accused the regime of selling Iran's independence and sovereignty to foreign powers. Knowing that he could not suppress Khomeini, the Shah decided to send him into exile. On

November 4, 1964, Khomeini was exiled to Turkey and then to the holy city of Najaf, Iraq on September 5, 1965, where he remained for thirteen years.⁸⁸

Khomeini's Pre-Revolutionary Activism in Exile

Khomeini's exile over a decade in Najaf prepared him for the revolutionary work ahead and an unforeseen takeover of the Shi'i hierarchy of Iran. Najaf became Khomeini's base of operations for anti-Pahlavi activism and the cornerstone of his preparatory work for the Islamic Revolution.

While in exile, Khomeini used his position as a famous teacher from Qom not only to establish a prominent position, but also to influence the Shi'i population in Iraq, Iran and the Gulf states through his writings and proclamations. He began teaching his popular course on jurisprudence (*fiqh*) at the Shaykh Murtaza Ansari madrasa, which attracted students mainly from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. Khomeini's fame throughout the Muslim world grew as his messages were distributed on numerous occasions in Mecca during the pilgrimage season.⁸⁹

In Najaf and in 1970, Khomeini developed the concept of *vilāyat-i faqīh* (Governance of the Jurisconsult), which ascribed a divine appointment to the chosen leader of the Islamic government (*hokūmat-i Islami*). The basis for this theory was two-fold: first it was his belief that Shi'i religion gave *mujtahids* (jurist-intellectuals) the authority to engage in the oversight of the state and legislation. In his writings, he often used the term *hākim*⁹⁰ for both an individual who oversaw the judiciary process in a political sense, and an individual who made religious decisions. Both of these make up the components of *vilāyat-i faqīh*. Second, since the *ummah* (Muslim community) cannot remain without the oversight of a divinely-appointed Imam during the absence of the infallible Imam, his authority is transferred to Shi'i jurists. Thus, Khomeini

took the radical step of proclaiming that the Imams' right to rule devolved upon the jurists during the occultation of the Twelfth Imam. And, "if one of them succeeded in setting up a government, it was the duty of the other jurists to follow him."⁹¹ This theory gave rise to controversies among the leading clerics since no jurist could exercise authority upon another jurist according to traditional Shi'i belief. For this very reason, when seeking to overthrow the Shah's regime, Khomeini refrained from using the term, "Governance of the Jurisconsult" or "the Mandate of the Jurist." Instead, he introduced a new term—*ḥokūmat-i Islami* (Islamic Government).

Despite similarities between the two *marja'iyah*, Khomeini was the first Shi'i jurist to open the discussion of Islamic government in a work of jurisprudence. The establishment of an Islamic government required two things: to overthrow the secular regime of the Shah and to establish a theocratic government. Khomeini said: "It is the duty of all us to overthrow the *ṭāqūt*, the illegitimate political powers that now rule the entire Islamic world."⁹² In order to achieve this goal, Khomeini and his army of clerics required public support. To this end, his clerical lieutenants and their disciples (younger clerics) were dispersed into Shi'i and Sunni mosques to preach the ideologies of the revolution and initiate a *religious* uprising among Iranian Muslims. Thus, the Shi'i-Sunni pulpit became Khomeini's revolutionary platform.⁹³

Khomeini's large following of Shi'i clerics transformed into a powerful Shi'i army that was prepared to end the Shah's secular policies and Western cultural domination in Iran. Thus, Khomeini organized his first group of supporters, comprised of laymen and clergy, and named it the Coalition of Islamic Societies (*Hey'atha-ye Mo'talafeh-i Islami*). This group gave rise to a second organization in the 1970s, called the Society of Combatant Clergy (*Jame'ih-i Ruhaniyun-i Mobarez*).⁹⁴ Khomeini began the Islamic movement first with religious scholars who were

inspired by his ideology, and later by an actual politico-religious movement that was the foundation of his victory in 1979.

Khomeini's Militant Clergy consisted of leading clerics who were Khomeini's former students, such as Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Hosseini Khamenei, the current Supreme Leader of Iran (*valī-i amr-i Iran*) and Ayatollah 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the current Chairman of the Expediency Discernment Council (*Ra'is-i Majma'-i Tashkhis-i Maslahat-i Nezam*). These leading clerics were ready to occupy the executive positions in the Islamic Republic, while recruiting younger clerics from small towns and rural areas. The common factor uniting these individuals was their traditional Shi'i view of Islam as they determined to reclaim their lost Shi'i hierarchy within Iranian society.⁹⁵

Signs of the 1979 Islamic Revolution

The Shah's downfall began in November 1977 with the assassination of Ayatollah Khomeini's eldest son, Hajj Mustafa by SAVAK (the Shah's U.S. instituted security police). This enraged both Khomeini and the religious sector of the Iranian society who were exasperated by the Shah's social and economic corruption while ignoring his own people's oppression and poverty. The public expression of rage and rebellion of the religious sector reached the hearts and minds of the majority of the Iranian public, resulting in uprisings which reached its pivotal point in the 1979 Islamic Revolution of Iran.⁹⁶

The first signs of a *possible* revolution were seen after President Jimmy Carter visited Iran on January 8, 1978. The American president lauded the Shah as a wise statesman and beloved by his people. Afterwards, the government-controlled press printed an article supplied by Ministry of the Court accusing Khomeini of being an agent of foreign powers. This outraged the public both in Iran and Najaf, and the first revolutionary demonstrations were held the

following day in Qom.⁹⁷ This was the first of many demonstrations that gradually unfurled across the country. Throughout the spring and summer of 1978, Khomeini issued several proclamations praising people for being steadfast, while predicting the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime and the establishment of an Islamic government. By then, Khomeini was a pivotal figure in the uprising of the Iranian public against the Shah. His name appeared in every anti-Shah slogan and chant, “his portrait served as a revolutionary banner,” and the people demanded his return from exile.⁹⁸ To counter Khomeini’s progress, and as a last-ditch effort, in September 1978 the Shah asked, and Saddam Hussein, the leader of the Ba’athist government of Iraq complied, to exile Khomeini from Najaf to destroy Khomeini’s base of operations. Finding no refuge in any Islamic nation that would guarantee him the continuation of his politico-religious activism, Khomeini headed for France in early October 1978. Contrary to the Shah’s expectations, France provided greater opportunities for Khomeini. His messages were easily disseminated in Iran, he received many visitors from Iran, Europe, and the U.S., and the media’s interest helped spread his message internationally.⁹⁹

The Victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution of Iran

December 1978 laid the foundation for the victory of the Islamic Revolution. Thousands of Iranians filled the streets of Tehran during the holy month of Muharram, demanding the eradication of the Pahlavi monarchy and establishing an Islamic republic under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. Failing to subdue public outrage, even by killings, torturing and imprisoning civilians, the Shah left Iran on January 16, 1979.¹⁰⁰ The government remained in the hands of a surrogate administration under Shapur Bakhtiar (1914-1991), the Prime Minister of Iran, from January 4, 1979 to February 11, 1979. Iranians flooded the streets of Tehran and other

major cities with celebrations over their victory and the fulfillment of Khomeini's sixteen-year-old prophecy.¹⁰¹

Khomeini's Return from Exile

Khomeini's final return to Iran occurred on February 1, 1979. For the majority of Iranians, his return was likened to the return of the Grand Imam Mahdī, who was expected to come for the salvation of Islam and Muslims. Khomeini abolished Bakhtiar's administration and, on February 11, 1979, the provisional government of the Islamic Republic of Iran (*Jomhuri-i Islami-i Iran*) was born.¹⁰² Khomeini affirmed the establishment of a government based on the Sacred Law of Islam (*Hokumat-i Sharī'ah*). This meant a religious leader who had the right to issue religious decrees and influence political and legal spheres. His Instruction Manual of Jurisprudence, "*Tahrir al-Wasilah*" ("Commentary on the Liberation of the Intercession" or "Exegesis of the Vehicle to Salvation"), was declared the law of the land.¹⁰³ Shortly after, as the theocratic ruler of Iran, he established the notion of *vilāyat-i faqīh* (the Governance of the Jurisconsult or the Mandate of the Jurist). He intended to establish an Imamate government that would oversee the law in every aspect; personal, criminal, and commercial transactions. As the representative of the Hidden Imam, he held the highest religious position, and at the same time, he led the Islamic revolution as a powerful political leader. Khomeini earned the title "Imam" by his supporters. From there he was called "Imam Khomeini."

Khomeini called for independence, freedom and an Islamic Republic for Iranians (*esteqlal, āzadī va jomhūrī-i Islami*). This became the slogan and outcry of the revolution for decades to come. Iranians called for the expulsion of all foreign powers and an end of their influence in Iran's domestic affairs. Since the majority of Iranians perceived the Shah's regime as totalitarianism, Khomeini's promise of a democratic and just government seemed appealing to

most Iranians.¹⁰⁴ In an interview on German television on November 12, 1978, Khomeini promised that “the Iranian regime will become a democratic state and *vilāyat* will be with the people.”¹⁰⁵ Citizens will elect their representatives and he would not interfere with the organization of the government, but his support would continue through his guidance. Although a political leader, Khomeini emphasized his role as a cleric or a spiritual leader. In an address he said, “Along with other clergy, my responsibility is orthodoxy (*ershād*) and to show the nation the correct way. In the future government, I will have the responsibility of guidance (*hedāyat*).”¹⁰⁶

Khomeini seemed to show a shift in his political position after the establishment of the Islamic Republic and more so after the approval of the 1979 Constitution. Khomeini re-defined his role as the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic and established himself as the *divinely-elected* leader of Iran. He further redefined democracy as freedom from foreign domination as opposed to democracy in the modern liberal sense.

Origin of Khomeini’s Political Ideologies

According to Richard Hrair Dekmejian, author of *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*, Khomeini’s political ideologies *may* have been influenced by Baqir al-Sadr, who was “the chief ideologue and inspirational leader of Iraq’s Shi‘ites.”¹⁰⁷ Although the extent of Baqir al-Sadr’s influence on Khomeini’s political ideology is unclear, Dekmejian asserts that “Baqir al-Sadr’s rule of *marja‘* and Khomeini’s *vilāyat al-faqīh* are synonymous.”¹⁰⁸ Similar to Khomeini, Baqir al-Sadr’s political ideology in respect to the formation of an Islamic government and the governance of the Jurisconsult is based on, 1) God as the sole source of authority and sovereignty; 2) the Muslim community as God’s representative on earth; and 3) the deputyship of the Hidden Imam.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, several key religio-political principles of Baqir

al-Sadr are heard in Khomeini's revolutionary slogans and doctrines: 1) non-separation of religion and state; 2) a call to the *ummah* (Muslim community) to return to the principles of *Ahl al-Bayt* (the household of the Prophet); 3) the search for freedom; 4) struggle against oppression and tyranny; 5) "Neither East, Nor West" policy; 6) resistance against Israel and liberation of *Quds* (Jerusalem); 7) anti-deprivation; 8) culture of martyrdom; and 9) reconstruction and progress.¹¹⁰

CHAPTER 4
THE CONCEPT OF *VILĀYAT-I FAQĪH*
AND DEBATES AMONG THE IRANIAN ‘ULAMA’

Soon after the revolution, controversies arose over Khomeini’s interpretations of the “political” rule of a jurist and *vilāyat-i faqīh* (Governance of the Jurisconsult). Khomeini and his supporters interpreted *vilāyat-i faqīh* as the political authority of the jurist (*faqīh*) with all powers that had been vested in the Prophet and the Shi‘i Imams. Therefore, in the absence of the Hidden Imam, the status and the authority of the *faqīh* are parallel to that of “the Most Noble Messenger and the Imams.”¹¹¹ By *authority*, Khomeini meant “government, the administration of the country, and the implementation of the sacred laws of the *Shari‘ah*.”¹¹² As Khomeini elevated the traditional authority of the *faqīh* to “absolute deputyship of the Prophet,” he elevated the rank and the prestige of the jurist “to those of the infallible Imams.”¹¹³ As a result, *vilāyat* (Governance, Guardianship or Mandate) became a divine appointment without any human interference in the process of election; hence the *faqīh* held a “sacred” position.¹¹⁴

The Formation of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic

The ideology of the Iranian Revolution was constructed through Khomeini’s interpretation of certain key themes in historical Shi‘i Islam. The effectiveness of Khomeini’s ideology lay in his ability to interpret and articulate these themes with the charisma that garnered public support. He insisted on a regime that was governed by the rule of law (*ḥokūmat-i qanūni*) since Islam had come to establish the divine law here on earth.¹¹⁵

Based on his book, “Islamic Government” (“*Hokumat-i Islmai*”), Khomeini argued that Islamic law (*Shari‘ah*) was one of the most complete systems of law. It was capable of

governing all aspects of life by executing rules and regulations that govern all human relations including personal, social, economic and political matters, and human-God relations. He stated:

The laws of the *Shari'ah* embrace a diverse body of laws and regulations, which amount to a complete social system. In this system of laws, all the needs of man have been met: his dealings with his neighbors, fellow citizens, and clan, as well as children and relatives; the concerns of private and marital life; regulations concerning war and peace and interaction with other nations; penal and commercial law; and regulations pertaining to trade, industry and agriculture. Islamic law contains provisions relating to the preliminaries of marriage and the form in which it should be contracted, and others relating to the development of the embryo in the womb, and what food the parents should eat at the time of conception. It further stipulates the duties [that] are incumbent upon them while the infant is being suckled, and specifies how the child should be reared, and how the husband and the wife should relate to each other and to their children. Islam provides laws and instructions for all of these matters, aiming, as it does, to produce integrated and virtuous human beings who are walking embodiments of the law, or to put it differently, the law's voluntary and instinctive executors. It is obvious, then, how much care Islam devotes to government and the political and economic relations of society, with the goal of creating conditions conducive to the production of morally upright and virtuous human beings. [Thus,] both law and reason require that we [do] not permit governments to retain a non-Islamic or anti-Islamic character. The existence of a non-Islamic political order necessarily results in the non-implementation of the Islamic political order. Then, all non-Islamic systems of government are the systems of *kūfr* (anti-revolutionary; anti-religious) since the ruler in each case is an instance of *ṭāqūt* (profligate; oppressive), and it is our duty to remove from the life of Muslim society all traces of *kūfr* and destroy them.¹¹⁶

Due to its divine nature, Khomeini claims that Islamic law has the power not only to set rules for religious institutions, but also for political institutions and government:

Islamic government is a government of law. In this form of government, sovereignty belongs to God alone and law is His decree and command. The law of Islam; the divine command, has absolute authority over all individuals and the Islamic government. Everyone, including the Most Noble Messenger(s) and his successors, is subject to the law and will remain so for all eternity—the law that has been revealed by God, Almighty and Exalted, and expounded by the tongue of the Qur'an and the Most Noble Messenger(s).¹¹⁷

These statements affirmed Khomeini's beliefs that the divine was at the core of his proposed Islamic government. To justify his position, Khomeini posited that the appointment of *vilāyat*

was not motivated by the absolute power he would possess, but that it was about governance of the *ummah*.¹¹⁸ He explained:

The governance of the *faqīh* is a subject that elicits immediate acceptance. This vital Islamic concept requires little demonstration. Those who have some general awareness of the beliefs and ordinances of Islam will unhesitatingly give their assent to the principle of *vilāyat-i faqīh* as soon as they encounter it, and they will recognize it as necessary and self-evident. If little attention is paid to this principle today, so that it has come to require demonstration, it is because of the social circumstances prevailing among the Muslims in general and in the teaching institutions in particular.¹¹⁹

When we talk about *vilāyat* that the Prophet and Imams held, no one should mistake that the position *fuqahā'* hold during the occultation is the same as the position the Prophet or the Imams held. The issue here is not position or rank but responsibility. *Vilāyat* means the governance of the country and the execution of the laws of the holy *Sharī'ah*, which is a very important responsibility. It is not something to be taken lightly so that just about anyone can undertake this significant task and be placed above all humanity. In other words, *vilāyat* is governance, administration and execution of Islamic precepts against the supposition many hold. It is not a privilege, but a critical obligation. [Hence,] *faqīh* carries the responsibility of protecting Islam. When they say *fuqahā'* are the fortifications of Islam, it means that they are bound to protect Islam and create the basis for the protection of Islam. This is one of the most important religious precepts and an unconditional duty. Hence, in the same way that the Prophet and the Imams were protectors of Islam and observed the beliefs, rules and regulations of Islam, so it is the responsibility of the *fuqahā'*.¹²⁰

Based on his statements, Khomeini saw no reasons for opposition to *vilāyat-i faqīh*. Therefore, he considered any opposition to his proposed leadership system as opposition to Islam:

Some believe that if they submit to *vilāyat-i faqīh*, they will cause dictatorship, whereas this is not equated with Islam. Those who make such claims are haters of Islam and they should know that they cannot harm our regime with their opposition. The issue is that they do not want Islam to be established and this is their plot right now. Let everyone; all the governments in the world know that these people are afraid of Islam that if Islam is established they can no longer do everything they desire.¹²¹

After extensive debates among the clerical establishment, in November 1979, the newly proposed constitution was adopted by national referendum. Khomeini secured the position of the *Valī-i Amr* (Supreme Leader) as the highest authority in Iran, and was officially recognized as the Leader of the Islamic Revolution (*Rahbar-i Enqelab-i Islami*).

Controversies over the Concept of *Vilāyat-i Faqīh*

The declarations made by Khomeini prior to his arrival to Tehran and statements he made after the Revolution, specifically in his book, “*Hokumat-i Islami va Vilayat-i Faqih*” (“Islamic Government and the Governance of the Jurisconsult”) became somewhat contradictory. On one hand, he seemed to truly believe he was elected by the people as the revolutionary leader. On the other hand, he believed he was appointed by God to lead Iranians out of oppression.

These controversies gave rise to the question of whether to include *vilāyat-i faqīh* into the Islamic Republic’s Constitution or leave it out. It is reported that the first draft of the constitution was written during the presidency of Mehdi Bazargan (February 4, 1979 – November 6, 1979), and there was no mention of *vilāyat-i faqīh*. Ayatollah Khomeini approved the draft without any mention of it and turned it over to the Council of the Islamic Revolution (*Shura-i Enqelab-i Islami*). After their review and approval, the Council forwarded it to the Assembly of Experts (*Majlis-i Khobregan*) for final review and vote. It was not until Ayatollah Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini Beheshti’s (d. 1981) term as the head of the Chairman of the Assembly of Experts in 1979 that *vilāyat-i faqīh* was added to the Constitution.¹²²

According to reports from the Islamic Republic’s first President Abdulhassan Bani-Sadr (February 4, 1980 – June 21, 1981), the concept of *vilāyat-i faqīh* faced strong opposition from several members of the Assembly of Experts. Some of these members were Ayatollah Taleqani, Ezzatollah Sahabi, ‘Ali Golzadeh Qofuri, Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi, Nourbakhsh and Moghaddam Mraquehi. These members initially decided to resign from the Assembly in protest, but ultimately decided that it was in the best interests of the nation to remain, but maintain their opposition.¹²³ Other leading jurists, who remained opposed to *vilāyat-i faqīh* as interpreted by Khomeini, were Ayatollah Seyyed Kazem Shari’atmadari, Ayatollah Seyyed Abu El Qasem

Khoei, Ayatollah Hassan Tabatabai Qomi, Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari and Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Sistani.¹²⁴

Ayatollah ‘Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani reports that the reason Khomeini and other clergymen initially decided to exclude *vilāyat-i faqīh* from the constitution was not because Khomeini felt it was unimportant, but because they were unsure how to articulate it. Consequently, in his attempts to clarify any confusion and avoid any criticism from the intellectuals, Khomeini began to emphasize the importance of the role of the supreme leader in his speeches.¹²⁵

Debates over the Political Role of *Vilāyat-i Faqīh*

According to Mohsen Kadivar, these ambiguities and contradictory comments about the role of a jurist and the importance of people’s involvement in the decision-makings of the government gave birth to two opposing schools of thought: *Vilāyat-i naṣb* (appointive guardianship) and *vilāyat-i nokhb* (elective guardianship).¹²⁶ Ayatollah Hossein-‘Ali Montazeri (1922-2009) seems to have been the leading cleric of the latter position. In some ways he believed Khomeini’s perceived powers limited and gave more weight to the public’s role in government. The more moderates viewed *vilāyat* as “representation” rather than guardianship, akin to contractual oversight. Others took a more cautious approach. They believed it was possible for a *faqīh* to undertake *vilāyat* only if he met all the religious and scholarly qualifications. However, the opponents of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, such as Mohsen Kadivar, argued that scholarly and religious training did not properly prepare a *faqīh* for political leadership. Only those who had been educated in the political fields were suitable for governing a nation. Therefore, this group of *fuqahā*’ completely rejected the notion of *vilāyat-i faqīh* as “invalid.”¹²⁷

According to Ayatollah Montazeri, the fundamental questions about *vilāyat-i faqīh* include: whether or not it is a power which has been bestowed upon the guardian by God. Or, does it mean that God has set certain conditions and people themselves have given that guardianship to the *faqīh*? If the latter is true, argues Kadivar, then the right to execute orders comes from God and is bestowed upon people. He further adds that the nature of *vilāyat-i faqīh* raises two additional questions among the *fuqahā*: whether God has given the *faqīh* authority and commanded him to become *valī* (leader) of the people? Or God has prescribed certain attributes for the *faqīh* so that people can select him based on those conditions?¹²⁸

Moreover, Kadivar argues that the way *vilāyat-i faqīh* has been described by Khomeini and his supporters, the *faqīh* is given *vilāyat* over *all* human affairs. If this were true, how would it be possible to give *vilāyat* to the *faqīh* but deny him the ability to execute all its powers?¹²⁹

The Absolute, Appointive Vilāyat-i Faqīh

According to Mohsen Kadivar, an absolute, appointive *vilāyat-i faqīh* (*naẓariyyeh-i naṣb*) is the only form of Islamic government during the occultation of the infallible Imam, and its execution is a binding religious duty on the society. Therefore, the *faqīh* exercises absolute authority over the Islamic government. Although such a government would make sense if it was approved by the public, the legitimacy of all decisions and acts in the public sphere would depend on the approval and authorization of the Supreme Jurist (*valī-i faqīh*) or the supreme leader (*valī-i amr*).¹³⁰ Because the absolute, appointive *vilāyat* takes into account public interests and supervises the society in all aspects, the execution and enforcement of Islamic precepts in its complete form is impossible without absolute, appointive *vilāyat*.¹³¹

Kadivar's theory is based on four principles: i) guardianship (*vilāyat*), ii) appointment, iii) absoluteness, and iv) jurisdiction.¹³²

Kadivar explains that the two meanings of the principle of *vilāyat* – being the guardian over people and being responsible for the people while exercising jurisdiction over their affairs – considers the public to be incapable of making moral or religious decisions. Hence, the religious oversight and legitimacy of all decisions and actions within the public domain is given to the authority and approval of the supreme leader as the *valī-i amr*. Citizens have no say in the appointment or the dismissal of the *valī-i amr*. The supreme leader is accountable to God alone, and there is no authority, other than God, who can oversee his decisions. As a result, the authority of the *valī-i amr* is binding on the public. It is not the task of the supreme leader to conform to the public opinion, but it is the religious duty of the society to submit to the decisions and laws established by the *valī-i amr*.¹³³

Kadivar also explains the principle of *appointment*, which means that the *valī-i faqīh* has been appointed by God alone hence not elected by the people. Since the divine rule is instrumental in his election, the legitimacy of his government is established, and he is pronounced qualified to oversee the lives of the public on behalf of the Hidden Imam. Since the divine decides on the qualifications of the *valī-i amr*, the public can neither be consulted nor participate in the installment and dismissal of the supreme leader. In other words, beyond the *valī-i amr* is God.¹³⁴

The principle of *absoluteness* according to Kadivar means that all matters in the public domain fall under the jurisdiction of the *valī-i faqīh*. Since his authority is analogous to that of the Prophet and the Imams, he is able to rule on all issues, including religious and non-religious matters, with the best interests of the state in mind. All branches of the government, including judicial, legislative, executive, and military, and the media are under his jurisdiction. In his management of the society, the *valī-i amr* appoints those he deems to be qualified to govern the

state. Since, in his own estimation, the supreme leader is bound by God's laws and not social laws, he is not bound by the constitution either. His decrees take precedence over all other decrees, and in case of any conflicts, his decrees prevail.¹³⁵

The next principle Kadivar explains is *jurisdiction*, which is the most vital duty of the *valī-i amr*. Since Islamic jurisprudence is capable of providing solutions for all social, cultural, economic, political, and military rule of the Islamic society and the world as a whole, it is able to manage and guide both the Muslim and non-Muslim populations of the world. Thus, Islamic jurisprudence plays an indispensable role in the planning and management of society. Politics is a branch of Islamic jurisprudence hence all political decisions must be in agreement with religious fundamentals. Islamic jurisprudence provides comprehensive guidelines for the management and administration of civil life from its inception to death. And, only Islamic jurists who are appointed by God can exercise this right.¹³⁶

Advocates of this theory find evidence to support their views in Articles 5 and 107 of the Constitution which state:

Article 5

During the Occultation of the Valī al-Asr (may God hasten his reappearance), the wilayah and leadership of the Ummah devolve upon the just ('adil] and pious [muttaqi] faqih, who is fully aware of the circumstances of his age; courageous, resourceful, and possessed of administrative ability, and will assume the responsibilities of this office in accordance with Article 107.¹³⁷

Article 107

After the demise of the eminent marjia' al-taqlid and great leader of the universal Islamic revolution, and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatullah al-'Uzma Imam Khumayni - quddisa sirruh al-sharif - who was recognized and accepted as marji' and Leader by a decisive majority of the people, the task of appointing the Leader shall be vested with the experts elected by the people. The experts will review and consult among themselves concerning all the foqaha' possessing the qualifications specified in Articles 5 and 109. In the event they find one of them better versed in Islamic regulations, the subjects of the fiqh, or in political and social Issues, or possessing general popularity or

special prominence for any of the qualifications mentioned in Article 109, they shall elect him as the Leader. Otherwise, in the absence of such superiority, they shall elect and declare one of them as the Leader. The Leader thus elected by the Assembly of Experts shall assume all the powers of the *vilāyat al-amr* and all the responsibilities arising there from. The Leader is equal with the rest of the people of the country in the eyes of law.¹³⁸

As indicated in Article 107 of the Islamic Republic's constitution, "the Leader is equal with the rest of the people of the country in the eyes of the law."¹³⁹ At the same time, the supreme leader is bound by God's laws as opposed to social laws. Since he is accountable to God alone and his decisions "take precedence over any other decision," he is not bound to the constitution and he holds a higher authority than the constitution...and his authority is even above the constitution. This seems to reject the very notion of equality as stated in Article 107. Although the Iranian constitution mandates the equality of the leader with the rest of the Iranian citizens, his divinely-appointed position may appear to reject this very notion of equality.

Ayatollah Nematollah Salehi Najafabadi (1923-2006) as one of the strong supporters of the appointive theory claimed that *vilāyat-i faqīh* superseded all other branches of government and his orders were [fully] executable in the Islamic government. He looked at *vilāyat-i faqīh* as a bilateral contract between the *faqīh* and the people that neither side could breach. Therefore, he argued that *vilāyat-i faqīh* could not be replaced unless the *faqīh* committed a violation. He rejected the notion of collective rule of the *Shura al-Fuqahā' al-Marja'* (the Leadership Council of the Jurists). He believed that only one *faqīh* could have *vilāyat* at any given time and usually, such authority ended at the time of his death, unless he had acted against Islamic precepts or was unable to perform his duties.¹⁴⁰

Ayatollah Abdollah Javedi-Amoli (1933-Present) is in very close agreement with Ayatollah Najafabadi. He asserts that no human being can have *vilāyat* over another human being unless he has been elected by God. The Immaculate Imams who have been appointed by

God as the guardians of the people are able to elect a *valī* and a leader on their behalf. Those appointed on behalf of the Imams received such authority from God so that they could govern the Islamic society. Therefore, decision-making falls under the authority of the *faqīh* because the source of his power and guardianship is the divine. He argues against those who support the elective theory and says that *vilāyat* cannot be done according to human selection because no mature and reasonable person would surrender his sovereignty to another. Such surrender comes through *vilāyat* because *vilāyat-i faqīh* in the sense of religious jurisprudence means absolute *vilāyat* over the divine Islamic society, and complete submission to God. Therefore, the power to represent the *faqīh* does not end until his authority is replaced by another *valī* from the group of *fuqahā*. Since his authority has been approved by the Prophet and the Immaculate Imams, he remains in authority unless he is found in violation of Islamic precepts.¹⁴¹

Ayatollah Mohammad Shirazi (1928-2001) agreed with Ayatollah Javedi-Amoli contending that *vilāyat-i faqīh* was in fact a representative of the Imam. However, he did not believe that only one qualified *faqīh* could be *valī* at any given time. Still, he agreed that since the *faqīh* assumed leadership according to the laws of Islam, he did not have the right to deviate from Islamic law and rule based on his own opinions. At the same time, he also needed to heed the opinions of other *fuqahā* as well.¹⁴²

On the other hand, Ayatollah Montazeri explained that *vilāyat* was the ultimate power of intervention in the personal affairs of another human being, whether or not the person was mature, meaning that the *valī* could intervene in all personal and non-personal affairs of an individual. However, only God exercised the true, unconditional, and conventional *vilāyat* over the people.¹⁴³

As a supporter of the *nazariyyeh-i naṣb*, the current Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei asserts that the *valī-i amr* exercises all the authorities of the Prophet of Islam (even authority over the life of Muslims), and his opinion takes precedence over the view of all citizens and *fuqahā*. He contends:

The intention of absolute *vilāyat-i faqīh* is that the orthodox religion of Islam, which is the last divine religion and continues until the Judgment Day, is a religion for government and administration of societal affairs. Hence, all classes of the Islamic society inevitably are in need of a *valī-i amr* and a ruler (*ḥākim*) and a leader (*rahbar*), so that the Islamic *ummah* is protected from its evil enemies. It is the task of the *valī-i faqīh* to guard the Islamic societal order, establish justice, and thwart injustice and oppression of the weak, while providing means for cultural, political and societal progress. Such an execution of power may be in contradiction with the aspirations, interests, and freedoms of some people. Therefore, once the ruler of Muslims has accepted the critical leadership role based on religious precepts, he must make appropriate decisions based on Islamic jurisprudence and issue necessary orders. When public interests are at stake, the decisions of the supreme leader take precedence over any other decision, even if they are in conflict with people’s opinion.¹⁴⁴

He too agrees with Ayatollah Khomeini that opposition to *vilāyat-i faqīh* indeed is opposition to Islam:

Islam is the reason for those who oppose *vilāyat-i faqīh*. Their opposition is not to *vilāyat* because it means government or rule. Their opposition is to the *faqīh* because the role of a *faqīh* is based on religion therefore implying the presence of religion in the society. This is what they cannot tolerate. It is not the government but government through religion, in this case Islam. They are indeed rejecting Islam. They do not want Islam to guide them and govern them. However, Imam Khomeini stood still against any opposition because he believed in the verities of Islam, its greatness and its power. He knew that the greatness of a nation along with justice will be provided under the shadow of Islamic principles. There were those who called upon democracy in their opposition to *vilāyat-i faqīh*. Yet, they were unable to provide the needs of the people. But Islam can do this. It is for this very reason that the Islamic Republic has been able to withstand the most powerful global forces and spread its movement into the Muslim world. The only reason for the reputable standing of the Islamic Republic of Iran within the global community, especially the Muslim world, is due to the blessing of Islam. Even those who do not believe in Islam witness the power of Islam and its influence socially, politically, globally, culturally, and in every realm.¹⁴⁵

The Elective, Conditional Vilāyat-i Faqīh

According to Kadivar, due to challenges posed by the appointive, absolute *vilāyat-i faqīh*, both in theory and in practice, some jurists offer an alternative, the elective, conditional view (*naẓariyyeh-i nokhb*). He explains that based on this view, during the absence of the Immaculate Imam, in the event a representative has not been specified, the people or their representatives must elect a temporary *faqīh* as their *valī-i amr* to take over the administration of society based on the laws approved by the jurists and the people. The elected *faqīh* would be responsible for the people. Hence, according to this interpretation neither the absolute, appointive *vilāyat-i faqīh* nor democracy is entirely acceptable, but perhaps through modification and/or the combination of the two one can arrive at democracy.¹⁴⁶

Kadivar introduces various attempts to resolve this challenge: first, the formation of a conditional government through the election of a group of representatives by the people. Second, the limited involvement of the *fuqahā'* in the operation of the society and increased involvement in consent and oversight. Third, the supreme ruler should be appointed from among the *fuqahā'* through a traditional approach instead of democratic elections. According to him, the final attempt offers three approaches: 1) Select a ruler out of qualified jurists based on the will and election of the people prior to his appointment by the divine ruler. 2) Since *vilāyat* occurs as a result of independent jurisdiction with the consent of the people, the appointed government takes the form of a religious treaty between the supreme ruler and the people. 3) Given that the relationship between the ruler and his public is based on an agreement, the constitution is appropriate and lawful. Therefore, the rule and government of the supreme ruler is limited to the terms and conditions set forth in the constitution.¹⁴⁷

Ayatollah Montazeri too, did not find sufficient evidence for the appointive theory. He believed that at any given time more than one *faqīh* has the qualifications for *vilāyat* and in that case, he offered three possible solutions: 1) People can elect any *faqīh* who possesses the qualifications approved by the Imams as *valī-i faqīh*. 2) Every *faqīh* has *vilāyat*, but only one of them is elected to rule. 3) They are collectively appointed to *vilāyat*, and together regarded as the Imam's representatives. However, the execution of their power must be based on *shura* (consultation) and the consensus of all the members of *Shura al-Fuqahā' al-Marja'* (the Leadership Council of the Jurists). Montazeri believed that any *faqīh* or several *fuqahā'* through whom *shura* obtained authority to oversee the laws of the country can be selected as leaders by a majority vote.¹⁴⁸

Furthermore, Montazeri asserted that between the opinions expressed; *nazariyyeh-i naṣb* or *nazariyyeh-i nokhb*, the second was more logical. Based on this view, God has given the people the right to select a qualified individual for leadership. Therefore the right to choose has been given to the people by God. He concluded that the first opinion that God had appointed a person as *vilāyat-i faqīh* was false. He further argued what if a *ẓalim* (unjust; cruel) appointed himself as *vilāyat-i faqīh* by force? In this case, *ẓolm* (injustice; cruelty) had been committed against people and what the *faqīh* had done was against religion and reason. Therefore by reason, there was no other way but the appointment of a government by the people. This was the only remaining option. In the past, those who practiced law based on reason, elected a reasonable person as their leader or *valī*.¹⁴⁹

Ayatollah Shirazi supported the elective theory and supported Montazeri's views on the *Shura al-Fuqaha' al-Marja'*. He, too, offered three solutions for the process of electing *valī-i faqīh*: 1) If there is only one *faqīh* who meets all the criteria of a *marja'* (source of religious

reference) and is elected by an overwhelmingly public majority, then he is the *valī-i faqīh*. However, 2) if several *fuqahā'* meet the criteria of *marja'*, and there is no overwhelming endorsement for any one of them, the *Shura al-Fuqahā' al-Marja'* becomes *vilāyat-i faqīh*. Therefore, the members of this Council are the qualified *fuqahā'* and *marja'*. On the other hand, 3) the members of the Council have an option of electing one of the *fuqahā'* from amongst themselves as the *vilāyat-i faqīh*.¹⁵⁰

Ayatollah Shirazi contended that the elective theory based on *shura* was not merely a theory, but there was evidence for it in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Looking into scriptures, he cited Al-'Imran (3):159 and The Consultation (42):38 as *āyat* (verses) that emphasise the importance of *shura* in the government and how *vilāyat-i faqīh* is validated only through *shura*. He also recited cases in the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet that supported the idea of *shura* and situations where the Prophet entered into consultation by his free will and took the view of the majority. Finally, Ayatollah Shirazi believed that currently Muslims do not have one specific individual as *vilāyat-i faqīh* or *valī-i amr* other than the *Shura al-Fuqahā' al-Marja'*.¹⁵¹

On the other hand, Kadivar believes that since *shura* does not depend on votes, it does not necessarily correspond with the elective theory. He views *shura* as neither democratic nor antidemocratic, but as a system with democratic potential.¹⁵²

Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani expresses his views:

I believe that at any given time there may be several *fuqahā'* who have the qualifications for becoming a *faqīh*, but eventually one of them should be elected. It is possible that in the election process mistakes occur. Meaning, the Assembly of Experts elects an individual who is not qualified to be a *faqīh* while a qualified individual exists in the society. In this case, the supporters of such theory must accept that the elected individual is not a true *valī-i amr*.¹⁵³

Ayatollah Qorbanali Dorri-Najafabadi (1950-present) reiterates the views of his colleagues:

The election of the leader of the Islamic Republic and our constitution, which are inspired by our religion, are done through the election of the people. It is the people who elect the highest office in the country. They are the ones who want a leader to become a leader. Every election is ultimately in the hands of the public.¹⁵⁴

Defenders of the elective theory find support for their arguments in Articles 6 and 111 of the Constitution.

Article 6

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the affairs of the country must be administered on the basis of public opinion expressed by the means of elections, including the election of the President, the representatives of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, and the members of councils, or by means of referenda in matters specified in other articles of this Constitution.¹⁵⁵

Article 111

Whenever the Leader becomes incapable of fulfilling his constitutional duties, or loses one of the qualifications mentioned in Articles 5 and 109, or it becomes known that he did not possess some of the qualifications initially, he will be dismissed. The authority of determination in this matter is vested with the experts specified in Article 108. In the event of the death, or resignation or dismissal of the Leader, the experts shall take steps within the shortest possible time for the appointment of the new Leader. Until the appointment of the new Leader, a council consisting of the President, head of the judicial power, and a faqih from the Guardian Council, upon the decision of the Nation's Exigency Council, shall temporarily take over all the duties of the Leader. In the event, during this period, any one of them is unable to fulfill his duties for whatsoever reason, another person, upon the decision of a majority of foqaha' in the Nation's Exigency Council shall be elected in his place. This council shall take action in respect of items 1, 3, 5, and 10, and sections d, e and f of item 6 of Article 110, upon the decision of three-fourths of the members of the Nation's Exigency Council. Whenever the Leader becomes temporarily unable to perform the duties of leadership owing to his illness or any other incident, then during this period, the council mentioned in this Article shall assume his duties.¹⁵⁶

Invalidity of Vilāyat-i Faqīh

The final view with respect to *vilāyat-i faqīh* is the absolute denial of such authority, asserts Kadivar. He explains that the believers of this view argue that *vilāyat-i faqīh*, in the

political sphere, whether appointed or elected, is not supported by compelling religious attestation. Basically, Islam has not offered a fixed model for the political administration of society. *Vilāyat-i faqīh*, as an autocratic rule of God based on the divine rights of the *faqīh*, is incompatible with democracy. Because democracy is established based on principles of sovereignty, participation, rule of law and human rights, it is clearly incompatible with clerical rule or the rule of the jurist.¹⁵⁷

Furthermore, those who consider the two compatible, do so due to the lack of familiarity with Islamic jurisprudential terminology and the theory of democracy, Kadivar argues. Hence, the democratic management of an Islamic society is not dependent on the fundamental compatibility between democracy and *vilāyat-i faqīh*. Similar to the views of Ayatollah Montazeri, Kadivar also believes that the majority of the Islamic society can have a democratic government while remaining steadfast in their faith and ethical values, because Islam as a religion can amalgamate with democracy in modern political life.¹⁵⁸

Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari (1920-1979) has written: “People did not envision *vilāyat-i faqīh* as the rule of the clergy and the government of the country. This concept belongs to the Sunni world. No such concept has ever existed in Shi‘i Islam.”¹⁵⁹ Grand Ayatollah Seyyid Ali al-Husayni al-Sistani (1930-present) contends that *vilāyat-i faqīh* is about addressing religious affairs and for *taqlīd* (to follow or imitate a religious reference). However, when it comes to public affairs and order in an Islamic society, both a *faqīh* and a non-*faqīh* can become leaders of the nation. In other words, there is no *āyah* in the Qur’an that indicates a *faqīh* can become leader. In religious issues, there is a need for the guidance of a *faqīh* but not in [political] leadership.¹⁶⁰ Finally, Grand Ayatollah Hassan Tabataba’i-Qomi (1911-present) believes that under current conditions, establishment of an Islamic government is impossible.¹⁶¹

Conditions for Vilāyat al-Faqih

Several of the *fuqahā'* have outlined conditions when a *faqīh* could undertake *vilāyat*. Ayatollah Khomeini drew a close relation between knowledge and justice. He argued, because Islamic government is a government of law, the head of the government needs to know [Islamic] law. This is necessary not only for the ruler but for anyone who holds an office. Additionally, he should be a pious and just individual who does not practice oppression and dictatorship.¹⁶²

Ayatollah Montazeri also emphasized that the responsibility of leadership should be given to the most knowledgeable individual, not just a *faqīh*, but any capable person in the field. Since in all Islamic governments, whether based on religion or non-religion, there is an individual with higher knowledge, expertise, and ability to lead, it is in the best interests of society for such an individual to be elected.¹⁶³

Ayatollah Najafabadi asserted that in addition to having knowledge of religious jurisprudence and justice, the *valī* must have political awareness, expertise in the administration of the society, prudence and foresightedness in all national affairs, and courage and decisiveness in decision making. A *faqīh* who does not have these characteristics cannot have *vilāyat*.¹⁶⁴

Even 34 years after the establishment of the Islamic Republic, Iran remains to be in struggle over the essence and authority of the supreme leader. As tensions between the three factions of the Islamic government grow – the conservatives, moderates and reformists – so does the struggle as how to define the highest office of Iran's political order.¹⁶⁵

PHASE I

THE EMERGENCE OF AYATOLLAH KHAMENEI

THE CURRENT *VALĪ-I FAQĪH* OF

THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN:

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

(1962-1979)

CHAPTER 5
THE POLITICAL JOURNEY OF
AYATOLLAH ‘ALI HOSSEINI KHAMENEI
(1962-1979)

Born in 1939 in Mashhad into an Azeri religious family, Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei studied religion under his parents’ wings. Unlike his parents, Seyyed ‘Ali had political inclinations akin to his paternal and maternal grandfathers. His paternal grandfather, Ayatollah Seyyed Hossein Hosseini Khamenei (1844-1907), was a prominent Shi‘i *‘alīm* (religious scholar) of the late 19th century. He was a reputed scholar, a jurist, and had a distinct social and political ideology. He was also one of the ‘ulama’ who supported the 1905-6 Constitutional Movement.¹⁶⁶ His maternal grandfather, Hajj Seyyed Hashim Mirdamadi (1885-1960), was a *mujtahid* (jurist-intellectual). He too was among the ‘ulama’ involved in social and political uprisings, and after the bloody events of the Goharshad Mosque in 1935, he was arrested along with several other ‘ulama’ and later exiled.¹⁶⁷

Religious Training

Khamenei began his religious training at home from the young age of four. Though his father Ayatollah Seyyed Javad Khamenei (d. 1986) was his primary educator, teaching his young son ‘Ali, the Qur’an, his mother Khadijeh Mirdamadi (d. 1989) also played a critical role in his religious educational development.¹⁶⁸ She read the Qur’an to her children at nights and taught them to pray. According to Khamenei, both his parents were closely involved with the Muslim community. His father was a recognized cleric who often received unexpected guests for

consultation. Khamenei still recalls the adjustments his mother and his seven siblings had to make in their small house, while his father consulted numerous guests.¹⁶⁹ He explains:

Up until I was four or five, our house was 60-70 square-meters, located in a poor neighborhood (*faqīrneshin*) in Mashhad, which only had one room with a dark and suffocating (*khafeh-i*) basement! When guests arrived for my father, and he often had guests because he was a cleric, our house was the place for consultation (*maḥal-i marja`*), so we all had to go to the basement until they had left! Later, a group of my father's friends purchased a small piece of property next to our house and built an addition. Then, we had three rooms.¹⁷⁰

Khamenei's mother was a source of consultation (*marja`*) for the local women who sought her advice on childrearing, based on Qur'anic principles.¹⁷¹ Still to this date, Khamenei speaks highly of his parents:

My parents were very good parents. My father was a pious, quiet, and a shy individual, who loved to study *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *uṣūl* (principles of religion), *tafsīr* (Qur'an exegesis), *ḥadīth* (sayings of the Prophet), *rijāl* (history of narrators), and other historical books. He dedicated a corner of the house to his numerous books, which we referred to as "our library." My mother was a very intelligent and educated woman, who loved to read. She enjoyed poetry, art, and was well acquainted with "Hafez" (a collection of Persian poetry). She was very well-versed in the Qur'an and recited it beautifully. When we were children, we would sit by our mother and she would read the Qur'an to us...about the lives of the Prophets...and explain their stories. She was a woman of prayer who loved to worship...so on a daily basis she gathered her children around her for prayer.¹⁷²

At age seven, Khamenei entered *Dar al-Ta`alīm Diyanati* Elementary School, also known as Tadin School (*Madrseh-i Tadin*) with his older brother Seyyed Mohammad.¹⁷³ His favorite subject was religious studies (*ta`alīmāt-i dīnī*), and he soon became the school's Qur'an reciter. It was during this period that Reza Shah implemented the new social reforms, including his controversial policy of *Kashf-i Hijāb*, which banned women from covering their hair by wearing the Islamic *hijāb* in public. Due to his opposition to the Shah's Westernization of Iran and his strict religious beliefs, Khamenei's father did not allow his children to attend public high school. He claimed that the Shah had imposed Western culture (*taḥmīl-i farhang-i gharbī*) on Iran's educational system. Due to the unavailability of local religious schools, Khamenei's father

became their primary teacher, while his sons insisted on attending night school.¹⁷⁴ Reflecting on his father's religious standings, Khamenei explains that everyone at home was required to fully adhere to the Islamic dress code:

Our family was a clerical family from both sides. It was for this very reason that my older brother Seyyed Mohammad and I wore clerical garbs from childhood and turbans from high school. The shoes that my father bought us had no laces because they were considered improper for clerics. The clerical shoes at the time were sandals (*n'ālīn*) called, "*Mīrza 'yi*," and were without laces. But, we all longed for shoes with laces. Up until today I have not worn shoes with laces.¹⁷⁵

After high school, Khamenei continued his academic endeavors at the theological school in Qom (*Hawzah 'Allmiyeh*) in 1958. He pursued subjects in *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence) and *dars al-kharij* (advanced independent studies) under prominent authorities such as the Late Ayatollah al-'Uzmā Borujerdi, Ayatollah Khomeini, Sheykh Morteza Ha'iri Yazdi and 'Allama Mohammad Husayn Tabatabaei.¹⁷⁶ After hearing of his father's severe cataract condition and his potential loss of eyesight in 1964, Khamenei left his studies and returned to Mashhad to care for his father. Though it was a difficult decision for Khamenei, he left Qom convinced that it was God's will and if God intended, he would return someday. He says: "I went to Mashhad and the Almighty God (*khodā-ye mote 'āl*) gave me numerous successes. Anyhow, I took care of my obligations. If I have ever had any success in my life, I believe it was due to the kindness I showed towards my father and mother."¹⁷⁷

From a very young age everyone knew that Khamenei was suited to become a cleric—a dream both he and his parents held. Despite his formal education, Khamenei credits his father for his advanced mastery of Shi'i legal theory and principles of jurisprudence.¹⁷⁸

The Beginning of Khamenei's Political Aspirations

Three critical political events unfolded during Khamenei's youth that influenced his political views: the Shah's social reforms, the political upheavals of Mosaddeq's nationalization of Iran's oil, and his introduction to Navab Safavi's Islamic movement.

As a young boy, Khamenei was in seventh grade when Reza Shah Pahlavi implemented new social reforms.¹⁷⁹ Shortly thereafter, Mosaddeq initiated the nationalization of Iran's oil. Khamenei witnessed the events unfolding in Mashhad. People gathered by the thousands on Tabaresi Street to support Mosaddeq. They brought down the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (*Sherkat-i Naft-i Engelis va Iran*) sign and replaced it with the National Oil Company (*Sherkat-i Meli-ye Naft*). Khamenei witnessed Britain's resistance to this change by initiating legal proceedings in court. Along with other youth, Khamenei attended numerous gatherings organized by religious and national groups, specifically "The Coalition of Islamic Societies" (*Hay'atha-ye Mo'talefeh-i Islami*).¹⁸⁰

The first time Khamenei encountered the political activism of a Shi'i cleric was from Ayatollah Seyyed Abou al-Qasim Kashani, who fervently supported Mosaddeq's movement. Ayatollah Kashani's representative Afzal al-Motekalemin Araki located in Mashhad called upon a "meeting" at Goharshad mosque. This was the first time Khamenei heard the English word for "meeting." The young, curious Khamenei attended.¹⁸¹ To their despair, the people of Mashhad were informed of Mosaddeq's fall on August 19, 1953 (28 Mordad 1332), by the local radio. Consequently, the Shah's military forces attacked the city, shops, newspapers, buildings, homes, and the offices of "Iran Party" (*Hezb-i Iran*), located near Seyyed Javad Khamenei's house, and destroyed any support for Mosaddeq.¹⁸²

As he explains in his biography, through Mosaddeq's coup, Khamenei witnessed the manner in which the West exercised its power. As a young man, he experienced Western intervention in Iran's domestic affairs and thought Iran's leader, the Shah, was too weak to fend off this Western invasion. Khamenei also explains that he observed how Western powers imposed their will on Iran, specifically how America used "peace-making" as a distraction to get its grips on Iran's oil. He also saw the Shah's weakness when he placed his own interests before the nation's interests. Instead of resisting foreign control, the Shah turned his back on his people and vandalized homes and businesses by military forces. Furthermore, through Ayatollah Kashani's support of Mosaddeq's movement, he observed the critical role Shi'i 'ulama' played in Iran's political affairs. Through these experiences and the hatred his father expressed for the Shah, Khamenei began his dedicated journey of dislike and opposition to the Shah's regime from a young age.¹⁸³

At 13, Khamenei recalls his first spark of political activism, when he learned of Seyyed Navab Safavi (1923-1955), the Iranian Islamic revolutionist and the leader of Feda'iyyan-i Islam (Devotees of Islam). In spring 1952, Navab Safavi visited Mashhad with a group of his supporters (Feda'iyyan-i Islam) to lecture at Solayman-Khan and 'Allamah Navab Schools. Khamenei had heard about him during Mosaddeq's movement and wanted to meet him. Khamenei attended the lectures with his father and was inspired by Navab's call for the revival of Islam (*ahya-ye Islam*) and the rule of divine laws (*hākemiyat-i ahkam-i elahī*). Khamenei still recalls Navab's words: "We must make Islam rule (*ma bayad Islam ra hākim konim*). Muslim brothers, zealous brothers, Islam must rule!"¹⁸⁴ Navab criticized the Shah for his fraudulent dealings with Britain, and for lying to the Iranian nation. Supporters of Navab Safavi assisted with the formation of the Coalition of the Islamic Societies and expressed their disgust for the

court's interference with the nationalization of Iran's oil industry.¹⁸⁵ Khamenei was influenced by Navab and his words had a lasting impact. "It was at that very moment, because of Navab Safavi that the consciousness of Islamic Revolutionary activism sparked in me. I have no doubt that it was Navab Safavi who first kindled the fire of revolutionary Islam in my heart."¹⁸⁶

A mere two years after Mosaddeq's coup in 1955, Navab Safavi was executed by the Shah's regime. This enraged students and administrators at the Islamic Seminary of Qom (Hawzah 'Allmiyeh), as they protested with anti-Shah slogans and screamed obscenities. For the first time, Khamenei witnessed political fervor in an educational setting.¹⁸⁷

Khamenei-Khomeini Family Relations

Khamenei first learned about Khomeini in the summer of 1955-6 through Khomeini's son Seyyed Mostafa, who spoke at a student gathering in Mashhad. He described his father as a renowned teacher at Hawzah 'Allmiyeh in Qom, who was famous for his ethics and jurisprudence courses.¹⁸⁸ The first time Khamenei met Khomeini was in 1957 when he traveled to Qom with his mother. Since his parents knew Khomeini and his wife, his mother took the young Khamenei to meet Khomeini and sit through his *dars al-kharij* (Advanced Independent Studies) at the seminary. During his visit, he also attended Khomeini's lecture at Salmasi Masjid. His next encounter was in 1958 when he went to Qom to formally study at Hawzah 'Allmiyeh and attended Khomeini's *usūl* and *fiqh* courses.¹⁸⁹ After his first year, when Khamenei was leaving for summer vacation, he stopped by his teacher to ask for permission to leave for Mashhad. While sitting on the ground with a pile of books, Khomeini looked up, wished him well and sent greetings to his father. "He was a man of a few words," says Khamenei, and for that he admired his teacher.¹⁹⁰

The Beginning of Khamenei's Political Activism

With the onset of Khomeini's movement in 1962, Khamenei and his two brothers entered the political scene and joined anti-Pahlavi activities. Though he was born to apolitical parents, while studying at the Hawzah 'Allmiyeh in Qom (1958-1964), Khamenei was captured by his teacher's, Ayatollah Khomeini's, political ideologies and interpretations of Islam. Khamenei considered himself not only a student but a disciple of Ayatollah Khomeini, and at age 23, joined his teacher's revolutionary movement against Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi.¹⁹¹ This political activism, which included imprisonments and exiles, lasted 16 years until the victory signs of the Islamic Revolution in 1978.

Khamenei describes his mentor Ayatollah Khomeini's robust political posture during his struggle against the Shah:

He stood still like a strong wall against the Shah's regime. He did not cave into pressures. He did not seem afraid. He spoke with authority. He said little, but his message was strong. His messages melted the hearts of his listeners. His words were sweet and warm, filled with wisdom and knowledge. His thoughts were so influential that he would bring tears to the eyes of his listeners. When Khomeini objected to the Shah's ratification of the referendum, he did it fearlessly and challenged the Shah's government to come to Qom, kneel before the 'ulama' so that they could help him understand which part of the referendum had spiritual problems. The weakness of the Shah's government was that they did not precisely define their opponent Imam Khomeini. They did not realize that Khomeini nullified threats and continuously revived courage in people. Imam Khomeini was gifted with political awareness and political boldness – two rare qualities in other high ranking 'ulama' of the time. Khomeini had a splendid ability to lead an impressive Islamic movement against a powerful regime backed with foreign powers with his talents, intelligence and insightfulness in social and political issues. He had a deep understanding of Islamic issues and [splendid] ability to place them all into a framework of a massive revolution. It is for these reasons that studying Imam Khomeini's political thought is a worthy and critical cause. Perhaps one can gather Khomeini's religious views, courage, political perceptions and divine inspiration under the umbrella of "religious motivation" (*angizeh-i dīni*).¹⁹²

First Arrest

With political aspiration and fervor for the rule of Islam, Khamenei joined Khomeini's army of religious students and became active in his movement. Khamenei's first official mission on behalf of his teacher was the distribution of Khomeini's messages, by transporting letters, communications and announcements between the cities of Qom and Tehran. Since Khomeini and his quarters were under SAVAK's surveillance, Khamenei encountered the Shah's intelligence officers on several occasions and they recovered one of Khomeini's messages while being transported by Khamenei.¹⁹³ The message called for the "propagation and exposure of the pro-American policies of Mohammad Reza Shah in the month of Muharram."¹⁹⁴ As a result, Khamenei was arrested on June 2, 1963 and detained overnight. The next day he was released on the condition he would no longer disseminate anti-government propaganda and would consent to further surveillance.¹⁹⁵

After his participation in the bloody events of 15 Khordad (June 5, 1963),¹⁹⁶ Khamenei was detained at *Bazdashgah-i Lashkar* (Military Detention Center) in Mashhad and endured 10 days of severe conditions. Khamenei describes his first incarceration: "It was not bad! It was a new experience. It was a new world with SAVAK; either interrogations (*bazjuuiyyah*), disputes (*ekhtelaf*), hardships (*talkhiha*) or severe insults (*ehanatha-ye shadid*); basically the hardships of activism (*narahatiha-ye mobarezeh*)."¹⁹⁷

Second Arrest

After his release from prison, Khamenei continued his revolutionary activism through his teacher's anti-Shah ideology and spread the word in mosques, schools and in meetings at his home. In his messages, he called the Shah's and America's policies "Satanic." Consequently, he

was arrested and detained in solitary confinement at Ghazal Ghalleh Prison in Tehran for two months, and was tortured.¹⁹⁸

After his release, Khamenei traveled to various cities to influence as many different groups as possible. In a message in January 1964, he accused the Shah's government as the enemy of Islamic principles:

If someone is deceived by money and is subjected to domination and colonization, this individual cannot be beneficial to the well-being of a nation. This individual is harmful. This is detrimental and reproachful. It is like a captain of a ship with the people inside of the ship. Not only has he drowned himself, but he wants to drown the passengers of the ship as well.

The true cleric is someone who has faith in God and is not afraid of anything and assumes the leadership of a Shi'i nation with integrity. Parallel to this truth is the current condition of our very nation, Iran. They noticed that they cannot infiltrate the society under any circumstances and remove the Qur'an from among the people, so the first thing they did was feed the people the perilous poison of Satanic lusts (*shahavāt-i sheytanī*) until the situation became [so grave] that they called us; the clerics, "black reactionary" (*erteja'-i sīyah*). They said the clerics are superstitious, worship the old, and are useless human beings. But their desire is to adulterate the thoughts of our youth with their poison through naked and nude pictures of women and mislead our daughters. They are driving us towards destruction and they have called it the "new civilization" (*tamadon-i jadīd*).¹⁹⁹

Alongside his provocative messages, Khamenei began translating controversial books, resulting in legal battles. SAVAK interpreted Khamenei's actions as an attempt to promote an Islamic government, while insulting the regime and the Shah himself.

In 1965, he translated the Egyptian Islamic theorist Sayyid Qutb's book, "*al-Mustaqbal al-Islam*" ("The Future of Islam"), from Arabic to Farsi.²⁰⁰ In this book, Seyyid Qutb discusses the supremacy of Islam, leading to absolute future submission of all humanity to Islamic principles. Hence, Qutb called upon Muslims to unite and sharply criticized America and foreign powers for colonizing the Muslim world.²⁰¹ Khamenei describes the distinctive feature of Seyyid Qutb's writing that inspired him to translate his work:

Seyyid Qutb voiced an Islam that was involved with society and politics. He believed in Islam's political rule and saw the future in the realm of Islam. He had [personally experienced] the West and its beating heart – America, and with his knowledge of Muslim countries, he knew that the blades of Western cultural swords are descending upon the roots of the Islamic tenets. Seyyid Qutb considered struggle against the West as one of the basis for the establishment of an Islamic government. He said: “Western life without any doubt is tastier and more comfortable, but in terms of morality, it is no more exalted or honorable.... There are no limits in the West and they call this freedom. Yes, there is freedom, but not freedom of spirit, but freedom of body, animal-like freedom, not human-like.” Seyyid Qutb believed in the same degree of struggle against the West as against Communism. He understood that the reason for the West's cordial posture towards Islam was due to its opposition to Communism and prevention of its influence in Muslim countries. He further said: “They do not want an Islam that rules. Generally, they do not have tolerance for an Islamic government because when Islam governs, it will produce and educate a different kind of a society and will teach other nations that preparation of power and authority is mandatory, and the ostracism and negation of colonization is given, and Communism like colonization is a catastrophe. Both are enemies and both are aggressors.” Seyyid Qutb also gave serious warnings about Zionism. He asserted, “Anywhere there was an invitation against morality, anywhere war would occur against peace, the hands of Zionism were involved.” Finally somewhere he wrote: “There is no doubt that despite these enmities and sabotages, the future is in the realm of Islam and we have a long, challenging and dangerous *jihād* before us. This is a *jihād* for the salvation of nature from the swarming dark clouds and victory over this darkness. We have to become mobilized for this *jihād* and prepare ample power. The tool for this *jihād* is only one thing: complete familiarity with Islamic truth and the supreme position of religion.”²⁰²

Khamenei began the translation of “*Kifah al-Muslimin fi Tahrir al-Hind*” (“Muslims in the Liberation of India” or in Farsi, “*Mosalmanan dar Nehzat-i Azadi-ye Hendustan*”), towards the end of 1966. Inspired by this book, he felt increased political oppression and awareness of the public and particularly, the youth. He asserts: “Throughout history Muslims experienced constant struggles against domination and cruelty. They have endured a lot of challenges, difficulties and dark days, but at the end, they have become victorious.”²⁰³ For Khamenei, this book was a reflection of the exemplary role of Islam and Muslims in such a historical test, which gave rise to the prominence of Islam.²⁰⁴

Next, Khamenei attempted to translate a second book by Qutb, “*al-Mustaqbal li-Hadha al-Din*” (“The Future of This Religion”), but was unable to complete the translation due to his

arrests and detentions.²⁰⁵ Khamenei expanded his anti-Shah and political activities at the seminary and in social spheres. His *tafsīr* (exegesis of the Qur'an), *ḥadīth* (Prophetic sayings) and Islamic ideology classes in Mashhad and Tehran were welcomed by youth filled with revolutionary fervor.²⁰⁶

In 1965, in conjunction with several others, Khamenei and his then-seminary friend 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani founded *Entesharat-i Sepideh* (Sepideh Publishing Company). They published four books: "*Fayedah va Lozum-i Din*" ("The Advantages and Necessities of Religion") by Mohammad Taqi Shari'ati, "*Kongereh-i Islami-ye Hajj*" ("The Islamic Congress of Hajj") by 'Ali Golzadeh Qofuri, "*Vilayat va Zamamat*" ("Guardianship and Leadership") by 'Allamah Tabatabaei, and Sayyid Qutb's "*Ayandeh dar Qalamro-i Islam*" (Future in the Realm of Islam), translated by Khamenei.²⁰⁷

Third and Fourth Arrests

These activities resulted in intense scrutiny by SAVAK. Consequently, Khamenei moved to Tehran from Mashhad, where he shared a house with his friend Hashemi-Rafsanjani, and together engaged in covert political activities, until SAVAK discovered their whereabouts fifteen months later. SAVAK shut down Sepideh Publishing and confiscated all copies of Qutb's book, except for a few copies, saved by Khamenei's friends.²⁰⁸

Consequently, Khamenei was arrested in 1967 and faced a court trial. He was accused of insulting the regime by translating and publishing Qutb's book. SAVAK called him an extremist, anti-government cleric, who instigated tyranny among the public and youth, and threatened national security. Both his political activism and the contents of Qutb's book were considered a threat to the country. During his trial, the government presented specific pages from Qutb's book in support of the theory that the contents of the book were a threat to national security.²⁰⁹

One of the disputed ideologies in Qutb's book was the idea of "Islamic unity" (*vaḥdat-i Islami*). Qutb claimed that someday a global Muslim unity would be established, not merely an Arab unity, but the entire Muslim community. Qutb's call to unity entailed Muslims rebelling against their governments and turning to Islamic principles. He criticized colonizers and foreign powers that had used religion to enslave Muslim societies.²¹⁰ SAVAK found numerous statements and ideas in the book offensive and attributed them to Khamenei. During his trial, the prosecution argued that since he had translated the book and had written an eight-page introduction to the book, Qutb's revolutionary views were indeed his own. In his defense, Khamenei gave the following testimony during trial:

With its special teachings, Islam inspires Muslims in a way that makes them superior and higher than other communities and people. Muslims are the party of God (*hizbullah*) and God's party is the only one that will be victorious and delivered.²¹¹

After his release, Khamenei was arrested and imprisoned for the fourth time, in September 1970.²¹² SAVAK transferred him to Artesh Prison for the following charges:

Khamenei is accused of supporting Khomeini's *marja'iyat* and spreading propaganda on his behalf. He considers himself a *muqallid* (one who performs *taqlid*; follows or imitates a religious source) of Khomeini, which means he is in agreement with Khomeini's political views. He gave threatening messages to the 'ulama', who rejected to support Khomeini's treachery. He opposes the government's land reforms and women's freedom. He considers Khomeini's exile futile and listens to Radio Iraq "The Voice of Combatant Clerics" (*Seda-ye Ruhaniyat-i Mobarez*) station. Khamenei's speeches in Birjand, Zahedan, and Gorgan, the establishment of Sepideh Publication Agency (*Bongah-i Entesharat-i Sepideh*), and his translation of "Ayandeh dar Qalamro-i Islam" ("Future in the Realm of Islam") is considered insulting to the leader of the country. Hence, he has committed treason.²¹³

Khamenei was also accused of instigating uprisings among youth and students at the Hawzah 'Allmiyeh and other cities. SAVAK reports Khamenei telling the students:

We are the soldiers of *Imam-i Zaman* (Imam Mahdī) and those who are wearing clerical garbs have grave responsibilities. We should not be afraid of anything and anyone and should say what we need to say. We have to tell the truth. Moses told the truth and spent time in prison. Since we are the followers of the Imam, we also have to learn those

lessons and say what we need to say. There are many who are in prisons because of their truthful statements and are imprisoned or exiled needlessly.²¹⁴

Khamenei explains that his fourth detention was severe. He was detained in solitary confinement and was denied visitation. He was given very little food, no proper clothing, and no means to keep warm despite the cold temperature. His repeated petitions and letters were disregarded, since SAVAK and the detention center could not agree with one another. SAVAK tried to increase Khamenei's allegations so they could ratchet up his charges. He constantly bounced between SAVAK and the detention center. Forty days into his imprisonment, he still was not allowed family visits and remained in solitary confinement. Khamenei was finally released in January 1971, after three months and 20 days. He was thereafter prohibited from preaching.²¹⁵

Fifth Arrest

The harsh treatment from SAVAK motivated Khamenei to be more vigilant in his opposition to the Shah's "oppressive" regime. Equipped and encouraged by Khomeini's socio-religio-political ideologies, Khamenei became more outspoken and continued making statements found offensive by SAVAK, which resulted in his fifth arrest. Khamenei called upon the end of oppression and subjugation of Muslims and Shi'at 'Ali by Mu'awiyah's officials (referring to the persecution of Khomeini's supporters by the Shah's intelligence officers).²¹⁶ He spoke to the youth on numerous occasions at the Islamic Youth Association (*Anjoman-i Islami-i Javanan*) about social equality and social rights, and accused the Shah of giving away Iran's oil and wealth to foreigners.²¹⁷ According to SAVAK's records, on numerous occasions Khamenei accused the Shah's regime of oppressing the Iranian people:

If people want to attain their social rights they must defend their rights because social rights are equal for everyone, and for achieving this right, they must fight. Islam says everyone must enjoy equality and there should be no difference between the poor and the

rich. No one can take power, freedom and equality from people through oppression and at the point of a spear.²¹⁸

They have shut us up (*ḥarf ra dar galū khafeh nemūdehand*) and prevent people from expressing their views. If a society is unable to speak regarding their country's good and bad, that nation and society will be destroyed and cruelty and desperation will tie them down. Freedom of opinion of thought exists in Islam. Choice is with the people and a society does not need someone else to decide for it. Why should Muslims be the most despised nations in the world today? Poverty, illiteracy, hunger, and insecurity govern Muslim societies. Why should they be incompatible with other countries and foreigners have dominance over their lands and resources? Muslims follow Islam's outward rituals, not the truths of Islam. Where is the power of unity of thought? Where is equality and brotherhood? Where is true Islamic government which is based on Islam? We Muslims must follow Imam Hossein. Because Imam Hossein rose up to show Muslims who had been afflicted with mental stagnation to prove that the rule of Yazids and the house of Mu'awiyah could not give them Islamic honor. Be certain that if Imam Hossein lived today, he would have risen up too, and would have been killed for us Muslims, so that people would awaken. We Muslims will progress when Qur'an and the rule of Qur'an is among us. Currently we have the Qur'an, but we do not have Qur'anic rule.²¹⁹

Khamenei was arrested on September 26, 1971 and placed in a small cell. He was once again subjected to severe interrogations and tortures. With respect to his arrest he says:

The situation was ripening for an armed revolution in Iran. The sensitivity and severity of the regime against me had increased. Because of the circumstances they were no longer able to ignore people such as myself. I was again taken to prison, for the fifth time. The harsh attitude of SAVAK indicated that the System (regime) was very afraid of a revolution armed [with faith] and a sound Islamic ideology. They could no longer believe that my intellectual activism and propagation in Mashhad and Tehran had nothing to do with the developing situation in the rest of the country.²²⁰

After his release, despite verbal and written warnings by SAVAK, Khamenei continued his political activities through his teaching and indoctrinating the youth. The numbers of revolutionary students attending his lectures grew drastically. In turn, charged with Khomeini's revolutionary ideologies, they spread his messages to nearby cities in Iran, which lay the basis for the grand Islamic Revolution (*enqelab-i bozorg-i Islami*).²²¹ Acting as one of Khomeini's representatives, religious endowments were sent to Khamenei who then distributed them among students in the forms of scholarships at the seminary.²²² Khamenei and his militant student camp

continued to propagate the establishment of a divine government and the final triumph of the people of God against the oppressive Pharaoh (the Shah).²²³

In a message in October 1973 after visiting Ayatollah Hossein-‘Ali Montazeri in Tabas, where he was exiled with 25 other clerics, Khamenei acclaimed:

In the course of history the divine government will finally triumph and become victorious over the vain government. The obvious reason is Moses’ victory over the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh was not small. The Pharaoh had a strong government. Moses had nothing. The overt power of [this two] was not equal. Moses fought with spiritual power and will, which all sciences and industries are nothing before them... During our own time there are groups that have been victorious against weaponry and military apparatus without having modern tools, but with having will; the weapon of will, not giving up, and not running from the fight, and not becoming despaired. Moses gave the same weapon to his followers, not a spear. Be patient, ask God for help. With this same weapon Moses triumphed over the Pharaoh.²²⁴

In another message in December 1974, Khamenei criticized the Shah’s regime by equating it with that of the first Umayyad Caliph Mu’awiyah, who had persecuted the Shi’a. He stated:

‘Ali cannot rule over a group of naïve and uninformed individuals, just as Mu’awiyah could not rule over a group of informed and bright people. For this reason Mu’awiyah ensured the public’s ignorance...and now they keep people in the dark to rule over them. This is the path of Mu’awiyah.²²⁵

In a previous message, in October 1974, Khamenei invalidated the rule of the Shah and expressed his support for a religious leadership – “the absolute Guardianship of the Imam” (*vilāyat-i moṭlaq-i Imam*):

The Guardian (*valī*), the absolute ruler (*ḥākim-i moṭlaq*), and the commander of the people must be appointed by God. The role of the *valī* and Imam is like the relation of human soul and human body. A society without Imam is like a corpse without a soul. God introduces the *valī* like the 12 Imams. *Imam-i Zaman* (Imam Mahdī) has introduced the *valī* after him; a successor with four conditions:²²⁶

Khamenei attributed several qualifications to the leader of a Muslim nation: loyalty to Islam, piety, morally pure, faithful and obedient to the Imam. He further asserted: “With this statement, when you think about the successor to *Imam-i Zaman*, think about these qualifications, select one

from among the list of the Grand ‘ulama’... judgment is with you. The selection of the *valī* is with you.”²²⁷ SAVAK concluded that the successor Khamenei referred to was Khomeini.²²⁸

By this time, Khamenei began placing special emphasis on internal Muslim unity, which entailed both Shi‘is and Sunnis. His messages emphasized *the importance of an Islamic society and establishment of a global united Islamic society*. He called Iranians to a united Islamic front; not a Shi‘i or Sunni power, but the force of a unified Islamic order.²²⁹

In their desperate efforts to prevent Khamenei from teaching and preaching, SAVAK arrested him for the sixth time on January 10, 1975. By this time, Khamenei describes his life in prison so difficult that he believes only those who have experienced it can truly understand the magnitude of pain of a political prisoner. He recalls the severe emotional and physical torment he and other prisoners were subjected to. In the midst of the dark prison walls, all they could hear were the cries of other prisoners as they returned to their cells after being tortured. He himself was beaten on several occasions after his multiple intense interrogations. Khamenei was finally released after six months in detention, but remained under SAVAK’s strict surveillance.²³⁰

After his release from prison, Khamenei returned to Mashhad and continued his revolutionary and intellectual activities, and in 1977 along with several revolutionary clerics and prominent ‘ulama’ of Qom and Tehran, he established the Society of Militant Clergy (*Jame‘ih-i Ruhaniyun-i Mobarez*).²³¹ He defines the political situation in Iran of that time as grave. Khamenei received regular updates from his revolutionary student body, who kept him informed of the revolution’s progress across Iranian cities.

Khamenei’s Final Battle with SAVAK: Dual-Exiles

After being imprisoned six times, SAVAK finally exiled Khamenei to Iranshahr on December 11, 1977. He was identified as a zealot, an anti-government cleric who threatened

national security through his anti-government political activism.²³² In a report SAVAK described Khamenei's political activities since the early 1970s:

Khamenei is an intellectual, a *mujtahid*, and a teacher at a high level at the Seminary of Qom, who is familiar with social issues and today's cultural tools. He has been involved in political activities since 1962, instigating an uprising among the people. He was involved in 15 Khordad and encouraged religious zealots and naïve students to join in activities against national security. He has translated several books. He is an expert speaker, has a warm personality, is liked by the youth, and is an individual that socializes with all social classes. He has recently changed the manner of his political activities. He expresses his views through teachings, and interpretations of *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth* and Qur'anic verses in a revolutionary and anti-regime tone. He has also published Qur'anic verses and *tafsīr* in announcements and distributes them. Through his writings he calls the readers to unite and resist exploitation (*estesmar*). His activities lead students and religious zealots to anti-government activities. He absolutely rejects the current government and its principles, and insists on the establishment of an Islamic system. He is considered Khomeini's representative and a follower of his doctrines and ideology. He collects Khomeini's religious endowments and distributes them among the students. He sent financial assistance to Sheikh Hossein-ʿAli Montazeri while exiled to Tabas. We are confident that he is Khomeini's representative.²³³

Exile to Iranshahr gave Khamenei the freedom to further his political activism and extend Khomeini's revolutionary ideologies to both Sunnis and Shi'is through his Friday prayer messages at mosques, calling for sectarian unity. Nearly 50-60 percent of Iranshahr's population was Sunni. There, Khamenei mobilized a group of clerics and students and formed the "Clerical Assistance Group" (*Goruh-i Emdad-i Ruhaniyat*). In a short time, this group's political activism branched out propagating Islam and Islamic Revolution, once again, sending red flags to SAVAK.²³⁴ According to SAVAK's report, Khamenei called upon all Muslims and Muslim nations, whether Arab, non-Arab, Iranian, Sudanese, etc., to cooperate with one another and help each other in their [Islamic] revolutionary movements.²³⁵ In a message to the people of Iranshahr he said:

Our Islamic responsibility obligates us to look to Islam's future, and dangers that threaten it, and obstacles that are in the way of the accomplishments of its goals. All Muslims despite their religious beliefs and affiliations have heavy duties to be concerned about the future. If we spend our entire effort resolving our past mistakes and searching for sources

of disputes in ancient books, we will only intensify hostility and agitation. This neither serves the interests of Islam nor Muslims.²³⁶

As Khamenei's activities intensified among the Sunni-Shi'i community of Iranshahr, on July 31, 1978, SAVAK ordered his transfer to Jirift, where most exiled clerics resided. This provided Khamenei more opportunity to work with other clerics and raise the revolutionary spirit and political awareness in the hearts of revolutionary Iranians. Once again Khamenei opened up his home to the people and youth and had a tremendous following.²³⁷

Signs of the Islamic Revolution

As the political crisis in the country intensified, Khamenei was released by the Jirift Chief of Police (*Ra'is-i Shahr bani*). He left Jirift for Mashhad on September 23, 1978, after spending eight months in exile.²³⁸ In Mashhad, he joined revolutionary demonstrations and public uprisings against the Shah's regime. Khamenei attended the first meeting for the Compilation of the Islamic Charter (*Tadvin-i Manshur-i Islami*) with a group of clerics such as Ayatollah Hashemi-Rafsanjani, who were considered the pioneers of Khomeini's movement. They were tasked with paving the way for the victory of the revolution and the return of Ayatollah Khomeini from exile to Iran. According to Khamenei, this group sacrificed nearly everything for the success of the Islamic movement.²³⁹ This concluded Khamenei's 16 years of political activism against the monarchy and struggles for the establishment of Islamic principles and Islamic rule in Iran in the form of an Islamic Republic. In comparing the Islamic Revolution to previous historical revolutions, Khamenei avers:

I heard and read about other major revolutions in the world, but never imagined I would have experienced one personally: the excitements, the joys and fears. I personally witnessed an entire revolution unfold before my eyes. All those who were involved in the Islamic revolution were sunk in the strong waves of the revolution and could not see or think anything but the revolution. The Islamic revolution was an example of a true revolution. There was a huge ideological distance between the Shah and the people. Since

the Islamic Revolution was protected by God, it was God’s revolution and a revolution ordered by the divine. The divine was very active in this revolution because the leader of the revolution was not an ordinary man or an ordinary religious fanatic, but a high level *‘alīm* – a *marja’ al-taqlīd* who was worthy to follow as a religious reference since he occupied a high level position.²⁴⁰

Khamenei’s Presidential Diplomatic Visits and Press Interviews

Year	Messages, Letters & Telegraphs	Interviews	Foreign Travels	Domestic Travels	Response to Messages & Telegraphs	Visits by Foreign Dignitaries	Visits by Domestic Officials
1981	36	16	--	--	25	9	69
1982	64	25	--	4	5	44	188
1983	46	26	--	5	2	49	368
1984	41	15	4	14	4	55	528
1985	48	5	5	10	6	34	246
1986	51	8	--	6	--	64	197
1987	70	11	--	22	--	62	237
1988	81	8	3	14	--	66	202
1989	5	--	2	7	--	9	24
Total	442	114	14	82	42	392	2059

Figure 1. Khamenei’s Travels, Diplomatic Visits and Press Interviews (1981-1989)

Source: Based on information from biographical work:

“*Khaterat va Hekayatha-ye Vizheh-ye Zendejinameh-ye Maqam-i Mo ‘azam-i Rahbari*”²⁴¹
 (“Special Memories and Anecdotal Biography of His Excellency the Supreme Leader”)

Khamenei’s Works

The following is a list of Ayatollah Khamenei’s works before and after the Revolution:²⁴²

- A. Authorship, Research and Opinion (“*Ta’lif, Tahqiq va Nazar*”)
 - a. “A Complete Overview of Islamic Thought in the Qur’an” (“*Tarh-i Koli-ye Andisheh-i Islami dar Qur’an*”)
 - b. “The Profundity of Prayer” (“*az Zherfay-i Namaz*”)
 - c. “A Discourse on Patience” (“*Goftari dar bab-i Sabr*”)
 - d. “On the Four Principal Books Concerning the Biography of the Narrators” (“*Chahar ketab-i Asli-i ‘Elm-i Rijal*”)
 - e. Guardianship (“*Vilayat*”)

- f. “A Glimpse at the History and Current State of the Islamic Seminary of Mashhad” (“*Gozareshi az Sabeqeh-i Tarikhi va ‘Oza’-i Konuni-i Hawzah ‘Allmiyeh-i Mashhad*”)
- g. “A Biography of the Shi‘ite Imams” (“*Zendeginameh-i A‘ameh-i Tash‘i*”) (Not published)
- h. “Imam al-Saadiq” (“*Pishva-i Sadiq*”)
- i. “Unity and Political Parties” (“*Vahdat va Tahazob*”)
- j. “Art in the Viewpoint of Ayatollah Khamenei” (“*Honar az Didgah-i Ayatollah Khamenei*”)
- k. “Understanding Religion Properly” (“*Dorost Fahmidan-i Din*”)
- l. “The Collection of Messages” (“*Majmu‘-ye Payam*”)
- m. “The Struggles of Shi‘i Imams” (“*Mobarezat-i Imaman-i Shi‘a*”)
- n. “The Essence of God’s Unity” (“*Zat-i Vahdat-i Khoda*”)
- o. “The Necessity of Returning to the Qur’an” (“*Zarurat-i Bazgasht beh Qur’an*”)
- p. “Imam al-Sajjad” (“*Imam-i Sajjad*”)
- q. “Imam Reza and His Appointment as Crown Prince” (“*Imam Reza va Entesab-i Vey beh ‘Onvan-i Vali‘ahd*”)
- r. “The Cultural Invasion: Collection of Speeches” (“*Tahajom-i Farhangi: Majmu‘ih-i az Sokhanraniha*”)

B. Translations from Arabic to Farsi

- a. “The Peace Treaty of Imam Hassan” written by Razi Al-Yasin (“*Solh-i Imam Hassan*”)
- b. “Future in the Realm of Islam by Seyyid Qutb” (“*Ayandeh dar Qalamro-i Islam*”)
- c. “Muslims in the Liberation Movement of India” by ‘Abd al-Man‘am Namri Nasri (“*Mosalmanan dar Nehzat-i Azadi-ye Hendustan*”)
- d. “An Indictment Against Western Civilization” by Seyyid Qutb (“*Ede‘anameh ‘Alayih-i Tamadon-i Gharb*”)

Khamenei: The Person

Attaining knowledge and learning was a pivotal cornerstone of Khamenei’s upbringing. As his primary teacher, his father raised young Seyyed ‘Ali with strict educational disciplines. Khamenei’s education began with religious studies but ended before he could complete higher education because of his father’s illness.

One thing seemed to have been consistent in his life – progress. During his early years, progress for him meant learning. He loved to read novels and had a passion for art, music, literature and poetry. Among his favorite poems were Hafiz and “*Gulistan-i Sa‘adi*” (“Rose

Garden” by Sa‘adi).²⁴³ Khamenei kept a small notebook in his pocket that he called “*Safineh-i Ghazal*” with notes of new poems he found interesting. During his last arrest, SAVAK confiscated his book of poetry and never returned it to him. He joined *Anjoman-i Adabi-ye Ferdosi* “The Literature Association of Ferdosi,” established by Qolamreza Qodsi-Nejad, who often recited anti-British poems. Khamenei met him during the nationalization of Iran’s oil movement and remained friends with him until Qodsi-Nejad’s death in 1989. Khamenei was also a member of the *Aanjoman-i Adabi-ye Farokh* (Farokh Literature Association).²⁴⁴

Khamenei also loved to read historical novels. He explains that in his youth, he read numerous novels, which he says helped him learn about different people, civilizations and cultures. “No words can express history like a story can do, because it takes a reader into the details of the lives of different people and civilizations, whether poor or wealthy, or during times of war and peace.”²⁴⁵ Among the nearly one thousand novels he says he has read are: “War and Peace” (“*Jang va Solh*”) by Russian author Leo Tolstoy; “Les Misérables” (“*Binavayan*”) by French poet and novelist Victor Marie Hugo, which left the most influence on him; “Zhan Kristof” by Romain Rolland; “Don Cossacks” (“*Don Aram*”) by former Soviet novelist Mikhail Aleksandrovich Sholokhov, and other novels by Michelle Zhivago and Dante Alighieri. The book that had major spiritual influence on him was Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi’s book “*Masnavi*.”²⁴⁶

As a child, Khamenei also enjoyed sports, especially hiking. Today, he continuously encourages the Iranian youth to compete internationally to spread the ideals of the Islamic Revolution into the hearts and minds of youth within the global community as well as to introduce Persian and Iranian culture. Based on his public discourses, he views sports as a primary diplomatic tool.²⁴⁷

Khamenei's speeches demonstrate Qur'anic and poetic influence. He cites historical facts from religious books or novels and recites poems and quotes Qur'anic verses when addressing an internal or external issue. Sometimes, he clearly identifies his policies on key issues in one or two phrases or through poetic or religious language. For example, each year during his Nawaruz (Persian New Year) message to the nation, Khamenei clearly identifies his intentions and policies for the coming year using only a few words or phrases – a method that provides significant insight into his ideology.

PHASE II
AYATOLLAH KHAMENEI'S POLITICAL ROLES
IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN:
AFTER THE VICTORY OF THE REVOLUTION
TO THE END OF PRESIDENCY
(1979-1989)

CHAPTER 6
AYATOLLAH KHAMENEI'S POLITICAL ACTIVITIES
AFTER THE VICTORY OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION
(1979-1981)

As the Shah left Iran in January 1979, he left his government in the hands of a surrogate administration under Shapur Bakhtiar, the Prime Minister of Iran (January 4, 1979 to February 11, 1979).²⁴⁸ Khamenei recalls the internal crisis during the early days, after the victory of the revolution:

The first few days of victory were chaotic. The Liberals and the nationalists were trying to band together to start a movement against the revolution. The supporters of the Pahlavi regime also wanted to impose their influence to thwart the revolution. Early on, the enemy (the Shah's secret service) started their extensive efforts in the army through their financially supported radio ads, as well as their contacts. The first thing they did was to try to put in place their supporters. Their second goal was to create a gap between the Imam and the people. Bakhtiar was trying to legitimize his government by distorting the revolution and opening a venue by using some of the Shah's revolutionary elements and through his own presence on the scene. He did not succeed. So he attempted to stop Imam Khomeini from entering Iran by shutting the airports. But he could not keep the airports closed for very long. On the other hand, the clergy entered the scene and participated in public demonstrations in order to hasten Imam Khomeini's return to Iran.²⁴⁹

The Formation of the Islamic Revolutionary Council

Prior to his return to Iran and while in France, Khomeini called for the establishment of the Islamic Revolutionary Council (*Shura-i Enqelab-i Islami*). Khamenei was one of the founding five members along with other pioneers of the Islamic Revolution such as 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, 'Abdul-Karim Mousavi Ardebili, Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini Beheshti

and Mohammad-Javad Bahonar.²⁵⁰ Khamenei explains that his inclusion in the Islamic Revolutionary Council by Ayatollah Khomeini came to him as a surprise:

I was supposed to come to Tehran a lot sooner. I mean when I returned from exile and went to Mashhad; I stayed there for a while and later traveled to Tehran with my friends to take care of a few things. They insisted that I stay in Tehran and I had that intention too. But, because the holy month of Muharram and Safar were approaching, the Imam had issued a decree. I travelled to Mashhad to take care of things regarding these months. Many demonstrations and organizing the important and unprecedented rallies consisting of a few hundred thousand people in Mashhad prevented me from travelling to Tehran until Mr. Mottahari sent me a few messages on different occasions asking me to travel to Tehran for an important matter. So I convinced my friends in Mashhad to let me travel to Tehran, and I did. The important matter he had mentioned had to do with the news that Imam Khomeini had chosen me to be a member of the Islamic Revolutionary Council. I had no knowledge of his intentions to officially include me in the Council.²⁵¹

Khomeini returned to Iran on February 1, 1979. After abolishing Bakhtiar's administration, on February 11, 1979 (22 Bahman 1357), he officially established the provisional government of the Islamic Republic of Iran (*Jomhuri-i Islami-i Iran*). Khamenei recalls hearing the announcement on the radio: "This is the voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran." He immediately exited his vehicle and fell to the ground in worship. Hearing this announcement from the official radio of the country was unbelievable to him. For a few weeks, he thought he dreamt it.²⁵²

The Formation of the Islamic Republican Party

As the Islamic government was being established, the temporary government of Mehdi Bazargan formed his Cabinet and appointed his Ministers to different posts.²⁵³ The political atmosphere of the early days of Iran post victory was rather complex. In addition to the existence of the old political parties, there was a proliferation of new political groups and political parties such as the Marxist forces and the Mujahedin-i Khalq (MEK). Along with several other leading clerics, Hashemi-Rafsanjani went to discuss the matter with Ayatollah Khomeini, in attempts at finding venues for calming the political atmosphere. Consequently, Hashemi-Rafsanjani

appeared on national television and addressed the nation. He provided a detailed analysis of Ayatollah Khomeini's political views and goals for the newly-formed Islamic government. He also explained the efforts of the opposition groups to topple the regime.²⁵⁴

Shortly after, discussions about the necessity of forming an Islamic Party intensified among Khomeini's top lieutenants. The lack of a political party associated with the clerical establishment was negatively affecting the operation. As Khomeini's main advisor, Hashemi-Rafsanjani met with Ayatollah Khomeini to discuss the importance of forming such a party.²⁵⁵ He stated:

Up until now we were struggling against the Shah's regime and advocating for an Islamic government, but from this point on we are responsible for the administration of the country. Our first step must be the formation of a political party by the government. Additionally, as you see, currently there are several political parties active in the country. Even though we are actively involved in the affairs of the government, we do not have a base. If we do not have a political party, those who already have one, will take over the administration of the country. Therefore, this makes the formation of a political party essential. The intent is not to prevent others from their political activities, but to associate your supporters with a party since only your supporters lack a party.²⁵⁶

Ayatollah Khomeini had his own reservations about the establishment of a formal political party. He was concerned that it may create a wedge between the leadership and the people. However, Khomeini's clerical lieutenants believed that the formation of a political party by the clerical establishment will become an instrument of the transformation of the political life of the country.²⁵⁷ After lengthy discussions and considerations, with the approval of Khomeini, the Islamic Republican Party (*Hezb-i Jomhuri-ye Islami*) was established on February 17, 1979. The principal founders were Ayatollah Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Ayatollah Khamenei, Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, Ayatollah Mousavi-Ardabili and Mohammad Javad-Bahonar.²⁵⁸

The public responded to the newly-formed Islamic Republican Party warmly, and in a short time, the membership reached ten thousand members. In an interview on February 22,

1979, Ayatollah Khamenei said: “The influx and welcome of the people shows that the formation of this party was fundamentally critical.”²⁵⁹

Shortly after, the party began experiencing internal tensions and financial problems. In a letter on February 14, 1981, Hashemi-Rafsanjani inquired of Ayatollah Khomeini whether they should continue the party or halt its operations.²⁶⁰ Nine years after official activities, the principal leaders of the party noticed that they had lost their effectiveness and influence on the government and the Majlis. Consequently, Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Khamenei, in a letter, requested Ayatollah Khomeini’s permission to halt the activities of the party. With Khomeini’s approval, the Islamic Republican Party was disbanded in 1987.²⁶¹ There are conflicting views about the party’s dissolution. The authors of *Political Party in Islamic Republic of Iran* argue that it was due to internal conflicts and factionalism over the notion of *vilāyat-i faqīh*. Daniel Brumberg, author of *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran* argues that its was due to conflicts between then-President Khamenei and Prime Minister Mir-Hossein Mousavi, and the leaning support of the Party towards Mousavi that motivated Khamenei to ask Ayatollah Khomeini to dissolve the Party.²⁶²

Relations with America

Khomeini’s policies towards the U.S. remained open-ended or more accurately conditioned on “if America behaves itself” (*agar Amrīka ādam beshavad*), which meant if the U.S. refrains from dominating Iran.²⁶³ This same policy is evident in the leadership of his successor Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Khamenei. Hashemi-Rafsanjani explains that after the victory of the revolution, Iran was inclined to maintain cordial and friendly relations with every country, including America, and even countries that had supported the Shah. In terms of the Zionist regime, Iran did not recognize its legitimacy, and opposed the union of South Africa due to its

racist policies. According to Hashemi-Rafsanjani, shortly after, it became obvious that the United States would not recognize the Islamic Revolution and the spirit of independence and freedom for the Iranian nation. On the contrary, the U.S. continued to support the Shah in exile and oppose the regime internally.²⁶⁴

Krysta Wise, author of *Islamic Revolution of 1979: The Downfall of American-Iranian Relations* explains that in response to the acceleration of protests and demonstrations against the Shah's regime in 1978, the U.S. continued to provide military support to the Shah in attempts to keep him in power. While protecting the Shah's fragile regime, the U.S. was striving to secure its own interests in Iran, she asserts. Since Khomeini had declared his neither "Neither East, Nor West" isolationism policy while in exile, the U.S. feared irrecoverable restrictions on U.S.-Iran relations. In other words, the U.S.'s concerns for a possible Khomeini government translated into economic and political loss. Wise continues to explain that the U.S. feared a change in economic relations that would result in a lack of oil resources, which would negatively affect the U.S. economy. Politically, Washington was concerned about the reappearance of the Communist Tudeh Party of Iran (*Hezb-i Tudeh-i Iran*) and its support of Khomeini's Islamic government.²⁶⁵ Politically, the Tudeh Party had resurfaced like other leftist guerillas such as the Feda'iyyan and Mujahedin-i Khalq. These groups were gaining strength in the political chaos of the time. This raised a great deal of concerns for the U.S.²⁶⁶ In his efforts to establish bilateral relations with the U.S., the Shah had banned the Tudeh Party, but they had returned to the political scene during the Islamic revolution.²⁶⁷ The U.S. was highly concerned about the potential increase of the Soviet Union's influence in Iran as well as in the region, or a possible takeover of Iran by the Soviets, adding tensions to the Cold War. As a result, according to Wise, the U.S. made every effort to prevent the establishment of Khomeini's Islamic government, primarily by providing

military support to the Shah. As a desperate measure, on January 4, 1979, the U.S. sent its Commander-in-Chief of the U.S.-European Command, General Robert Huyser to Iran for a four-week mission. His task was to stabilize the Iranian military and encourage them to support the Shah's government. In the event the government toppled, Wise explains Huyser was tasked to assist the military to stabilize the resulting political chaos. As the events of the revolution intensified and spilled over the streets of Tehran and every major city in Iran, Huyser was convinced that the Shah's regime would indeed fail and Khomeini would soon return to Iran. Fearing for his safety, he left Iran and encouraged the Carter administration to begin communications with Khomeini.²⁶⁸

As Khomeini returned on January 30, 1979 and surprised the U.S. by officially claiming power on February 11, 1979, he publically expressed his ardent opposition to America. He once again accused the U.S. for exploiting Iran's resources and oppressing the Iranian nation for the past several decades. He claimed that the blood of the Iranian youth were on the U.S.'s hands, for it was because of U.S. oppression that Iranians had to fight against the Shah and shed the blood of their children. As difficulties of U.S.-Iran relations became apparent to the Carter administration, Washington decided to extend "positive diplomatic measures" with Iran. Instead, Khomeini resisted to having any relations with the U.S.²⁶⁹

At the same time, due to the existing weaknesses in Iran's military-security apparatus (*dastgaha-ye entezami*) and the necessity of forming a new military force (*niru-ye tazeh*), agreements were made between Khomeini and the temporary government to begin a new body of the Iranian military. Consequently, *Shura-i Enqelab-i Islami* appointed Hashemi-Rafsanjani to pursue the matter and present a proposal to the *Shura*. As a result, Hashemi-Rafsanjani drafted the constitution and bylaws for the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution (*Sepah-i*

Pasdaran-i Enqelab-i Islami), commonly known as Islamic Revolutionary Guard (IRGC), and submitted it to the *Shura* on April 15, 1979. After obtaining approval from the *Shura*, and with Khomeini's consent, Hashemi-Rafsanjani was appointed to oversight of the *Sepah* (or IRGC). Khomeini followed his lead in December 1979.²⁷⁰

As tensions increased in U.S.-Iran relations, in early May 1979, the U.S. Congress "passed decrees that criticized the Iranian government" for its political actions.²⁷¹ In response, on May 19, 1979, Khomeini condemned the U.S.'s response to Iran and in a speech said:

It is obvious that the U.S. Congress has to condemn us. There is no doubt. We know that they condemn us. The U.S. administration condemns us as well... It is because of the scar left on America's heart through this movement. No other nation exploited Iran like America. We must be condemned! The expectation that the U.S. Congress must be in agreement with us is a useless expectation. The U.S. government [threatened] us that should these executions continue, U.S.-Iran relations will be vulnerable. God willing (*ey elahī*) this relation will be threatened. What do we need relations with America for? Our relation with America is the relation of an oppressed with the oppressor – the relation of a plunderer with the plunderer. Why do we need this relation with America? They desire and need relations with us. Why do we need America?²⁷²

Consequent to Khomeini's speech, anti-American protests by various political groups broke out to an extent that even the interim government of Mohandes Bazaragan announced its reconsideration of relations with America. The Islamic Republican Party also published a statement denouncing U.S.'s comments, and called upon the public to join the demonstrations against colonizers. Consequently, masses filled the streets of Tehran crying out anti-American slogans and condemning U.S. interference in Iran's domestic affairs.²⁷³ To calm the waters, "the U.S. proposed a nominee for an ambassador to be sent to Iran, but Iran declined the nominee."²⁷⁴ From there on, a drastic decline in U.S.-Iran relations in the course of 1979 became the basis for over three decades of enmity between Tehran and Washington. First, through his isolation policy writes Wise, Khomeini succeeded in removing the U.S. "direct" influence in the domestic affairs of the Islamic Republic. This commitment to cut the cords of dependence on America was

manifested by the 1980 American hostage crisis when the Tehran university students stormed the U.S. Embassy to retaliate against the U.S. occupation of Iran. This resulted in the alteration of oil policies and the U.S.-Iranian arms sale agreements. Iran's response to the U.S. through the Iranian hostage crisis on November 4, 1979 severed all diplomatic ties between the two nations. The U.S. imposed a trade embargo in 1979 on Iran and provided military and intelligence assistance to Iraq during the Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988).²⁷⁵

The Exile of Americans: Iran's Second Revolution and the U.S. Hostage Crisis

Nearly nine months after the establishment of the Islamic government, Iran experienced a second revolution (*enqelab-i dovom*) against the U.S. which resulted in a long-term political crisis. From the onset of the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 (*Enqelab-i Islami-i Iran*), Ayatollah Khomeini boldly announced that "Iran is at war with America."²⁷⁶

On November 4, 1979, 300–500 university students from Polytechnic of Tehran, who called themselves "Muslim Student Followers of the Imam's Path" (*daneshamouzan-i peyrovan-i mosalman-i khat-i Imam*) or "Imam's disciples" (*shagerdan-i Imam*) attacked the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. Fifty-two Americans were taken hostage for 444 days.²⁷⁷ Khomeini called the U.S. Hostage Crisis a "Second Iranian Revolution" (*Enqelab-i Dovom-i Iran*). This was the second uprising of the Iranian Islamicists against the U.S., the first being the 1979 Revolution. The students broke into the U.S. embassy as a symbol of vehement public opposition to the American intervention in Iran's domestic affairs. They protested against U.S.-imposed *old Iranian wounds*, specifically the CIA's 1953 "Operation Ajax" in Iran, which removed the democratically elected prime minister of Iran Mohammed Mosaddeq and reinstated Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. This arrangement had resulted in a quid pro quo relationship between Iran and the U.S. over the continuous supply of the Iranian oil to America, "in exchange for military and economic aid."²⁷⁸

The protesters also opposed President Carter's admission of the Shah to the U.S. in October 1979 for cancer treatment, when Iranians were demanding his delivery to stand trial for anti-Iranian crimes – the “selling” of Iran to the West. This resulted in more severe anti-American rhetoric by Ayatollah Khomeini. Publically, Khomeini praised students who stood firm against the U.S. or the “Great Satan” (*Sheytan-i Bozorg*) and declared the U.S. Embassy in Iran, a “Den of Spies” (*Lāneh-i Jasūsī*).²⁷⁹ Hence, the students' initial plans to take over the U.S. embassy for a few hours turned into an American nightmare. The simple operation turned into 14 months of U.S.-Iranian confrontation, but Khomeini believed that this event united the Iranians, and strengthened his government.²⁸⁰ Khamenei recalls the political chaos of the time:

When the seizure of the embassy occurred I was at a pilgrimage in Mecca together with Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani. We were sitting on the terrace at midnight when the news was broadcasted that the Muslim students had taken over the embassy. We found this news both exciting and frightening because we did not know which group had done this, since we knew that the left was trying to take action for their political gain. So we remained very concerned until the second radio broadcast repeated the news mentioning that the embassy had been seized by the Muslim students of the line of the Imam and then we felt at peace that our Muslim friends had done this and not the left (the adversaries or the opportunists).

When I came back from pilgrimage, I continued to defend the actions of these Muslim students before the Revolutionary Council. We were approaching the holy month of Muharram and people were preparing for fasting, ritual of self-beating, and marching in the streets. The area around the embassy had become a holy site surrounded by the crowds. Various speakers addressed the crowds during the month of Muharram and I was one of them.

In my speech, I addressed our losses and its comparison to the loss suffered by the United States. America had lost everything, but we had gained everything. In fact with this remark, I was sending a message to the liberals inside the Revolutionary Council, since their position had always been that the embassy takeover would destroy the revolution – Iran would be defeated and America would devour Iran. I mean they always dealt with the issues through fear and despondency. My speech was in fact a response to them and an assurance to the people. Not only we did not lose anything in this campaign against America, but we gained something, which was giving hope to the people and glorifying the revolution. This helped us elevate the image of Iranians in the world.

Once the foreign reporters were allowed to see the hostages I was chosen as the person from the Revolutionary Council to speak with them. I met with each of the hostages together with the foreign reporters, and did extensive interviews.

In response to the unfolding events, the Imam said: “This revolution is bigger than the first one.” And, this revolution was much bigger than just taking over the den of spies. This revolution neutralized America’s plot to come back into Iran quietly and gradually. In fact, our first revolution was a revolution against America and Americans who had left through the front door and were trying to come back in through the window. So the Imam shut the window in their faces and this window shall remain shut for many years to come. The Imam called this the second revolution and it truly was.²⁸¹

To resolve the crisis, On April 25, 1980, President Carter attempted to unilaterally rescue the hostages through Operation Eagle Claw, which failed. As the helicopters began experiencing mechanical problems in the severe weather of Desert One, “the six helicopters were ordered to depart but one of them collided with a C-130, killing eight Americans.”²⁸² With the failure of this mission, President Carter’s administration applied both economic and political pressures on Iran through Executive Order 12170, ending oil imports on November 14, 1979 and freezing Iran’s eight billion dollar assets in the U.S.²⁸³ Through the interventions and negotiations of an Algerian diplomat, the Carter administration was able to initiate talks with Iran. The two countries agreed to release all 52 hostages and in turn the U.S. would unfreeze all Iran’s assets and give Iran immunity against any lawsuits that might arise from the hostage crisis. Furthermore, the U.S. signed the 1981 Algiers Accords “not to intervene directly or indirectly, politically or militarily, in Iran’s internal affairs.”²⁸⁴ Thirty-one years later, on November 4, 2010, Ayatollah Khamenei declared November 4, 2010 as “National Day of confrontation against global imperialism.” Iranians rushed to the streets with signs reading: “Death to America” (“*marg bar Amrīka*”) and “death to Israel” (“*marg bar Israel*”).²⁸⁵

The Iran-Iraq War

While the U.S. hostages were still in the custody of Iran, the country found itself at war with Iraq. The Iraqi government invaded Iran on September 22, 1980 without any formal warning. Iraq claimed that it feared Shi‘i insurgency at home among its oppressed Shi‘i population which was supported and energized by the Iranian Islamic Revolution. Iraq attacked Iran’s airfields in hopes of destroying its air force and invaded several Iranian cities. During the war, Iraq used chemical weapons against Iranian troops and civilians. While Iran accused the U.S. of supporting the Iraqi government with technological aid, military equipment, and intelligence.²⁸⁶ This deepened the anti-American sentiment in Iran. Until today, Iran refers to the Iraq-Iran war as an “imposed war” (*jang-i tahmīlī*) and Iran’s defense as the “holy defense” (*defa‘-i moqadas*).

Khamenei explains that from the outset, Iran was against war with Iraq, and considered it an indirect attack from the great powers seeking to topple the Islamic revolution in order to secure their own interests. In an interview in September 1984, then-President Khamenei outlined the reasons for the aggression by the Iraqi Ba’ath regime:²⁸⁷

1. Part of the intent was connected to globally dominant powers that instigated Iraq’s regime to confront revolutionary Iran;
2. To prevent the rise of a successful [Iranian] experience with respect to the formation of an Islamic regime (*nezam-i Islami*);
3. To cause nations who were influenced by the message of the Islamic revolution to regret their desire to fight against domination;
4. To deliberately cause the fall of the Islamic Republic.

Khamenei further asserted that the reason the great powers wanted the Islamic revolution to fail was because of the threats to their interests in the region. Of course the issue was oil, stated Khamenei, which has always been critical to Westerners. Khamenei further outlined three motives that in his view were mainly related to the Iraqi regime: First, Saddam thought that through this aggression he could gain a region filled with natural resources and water ways. Second, by separating the southwestern region from Iran, Iraq expected to gain a strategically crucial coast access to the Persian Gulf. Lastly, Iraq expected to become the leader of the Arab world by winning the war and emerging as the main policymaker of oil in the Persian Gulf.²⁸⁸ These goals, however, were never realized, but the war became a major distraction to Iran.

Khamenei's Appointments in the Islamic Republic of Iran (1979-1981)

Occupation with the Iran-Iraq war (*jāng-i Iran va 'Araq*) and the Cultural Revolution (*Enqelab-i Farhangi*) became the two principle areas of responsibilities of Ayatollah Khamenei after September 1980. However, due to his close relations with Khomeini prior to the victory as one of the pioneers of the Islamic Revolution, Khomeini offered Khamenei several prominent positions in the newly-established Islamic government.²⁸⁹

Imam of Tehran's Friday Congregational Prayer

After the passing of Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleqani, the first Imam of Tehran's Friday Prayer (*Imamat-i Jom 'eh-i Tehran*) and Ayatollah Montazeri's forced resignation, Ayatollah Khomeini appointed Khamenei to the post. Khamenei's sermons during the Friday prayer included discussions of Islamic education (*ma 'aref-i Islami*) and political analysis (*taḥlilhā-ye siyāsi*) of critical social issues.²⁹⁰

Supervision of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard

On December 1, 1979 disputes arose among members of *Sepah-i Pasdaran-i Eenqelab-i Islami* (the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution) or IRGC. Only three weeks earlier Hashemi-Rafsanjani had been appointed to the position of the Minister of Interior (*Vazir-i Keshvar*), which had left the oversight of the Sepah open. Consequently, Khomeini designated Khamenei as the Administrator of the Revolutionary Guard and asked him to resolve the internal conflicts and pending issues.²⁹¹

Secretary of Defense

Khamenei was first appointed as the Representative of the Council of the Islamic Revolution at the Ministry of Defense (*Namayandeh-i Shura-i Enqelab-i Islami dar Vezarat-i Defa`*), and in 1980 assumed the responsibilities of the Secretary of Defense (*Mo`avenat-i Vazir-i Defa`*).²⁹²

Initially, the Defense Council was established and managed under the directorship of Prime Minister Bazargan, leader of the interim government. According to Khamenei, the members of this Council included individuals affiliated with the Pahlavi regime and the liberal elements of the government, which later were removed.²⁹³ He explains:

The temporary government did not want to create problems with the wealthy and powerful America. As a result, Americans were allowed to serve in the Iranian Air Force. But, we did not know about this for a while. In the beginning of the revolution, they tried to keep the American military system. So until a few months after the revolution, the system of American military advisors had their own offices. Of course their offices at the joint army staff headquarters had been destroyed and they had escaped. But they had left some of their intelligence elements behind to maintain their stronghold.²⁹⁴

The Tehran Representative in the Consultative Assembly

With the beginning of the first cycle of elections of the representatives of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (*Majlis-i Shura-i Islami*) in spring 1980, Khamenei was elected Tehran's Representative. After his election, Khamenei played a key role in defusing the political heat in Iran with respect to the Embassy hostages. He visited the hostages and reported back to Ayatollah Khomeini and the Revolutionary Council.²⁹⁵

Khomeini's Representative in the Supreme Defense Council

In 1981, Khamenei was appointed by Ayatollah Khomeini as advisor to the Supreme Defense Council (*Shura-i 'Aali-i Defa*). The following is the letter written by Ayatollah Khomeini appointing Khamenei to the Council:²⁹⁶

In The Name of the Merciful God

Mr. Khamenei

I hereby designate you as my advisor to the High Security Council according to the Article 110 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and at this time, since we are in an exceptional time, it is necessary for you to carefully and thoroughly review all internal events of different military offices and send those reports to me.

Ruhollah al-Mousavi al-Khomeini

Active Duty During Iraq-Iran War

With the beginning of the Iraq-Iran war on September 22, 1980, Khamenei became very active and visited the frontlines. He explains:

One of the very sensitive and significant cross sections of the Islamic revolution was Iraq's imposed war on Iran. The Imam had called this war "the war of blasphemy against Islam" by the United States, in order to topple the newly-established Islamic revolution. The Iraq war was enticed by the world powers, but was a golden opportunity to prove to our youth their talents, capabilities, and depth of their beliefs.²⁹⁷

The war had been raging for seven, eight, ten days but every piece of news we received was disappointing. I felt that we had weak military forces, and in order to collect forces and encourage others to join the fight, I asked the Imam's permission to go to the frontlines (*jebhehha*). Permission was granted.²⁹⁸

It was a week into the war and I went to Ahvaz because the enemy was close to Ahvaz. For a little while I was in the Western region. Although I was not assigned to active duty in that region, I went for specific military and non-military operations. Most of my time was spent in Ahvaz assisting combatants and performing sporadic operations. In the beginning of the war, I participated in regular activities, helping with the operations and supporting the troops. After I became President I was unable to assist in the combat zone. I visited combat zones, but unfortunately I did not have an active role or decisive presence in the operations. I was at the frontlines (*jebhehha*) from September 1980 to around June 1981.²⁹⁹

I was going back and forth between Ahvaz and Tehran at least once a week for Friday Prayers and would always visit the Imam. Once, I went to see the Imam in my military uniform underneath my cloak with a turban on my head. Imam made a comment which I will not forget. He said: "It is an honor for a clergy to wear the war uniform. And this is how it should be." Truly there were times [in the past] that if the clergy wore military uniform, they would have been called ruthless.³⁰⁰

Assassination Attempt and Hospitalization

On June 28, 1981 a bomb concealed in a tape recorder placed beside Khamenei exploded during a press conference in Abuzar Masjid in Tehran. Khamenei was hospitalized for 42 days and permanently lost the use of his right arm. The following is a summary of the letter sent to Khamenei by Ayatollah Khomeini:³⁰¹

In the Name of the Merciful God

Respectable Hojrat al-Islam Hajj Seyyed 'Ali Khamenei:

Thank God who created the enemies of Islam from senseless groups and imprudent people. Praise God that from the inception of the splendid Islamic revolution, their very plans, plot and propaganda unified the devoted [Iranian] nation more and strengthened their bonds further. The more they talked, the more they disgraced themselves. The more they wrote, the more our people became alert, and as they continued their character assassinations, people became more resilient.

Today, the enemies of Islam have carried out an assassination attempt on you, the one who is from the genealogy of the tribe of Imam Hossein, the son of 'Ali. You have done nothing but serve Islam and this country. You have been a faithful soldier at the frontlines, and a passionate teacher for the public.

By attempting to kill you, they have angered millions of devoted Muslim, not only in our nation but around the world. Their lack of political perception led them to carry out this crime against you; the one whose call to goodness is still ringing in the ears of Muslims around the world.

I call upon parents to inhibit their youth from engaging in such criminal acts. At the same time, we are proud of our soldiers in the frontlines, who worship at night and are martyred during the day.

I personally congratulate you Mr. Khamenei that you have served this nation in the frontlines in a military uniform and behind the battle field in a clerical garb. I beseech God to bestow His goodness upon you so that you can continue to serve Islam and Muslims.

Ruhollah al-Mousavi al-Khomeini

His political activism during Khomeini's revolutionary movement and duties assigned to him during and after the revolution helped transform Khamenei into a politico-religious leader and influenced his political ideology. This analysis of his ideological development continues as Khamenei moves into the next phase of his political life as President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

CHAPTER 7
PRESIDENT KHAMENEI
(1981-1989)

On June 22, 1981, Khomeini removed Abolhassan Banisadr from his presidential post after majority vote by the members of the Islamic Parliament (*Majlis-i Shura-i Islami*). Six days later, Mohammad 'Ali Rajaei was elected as the second President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. While Khamenei was recovering from the injuries he had sustained from the assassination attempt on his life, on August 30, 1981, a bomb killed President Rajaei and his Vice President Mohammad Javad-Bahonar. Outraged at the acts of terror committed by internal opposition, Khamenei issued a response: "The opposition groups thought that their act of terror against the Islamic regime would weaken it, intimidate its leaders and frighten the nation, but they were wrong. These callous acts of terror and martyrdom of honorable people serving the Islamic government caused the nation to awaken and increase their power and versatility."³⁰²

After his release from the hospital, Khamenei participated in the presidential elections and on October 2, 1981, he was elected with 16,007,972 votes out of 16,846,996 ballots. On October 8, 1981 Khamenei was installed by Ayatollah Khomeini as the third President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.³⁰³ The following is a summary of Ayatollah Khomeini's speech:

Although criminals and the hypocrites martyred the President and a faithful servant of Iran, and deprived him from his service to this nation, they thought by their acts of terror they could cause despair in the hearts of the people. But the participation of this nation in the elections has proven them wrong. America, terrorists and their propaganda machines continuously insult the honorable Iranian nation and its loyal military. However, the faithful participation of the Iranian nation in the elections has invalidated their claims. The Almighty God directed the nation in the election of a President who walks in the direct path of Islam with a spirit of unity. Along with the vote of the Iranian nation, I install the Honorable His Excellency Hojjat al-Islam Seyyed 'Ali Khamenei as the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Mr. President and all government officials must

know that the faithful Iranian nation has placed an enormous obligation upon you. First, it was this nation that succeeded in the revolution through the blood of their youth, numerous imprisonments, exiles, and pain and sufferings from the unjust regime of the Shah. Second, it is this nation that through 16 million votes placed you, Mr. President, in the seat of presidency in order for you to protect this country against the devices of the enemy. They have rights over you and all of us, to serve them in the path of Islam. The nation is supportive of you and we are confident that our magnanimous and alert nation will respond to the oppressors.³⁰⁴

After the conclusion of Khomeini's speech, Khamenei gave his inauguration speech. The following is a summary:³⁰⁵

In the Name of the Merciful God

With sincere greetings to the pure spirits of all the Muslim martyrs and to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Warm greetings to our dear and benevolent Imam and with thanks to the resilient and faithful fighters in our nation, who through their unprecedented participation in the elections, disgraced and quashed the propaganda networks affiliated with the Zionists and the world Imperialists, who meant to destroy the Islamic Revolution through their poisonous propagandas.

The valiant hope the people have entrusted to us is worthy of recognition. It places a heavy burden upon us to understand and appreciate the public's trust and assure that our decisions are guided by God for the purposes of Islam. The people's vote of confidence and their faith in us is the backbone of our efforts and actions. Thus, I make a commitment to do my part and strive in the path of establishing the rule of Islam, which is the desire of our revolutionary nation. To our last breath, we are standing side-by-side those who have sacrificed themselves for the love of God and love of nation, and they did not alter their commitment by any means [Surah Ahzab (23)].

Now that the Iranian people have elected me as President with their absolute vote, as the trustee of the people, with a pure heart and honest compassion, void of hatred or rage, I proclaim that there is a place in the Islamic Republic and in the arms of this great nation for all who love God and those who truly serve Islam and Muslims.

Our country has been subjected to cultural, political and economic plunder by superpowers for many years. Now our nation wants to come to the world stage severing its dependence and upholding the slogan of "Neither East, Nor West." I firmly stand by our leader and our nation in upholding these values, knowing that victory belongs to our nation. Because our revolution is the revolution of the deprived and oppressed [Surah Qasas (5)], as we begin a new era in our Islamic Republic of Iran, I hope that we will continue serving the interests of the deprived and the oppressed, and cut the roots of domination, and social and economic infiltration of our homeland. I ask God to help me to fulfill the obligations our constitution has bestowed upon me. I thank the magnanimous

Imam for the kindness he has bequeathed upon this student and disciple of his. And, I thank the people for their unprecedented confidence in this servant and brother.

Goals and Policies of Khamenei's Administration

As Khamenei began his first term, he inherited enormous internal and external challenges. The infant Islamic Republic of Iran seemed to face opposition from all directions. One could say, the Islamic Republic was fighting two wars: internal and external. Internally, the Islamic Republic was still combating opposition groups including Banisadr's Camp and the Leftists. In an interview, Khamenei identified these groups as "Liberals, *monafeqin* (internal enemies or opposition; referring to Mujahedin-i Khalq) and infidels (*kāferha*), who labored hard against the Islamic Revolution."³⁰⁶ Externally, he was defending Iran against the "imposed" Iraqi war (*jang-i tahmīlī-ye 'Araq*).³⁰⁷

During an interview on December 23, 1981, Khamenei outlined his government's immediate goals: 1) Victory in the Iraq-Iran war; 2) preventing the interference of global hegemony in Iran and the region; 3) disseminating the culture of Iran's revolution, but not with the intent of causing political instability in other nations; 4) Muslim unity (*vaḥdat-e Islami*); 5) "Neither East, Nor West" Policy ("*siyāsāt-i na sharqi, na gharbi*"); 6) reforming the political, economic and social culture of the nation through an Islamic cultural revolution (*enqelab-i farhangi-ye Islami*); and 6) the integration of the Islamic Republic into the global community.³⁰⁸

The Philosophy of Iran's Foreign Policy

Khamenei defined Iran's foreign policy based on Iran's constitution and Islamic principles. As a policy that promotes national independence, Tehran respects the sovereignty of other nations within the global community.³⁰⁹ In two interviews in 1982 and 1984 Khamenei defined Iran's policies as Islamic:

Islamic politics (*siyāsat-i Islami*) are based in Islamic philosophy (*falsafeh-i Islami*) and inspired by the philosophy of the Qur'an (*falsafeh-i Qur'an*). Our policies aim to create a just and humanitarian environment in concert with peace for everyone, with rational relations [with other nations], devoid of any unnecessary conflicts, while rejecting domination, imposition and hegemony from the global community.³¹⁰

We believe in the divine gifts and talents of people and their right to freedom, knowledge, teaching, spiritual growth, and all the pleasures and joys of life. Of course in the political system of the Islamic Republic, which has been revealed by Islamic divine teachings, people are the foundation. We desire all blessings for everyone and all nations, not just for our country. Therefore, we are opposed to oppression, cruelty and corruption in the world. Thus, our beliefs are grounded in Islam. Our Faith gives us the courage to continue this path with strength and conviction despite any opposition.³¹¹

The critical elements in Iran's foreign policy are absolute independence from any government or power, while establishing good relations with other nations. Our policies are Islamic and populist (*mardomī*). We have no animosity with nations that do not have hostility towards us. But, those who wish to treat us with aggression will be treated with hostility. If their aggression is military aggression, we will respond in the same manner. If it is political, we will do the same. But, to nations that have no hostility towards us and desire peaceful brotherly relations, we extend our friendly hand. As Imam Khomeini said, "We do not have hostility towards any Muslim or non-Muslim country. The difference is that relations with Muslim countries have priority for us (*o'laviyat darad*). Thus, we are trying to increase our relations with Muslim countries and Muslim majority countries. Consequently, we have stronger political and economic ties."³¹²

The Establishment of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution

Since the philosophy of Iran's domestic and foreign policies was based on Islamic principles, soon after the revolution, Khomeini established the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution (*Shura-i 'Aali-i Enqelab-i Farhangi*). His goal was to transform the Iranian culture from a Westernized, liberal culture to an Islamic culture.³¹³ That meant a complete transformation of the political, social, economic and cultural affairs of the country. In 1982, Khamenei became the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution. From the outset of his Presidency, Khamenei focused on Khomeini's "Cultural Revolution" and his efforts have continued to this date.³¹⁴ In an interview in early 1983 Khamenei explains:

Of course one of the goals of the Islamic Revolution from the very beginning was to turn Iran into an Islamic society where everything, every aspect of social, cultural, economic, political and personal life is governed by Islam and Islamic principles. Islamization of a nation that has been functioning in a Westernized or semi-Islamic society is a difficult task that takes many years, and is an ongoing movement (*harekat-i mostamer*). The Islamization process is both an internal and external Islamization – that means the Islamization of both domestic and foreign policies and of course domestic life in every aspect.³¹⁵

Internally that meant re-defining Iran’s cultural language expressed through art, literature, customs, rituals and the belief system of the society. Socially, participation in elections became a new phenomenon, since according to Khomeini Iranians were not accustomed to elections under the Shah’s regime. Economically, the challenge was changing the culture of consumption, imports and exports. Politically, Iran’s relation with other governments was based on mutual respect and respecting Islamic political principles. Iran’s major foreign policy principle was “Neither East, Nor West,” while improving lateral relations and unity with the Muslim world (*vahdat-i jahan-i Islam*), and forming a coalition against foreign domination.³¹⁶

Economic Reconstruction Period and Transformation of the Iranian Economic System

Khamenei’s transformation of Iran’s economic system required cooperative efforts from the Ministry of Industry (*Vezerat-i Sanaye*), Finance Ministry (*Vezerat-i Darayi*), the Minister of Trade (*Vazir-i Bazargani*), and the officials of Economic Mobilization Campaign (*Setad-i Basij-i Eqtesadi*).³¹⁷ Khamenei attributes two characteristics to the economy the Islamic Republic inherited from the Shah’s regime:

1. *A dependent economy on foreign powers* – Khamenei explains: “We were dependent upon foreign imports in every sense: industrial, agricultural, manufacturing, food, clothing, home goods, rugs, etc. That meant complete reliance on foreign companies.

Even the bread that our baker baked used imported wheat from America. Our economy was dependent and we were not utilizing our own strengths and resources.”³¹⁸

2. *Monetary dependency on Iran’s oil industry* – Khamenei asserts: “Our exports were mostly dependent upon the oil industry. Our most important customers and largest consumers are Westerners, America and Japan. When analyzing our inherited economic policy, we realized that our country was in the hands of the enemy from both sides— exports and imports. Hence, the enemy could become a tool of oppression of our nation at any time. These are the situations we have inherited from the previous regime. Many changes occurred during the past two-three years and we have shut down our oil faucets to many countries and tried to depend on internal production until our agriculture, etc. grows.”³¹⁹

“Neither East, Nor West policy”

On several occasions President Khamenei is asked to describe Iran’s foreign policy of “Neither East, Nor West.” The following is a summary of his views:

“Neither East, nor West” (*na sharqi, na gharbi*) does not mean adversarial relations with the East and West. Rather, it means rejecting the domination of the East and the West and refraining from assimilating to Eastern and Western influence. This policy does not promote enmity (*zediyat*) with East and West. We have been delivered from the Shah’s regime, who was one hundred percent dependent upon the West. As a result, we became victims of aggression because of his policies of dependency. Henceforth, we do not desire dependency on either side.³²⁰

We have accomplished this slogan in two spheres: in the internal political sphere and outside the Iranian borders. Internally, today all Iranians know that the Islamic Republic has a strict policy of “Neither East, Nor West” that means it is neither dependent upon the East or the West, nor has any inclinations towards either side. Therefore, this has become an Iranian identity. Externally, Iran has spread this policy to other nations, specifically smaller third world countries and independent non-third world countries, who feel they have no choice but to rely on these two superpowers. They are under the false pretense that without relying on them they cannot exist as a nation. The Islamic revolution of Iran showed them it is possible to exist without these powers. Therefore, this concept

established roots in other nations and our people, and encouraged many governments to believe that such a phenomenon is possible. As long as a nation is not under the influence of, or subjected to the power of the East, West, or the Soviet Union, this goal has been accomplished.³²¹

U.S.-Iran Relations

With respect to U.S.-Iran relations, in a response to a Wall Street Journal reporter in November 1983, Khamenei asserts: “As long as America presents itself as a superpower, there is no hope for future political relations with Iran.”³²² This presented a slight change in Khamenei’s position from March 1982 when he said: “We will *never* have relations with America,” because “America is known as the foremost criminal in our nation, and has oppressed this nation for years.”³²³ Khamenei describes Iran’s opposition to the U.S.:

America has been our oppressor for years. For decades America has placed this nation under pressure and has caused the people of this country much harm. Therefore, when our nation struggled and fought against the Shah’s regime, in actuality it was a revolt against America. If Americans had ceased their hostility against Iranians, and had prevented translating the past into the future, perhaps our people would have reconsidered, but this was not the case. From the inception of the revolution, Americans plotted major revolts in this country. Fortunately, our people recognized most of these revolts and rejected them. The imposition of the Iraq-Iran war is an example of America’s opposition against this revolution, and we do not doubt that this war occurred at America’s behest.³²⁴ As long as America’s policies are based on domination and aggression, there will be no relations with America. We do not see future relations with America.³²⁵

During these early stages of the Islamic Republic’s life, Khamenei believes that two groups with two distinct political ideologies existed within the Iranian government with respect to the U.S.: those who boldly opposed the U.S. and those who were afraid of America.³²⁶ He asserts:

There are those who believe that we should no longer say “Death to America” (“*marg bar Amrīka*”) because America is a great power – that we need them and should not be enemies with them. Yet, there are those who believe that we must shout louder and protest objections against America. Forces supporting the Imam are congruent with the Imam’s path (*khat-i Imam*) and there are no disputes among them. They are opposed to superpowers and believe America is the most dangerous enemy of our nation and we must resist it. We all believe that we must unify Muslim nations and spread the revolution

like the aroma of a spring flower, and we all believe it is not in the best interests of the Islamic Republic that we interfere with the internal affairs of other countries.³²⁷

Soviet Union-Iran Relations

As the Eastern block and a neighboring country, Khamenei insists that Iran has no allegiance towards any power and is not willing to surrender to any power, including the Soviet Union.³²⁸ Even though Iran's animosity with the U.S. is greater than the Soviet Union, Iranian leaders exercise as much caution as possible to avoid Iran's dependence on Soviet power.³²⁹ Henceforth, Khamenei explains that Iran's neither "Neither East, Nor West" slogan is a political principle and a model of independence for other nations.³³⁰

Export of Revolution

One of Khamenei's major missions during his presidency was to export Iran's Cultural Revolution. For Khomeini-Khamenei, exporting Iran's revolution first began with transforming the Iranian society into an Islamic society, and then extending it globally, especially to the Muslim world.³³¹ In an interview on October 11, 1981, Khamenei explains the Islamic Republic's mission to export Iran's Revolution:

Imam Khomeini explained on numerous occasions that exporting the Revolution is the culture of the Revolution (*farhang-i enqelab*) and its true spirit of the revolution (*ruh-i vaq'ei-ye enqelab*). It recognizes no borders, no color, nor race. Therefore, no wall or gate can stand in its way to prevent its progress. Eventually, this revolution will reach other countries in the region that have also been subjected to U.S. domination. The difference with Iran's Islamic Revolution is that it influences without the slightest interference in the domestic affairs of other countries. Therefore, Iran's exporting its revolution is not by a military force, but a cultural influence. We have always said that we will neither become the security guard of the Persian Gulf, nor allow anyone to guard the Persian Gulf. We believe in a collective healthy existence around the Persian Gulf and believe that the surrounding countries must live and coexist in peace, harmony and brotherhood. Imam Khomeini calls the Persian Gulf, the "Islamic Gulf."³³² He also considers the Islamic Republic of Iran, the axis and center of gravity of the "Islamic Revolution." Hence, the Islamic Republic's role is indirect, which means the very survival of the Islamic Republic sets a model for the region. According to an Egyptian

writer, “If Islam is found in an island or a corner of the world, it is the biggest propaganda (*tabliqāt*) for Islam.” Currently, we have become that island, not in a corner of the world, but at the intersection of the Middle East. This is the best strategic location in terms of military, economy and politics, and we have become an inspiration influencing other movements. We cannot provide direct assistance to other movements, because our constitution prohibits interference. Of course we respect any type of progressive movement in the world, but we cannot directly establish relations with forces attempting to change a nation’s internal system. The Islamic Republic has never made such a policy part of its foreign policy. Therefore, the most important help we can provide to these movements is by setting an example.³³³

Muslim Unity

On January 5, 1982, during Muslim Unity Week,³³⁴ Khamenei describes his views about Islamic unity, as having several fundamental axes:³³⁵

1. Unity among different Islamic sects (*mazaheb-i mokhtalef-i Islami*), mainly among Shi’is and Sunnis, and also different branches within each sect.
2. Unity among Muslims in terms of geography and geographical borders such as Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and other Muslim countries. And, unity among Muslims in the Middle East, South-East Asia, South Asia and North Africa.
3. Unity in terms of political leanings (*gerayeshha-ye siyāsi*), which means despite each Muslim country’s political inclinations or political systems, Muslims are united under the banner of Islam.

The Benefits of Collective Power of the Muslim World

In a meeting with Muslim leaders in 1984, Khamenei calls upon the commencement of a colossal Islamic movement among all Muslim nations; whether Arab and non-Arab, small and large, in the Middle East, North Africa, or South Asia. He states:

Today, this region is under the influence of a few political powers. Different regional countries are dependent upon different political blocks. They may not be completely dependent, but they are in some way. Iran is the only country in the region that is

completely independent from associations with the East and the West. Now, if all these nations turn to God and decide to stand against political, economic or military powers that threaten us, see what would happen to the oil market, weapons production, or other international products. Truly, the Western world, the capitalist world, and the industrial world will suddenly be crippled. As you know, the largest oil resources are located in the Persian Gulf. If all nations in this region stand against the enemies of Islam, see what is going to happen!³³⁶

Who are the enemies of Islam? All the bullying oil customers (*moshtariha-ye gardan koloft-i naft*). Oil for them is an existential matter. If they do not have oil, their homes will freeze and their air and ground transportation will stop. This is the only reason the enemy tries to create conflict among Muslims, for they know this reality. The global hegemony knows and sees that if this enormous Muslim world comes together in unity and creates a superpower (*qodrat-i bozorg*) economically, politically and militarily, none of the military powers could stand against them. Of course they would try to do everything they can to destroy the unity of the Muslim world and create conflicts among them for their pursuit of power. One of the examples is the Iraq-Iran war. This war caused contentions between two neighboring countries, contentions among Arab countries, contentions among Muslims—Sunnis and Shi'is. It caused lack of trust among Muslims, created worry and concerns towards neighboring countries, and it will take years to heal from these wounds. What Iraq has done is treacherous and disloyal towards not only Iran, but the entire Muslim world, simply by subjecting themselves to the temptations of colonizers.³³⁷

If every Muslim in every Muslim country comes together in unison as one common unit, they will create a gargantuan force, unmatched globally. If one billion Muslims in the world can mutually agree and pursue common critical issues they could form an immense power in the pursuit of honorable, admirable and humanitarian goals. This requires setting aside sectarian differences, and instead focusing on common interests.³³⁸ Iran's message to all neighboring countries and the Muslim world is that we are not supporters of division and hatred among Muslims. We are supporters of kindness, love, cooperation and virtue with all Muslims and we believe that the filthy hands of colonization seek to create division among Muslims. Today, it is Iran's turn to spread propaganda against them. Tomorrow it will be the turn of another government and another country. We are confident that colonizers are powerless against people who make efforts by relying on God and the Qur'an. We are supporters of unity among Muslim nations and consider any voice causing division, the voice of Satan.³³⁹

Iran as a Superpower

Due to these claims made by Khamenei's government, the international community begins to question whether Iran is aiming to becoming a superpower. In terms of becoming the

third superpower of the world, the first two being the U.S. and the Soviet Union, in an interview in February 1982, Khamenei explains:

We believe that the ideals of the Islamic Republic are attractive to one billion Muslims across the globe, especially those in the third world countries. We are not in any hurry and believe that the Islamic Republic's ideals and thoughts must find their place in the world. We have no intentions of domination or becoming a superpower in its common and ordinary sense. Our fundamental intent is that all the oppressed in the world are able to find the power to decide their own fate and this is something that the oppressed should not be indifferent about.³⁴⁰ Instead, we seek amicable relations. When we say peaceful relations, we do not mean relations with every nation. Exceptions are the racist South Africa and the Zionist regime of Israel, which are not legitimate regimes. Therefore, we cannot have agreeable relations with them. The nature of these two regimes and their existence is illegal. The other exception is the United States.³⁴¹

Palestine-Israel

During an interview on February 18, 1982, Khamenei was asked by a Turkish reporter if he believes that Israel must be completely destroyed (*bāyad kolī az beyn beravad*). He was further asked, if the Arab world and Palestinians accept Israel, then can the Iranian government accept Israel and establish future relations with the Zionist regime?³⁴² Khamenei responds:

Those who understand the true nature of Israel and the intentions of superpowers for creating an Israeli government know that no one can expect Israel to ever say, "I will only contain this area and I do not want anything further." This does not even correspond with Israel's intents and the intentions of superpowers that created it, for it is within Israel's nature to be opportunistic and engage in violence and aggression. We believe that Palestine belongs to Palestinians and those are the Arab, Jew and Christian Palestinians. The government that will be established should be a Palestinian government. If Palestinians feel that it is in their interests that their government has a Jewish element, we are not opposed to it. But a government in the name of Israel with a Zionist element is never acceptable by us and we will never accept it. Arabs may someday be forced to accept this due to increasing American pressures, but we are not fighting with Israel for anyone else, unless it is for our own strategic goals and what we believe. Even if we are left alone, we will never tolerate Israel.³⁴³

Khamenei's Second Term Presidency (1985-1989)

Khamenei was elected President for a second term in July 1985 with 12,203,870 votes out of 14,244,630 ballots. Although he did not want to run in the presidential race for a second term, Khomeini told him it was mandatory.³⁴⁴ Khamenei explains:

I was elected to the presidency twice. I rejected it both times. The first time I had just left the hospital, but friends insisted that no one else could do the job. So I had no other alternative. And the second time, the Imam told me that it was imperative that I accept my candidacy. So I went to the Imam and told him that I was not accepting, and expressed that this time I was not going to come to the political scene. He said: "It is obligatory."³⁴⁵

Speech at the 42nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly

One of the critical international engagements during Khamenei's second presidential term was his participation at the 42nd session of the United Nations (U.N.) in New York on September 22, 1987. This speech highlighted Khamenei's policies and the posture of the Islamic Republic towards international matters and foreign policies.³⁴⁶

Khamenei first focused on the Islamic nature and Islamic culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran and distinguished it from other systems. He said:

I come from Iran, the birthplace of the most [important] – and yet the least known – revolution of contemporary history. A Revolution based on God's religion and in line with the prophets and great divine reformers, a path that is as long as the entire human history. The firm roots and the underlying intellectual base of this Revolution is Islam's monotheistic worldview, rooted in and derived from this divine worldview.³⁴⁷

Khamenei then emphasized the equal status of all humankind and their common roots derived from the divine. He said: "There is no difference among races, skin colors and peoples of different countries. These things are not grounds for superiority. Human beings are connected to one another, and violating the rights of a person is the same as violating the rights of humanity –

regardless of geographical and racial characteristics.”³⁴⁸ Thus, he condemned the spread of corruption, domination and oppression by hegemonic powers in the global community. He said:

Islam rejects systems based on coercion and bullying and systems born of oppression, ignorance, suppression, tyranny, humiliation of man and discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, blood and language. Islam vehemently fights with any system determined to fight the Islamic system. Islam orders its followers to love and help all human beings – whether they are compatriots or not. It was on the basis of such goals and foundations that the Islamic Revolution took place in Iran and led to the establishment of the Islamic Republic. Many people have sought the roots of the Islamic Revolution in Bahman 1357 [February 1979], and many of them have failed to understand this issue appropriately.³⁴⁹

Khamenei further asserted that the reason for America’s hostility towards Iran was the philosophy of the Islamic Republic that encouraged independence, which became a source of hope and inspiration for other Muslim countries.³⁵⁰ He said:

I deem it necessary to emphasize that the complaints of the Iranian nation are against the leaders of the American regime, not against the American people – who would agree with us, if they knew about what their government has done to our nation. Our people have shown that they have faith in their goals and that they will even lay down their lives to remain committed to these goals. Such a nation cannot be afraid of America or any other power. By Allah’s favor, our nation will ensure that truth prevails and that victory belongs to righteous believers. Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, dear audience, this is the story of our Revolution; a Revolution that gave rise to a widespread wave of hope among nations which have been suffering at the hands of arrogant global powers’ hegemony. It also created an equally widespread wave of opposition from the poles of international hegemony. Now the entire world should see that we have survived in spite of the power of the hegemons.³⁵¹

With respect to his speech and visit Khamenei said: “Clearly disclosing this information at the U.N. angered the American and Israeli representatives to the extent that they walked out of the meeting...though I did not fear America, many other attendees did.”³⁵² After his return to Iran, Khamenei announced the week of November 8, 1987 as “National Mobilization Against U.S. Aggression.” The intent was to mobilize the Iranian people for a united strategy towards resistance. “Everyone in the society has to mobilize himself [or herself] to defend the values of the revolution against the aggression of domineering powers,” declared Khamenei.³⁵³

End of Iran-Iraq War: Cease Fire

After lengthy U.N. interventions and calls for a ceasefire, Iran-Iraq ended their hostilities on August 20, 1988 by adopting Resolution 598. Despite his promises to fight until his last drop of blood and final breath, Ayatollah Khomeini accepted the U.N.-brokered ceasefire. In a statement Ayatollah Khomeini said, “Coming to this decision was more deadly than taking poison. I submitted myself to God’s will and drank this drink for His satisfaction.”³⁵⁴ The following is a summary of the letter composed by Khomeini to the Iranian leaders:³⁵⁵

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

With the grace of God and salutation to great prophets and infallible imams, God’s peace and benediction be upon them, now that the military officials, including the IRGC and the Military [Artesh] commanders who are war specialists, openly confess that the Islamic military will not be victorious for some time, and considering that the military and political officials of the Islamic republic see the continuation of the war not advisable at all, and are firmly pointing out that, under no circumstances and at any price, they can obtain even one-tenth of the weapons put at Saddam’s disposal by the Eastern and Western arrogant [powers], and in view of the shocking letter of the IRGC commander, which is among tens of military and political reports that I have received after recent instances of defeat, and taking into account the view of the deputy commander of the Armed Forces that the IRGC commander is one of the few commanders who believes in the continuation of the war providing that the needed equipment can be procured, and in the light of the enemy’s extensive use of chemical weapons and our lack of equipment to neutralize them, I give my consent to the cease-fire, and in order to clarify the reasons for taking this bitter decision, I hereby refer to some points of the IRGC commander’s letter dated 2.4.1367 [23 June 1988].

In his letter the IRGC commander has written that there will be no victory in the next five years and he may be able to embark on destructive (*Enhedami*) operations or retaliate if he obtains the necessary equipment during the same period.

He said that, with the grace of God, he can embark on offensive operations if after 1371 [1992] the Islamic republic is able to have 350 infantry brigades, 2,500 tanks, 300 fighter planes and 300 helicopters as well as having the ability to make a substantial number of laser and atomic weapons which will be the necessity of the war at that time.

He adds that the strength of the IRGC must be increased seven times and the Military by two-and-half times.

He also said that America should be evicted from the Persian Gulf, otherwise he would not succeed. The [IRGC] commander stated that the most important factor for his success was the timely budget and resources, and in his opinion, the government and the supreme commander's staff would not be able to meet their commitments.

In spite of stating this, he said the Islamic Republic must continue fighting which is now no more than a slogan.

The prime minister, on behalf of his minister of economy and budget, said that the financial situation of the country stood at below zero and the military officials underlined that the value of the weapons lost during recent instances of defeat was equal to the entire budget allocated to the IRGC and the Military for the current year. Moreover, the political officials pointed out that the willingness to go to the front line had subsided because the people were aware that a victory would not be in the offing.

You dear ones, more than anyone else, know that this decision is like drinking the poisoned chalice and I submit to the Almighty's will and for the safeguarding of Islam and the protection of the Islamic Republic, I do away with my honour.

O' God! We rose for the sake of your religion, we fought for your religion and we accept the cease-fire for the protection of your religion.

O' God! You are aware that we do not collude even for a moment with America, the Soviet Union and other global powers, and that we consider collusion with superpowers and other powers as turning our back on Islamic principles.

You are aware that, the high ranking officials of the system have taken this decision with extreme sadness and with their heart filled to the brim with love for Islam and our Islamic country. Be aware of God and whatever happens, it is His decision.

Peace be upon pious people
Ruhollah Al-Mousavi al-Khomeini

For Khomeini-Khamenei, Iran had concluded an "Eight-year Sacred Defense Era."³⁵⁶ Khamenei insists that under no circumstances Iran wanted to engage in a war with its neighbor. However, given the nature of the attack, Iran had no other alternative but to engage in a "defensive war." Though the outcome was not what the Iranian leaders desired, they still believed that they were victorious, simply because they were able to sustain the regime against superpowers.³⁵⁷

Conclusion of Khamenei's Presidency

On February 1, 1988, Iran celebrated the tenth anniversary of the arrival of Ayatollah Khomeini to Iran. The Islamic Republic declared it “the Decade of Enlightenment” (*daheh-i fajr*). In an interview Khamenei explains that it has been named for both the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the survival of Iran in the eight-year holy defense (*defa'-i moqadas*). Khamenei asserts that Iran passed through a critical decade and calls the next ten years an “economic reconstruction era” (*dawran-i bāzāsāzi-ye eqtesādī*). For Khamenei, so much is still pending to transform Iran into the ideal Islamic government and the full implementation of Islamic principles (*aḥkam*), understanding (*tafahom*) and education (*ma'aref*).³⁵⁸

The Role of the 'Ulama' and Their Influence in Iran's Political Sphere

As a politico-religious cleric, like his mentor and the Father of the Revolution, Khamenei views the clerical role in the political life of the Islamic government as essential. Khamenei reflects on the struggles of the clerics at a critical crossroad in Iran's history and finds it significant that religious leaders were able to change that history. For him, the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution was the “Day of Revolution and the Clergy” (*Ruz-i Enqelab va Ruhaniyat*), because of the exceptional role the clerical establishment played in the revolutionary movement. Iran had never witnessed such fighting and a determined spirit in its clerics, he asserts. The clerical establishment in Khomeini's movement was pro-active in its struggle against the Shah. Despite oppositions, imprisonments and exiles, the clerics continuously educated and mobilized the Iranian people until they brought the movement to its final victorious conclusion.³⁵⁹ Khamenei asserts:

Without any doubt no other organization or political system or party (*hezb*) in any of the revolutions in the world has played such an active role in mobilizing the people. After the revolution, the clerics continued their presence on the political scene by taking steps

towards struggling against global domination and enemies of the revolution. These courageous, reformists, progressive and combatant clergy (*ruhaniyūn-i mobarez*) were the spiritual pillars of the great flood of Iranian people on the streets that resulted in the victory of this grand movement. Of course the leadership of this clerical movement and direction was our magnanimous Imam Khomeini, who mobilized these clerics as their instructor, spiritual guide and spiritual father.³⁶⁰

The Iranian regime, its supporters, and its opponents witnessed the activism (or combat) of the clergy (*mobarezeh-i ruhaniyat*) and leadership of Imam Khomeini. They witnessed the vital role the clerics played in supporting the people's activism against the regime. Thus, they did everything they could to suppress and remove this clerical political threat by removing Ayatollah Khomeini from the political scene and the heart of the struggle against the regime. When Khomeini talked about capitalism and the immunity of American advisors, he explained it in a way that his audience understood his intentions – that this movement was indeed an Iranian movement. Therefore, the regime's and American's apparatus realized that the Iranian struggle with the leadership of Imam Khomeini was a struggle against global dominations. Hence, they realized the threat of this struggle even more. There are many political struggles in the world, but what was threatening to the colonizing apparatus was a political movement by a religious leader; a *marja' al-taqlid* and a great religious scholar (*'alim-i bozorg*). This was the truth about this movement and this regime that ended up defeating the Shah, who on the contrary, was respected and supported by global domineering powers.³⁶¹

Unlike the Constitutional Revolution and Mosaddeq's movement, this time, the 'ulama' had come on the political scene with more political zeal. Khamenei attributes two critical factors to Khomeini's victory against the monarchical establishment: support and participation of the Iranian people and the role the 'ulama' played in assisting the nation. "The 'ulama' were able to clearly understand the political and social issues involved and were unafraid to voice their objections to the Shah's regime, either in writing or by joining the people in demonstrations, or engaging in political activism behind the scenes."³⁶²

This was the second time Khamenei had personally witnessed the robust participation of the 'ulama' in Iran's political and social issues: First, the spirited involvement and support of Ayatollah Kashani during Mosaddeq's movement and now the Islamic Revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini.³⁶³ The difference between these two revolutions, for Khamenei, was the ability of

Reza Khan to defeat the clerics during the first revolution, but his son Reza Shah sees his demise by the clerics during the second revolution. Khamenei attributes two factors to the failure of the Kashani-Mosaddeq movement: the forceful opposition of the enemy and the weakening of the support of the clerical establishment.³⁶⁴ He asserts, knowing the power and devices of the enemy, from the onset of his movement, Ayatollah Khomeini called upon the active participation of the ‘ulama’ in the Islamic revolution. In a letter dated April 2, 1961, Khomeini warned the ‘ulama’ in Tehran about the temptations of supporting the Shah. He wrote: “Allegiance to the Monarchy (*shahdūsti*) means robbery (*qaratgari*), dishonoring Islam, violating the rights of Muslims and violation of the centers of religion and knowledge. Allegiance to the monarchy means striking the essence of the Qur’an and Islam. Islamic principles are in jeopardy. Qur’an and religion are endangered.”³⁶⁵ In respect to these statements, Khamenei states:

Khomeini gave courage to the people and the ‘ulama’, a courage they did not know they had. He helped them realize that they can be politically active. This was one of Ayatollah Borujerdi’s failures. He did not realize the power vested in him and did not realize that with one word he could have brought people together and the government to its feet. Khomeini’s greatness was in his ability to discover the power invoked upon the clergy and the of the clergy and spiritual authority (*qodrat-i ruhaniyat va marja’iyyat*).³⁶⁶

It is with such a spirit that Khamenei moved into the next stages of his leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Nearly half a century after his birth and a little over four decades after he began his religious training under the wings of his father, Khamenei was set to become one of the most powerful and controversial theocratic political leaders in the world.

PHASE III
IRAN AFTER KHOMEINI'S DEATH
SUPREME LEADER KHAMENEI
(JUNE 1989-JUNE 2013)

CHAPTER 8

KHAMENEI'S SUCCESSION TO SUPREME LEADERSHIP

Ayatollah Khomeini's death on June 4, 1989 gave birth to a sweeping shift in Iran's political system. Three years prior to his death, Khomeini had experienced a heart attack which had caused grave worries for the Iranian leaders as to who would be his "suitable" successor. As rumors of Khomeini's illness spread throughout the international community, the unifying sentiment was that Khomeini's death may result in the demise of the Islamic Republic. This created great uncertainties in the domestic front as well and questions rose about the next leader.³⁶⁷ Khamenei shared his frustrations:

The enemy already had sinister plans for the period following the Imam's illness and death. Financial Times reported that with death of the leader there would be a huge gap in the political system of Iran – a gap that would be impossible to fill. Radio America reported that Imam's death would be followed by instability throughout the country and this might even ignite civil war in Iran. Saudi Arabia's prominent newspaper wrote that Massoud Rajavi's group, supported by Iraq, was getting ready for a war at the borders. And, Associated Press wrote that one of the aftermaths of Khomeini's death would be for Banisadr to return to Iran and take over the government.³⁶⁸

To Khamenei, Khomeini was revered as the father of the revolution and the redeemer of the Iranian people from the oppressive powers of the Shah's regime. He had given Iran independence from foreign powers and handed Iran back to its rightful owners – the Iranian people. He had taught Iranians the ideals of the Islamic Revolution and had established their nation as the flag-bearer of Islam, and a model for the Muslim world. As Commander-in-Chief, he had led the nation in its darkest era of the eight-year Iraqi "imposed war" (*jang-i tahmīlī*). Through all these, the children of the revolution (the Iranians who believed in him) had a special emotional connection to their leader.³⁶⁹

On numerous occasions Khamenei had described his views of Khomeini's characteristics. He had called him: "a proof of God, a sign of God's greatness, possessor of exceptional wisdom, strong in faith, gifted with patience, humility and piety, and one filled with the divine wisdom."³⁷⁰ He also characterized him as "clever, alert, decisive, compassionate and obedient to God with a strong iron will."³⁷¹ Khamenei's experience had shown that nothing, no problem or challenge frightened his teacher. For Khamenei, these highly unique characteristics of Khomeini made it almost impossible for the clerical establishment to elect another individual as his successor who possessed similar characteristics.³⁷²

In an interview during his Presidency, in February 1982, Khamenei was asked if Imam Khomeini is replaceable by the Expediency Council and if a leader like him exists in Iran.

Khamenei responds:

I am assured that there is no leader in Iran who can achieve that status, purity, influence and performance of Imam Khomeini. Therefore, the heaviest loads of the Islamic Republic are upon his shoulders and everyone who is serving the Islamic Republic is his student and disciple, who love him like their father and teacher, and admire him. Therefore, the Expediency Council will not be in a state to replace the leadership of Imam Khomeini because the Expediency Council is one of the institutions of the Revolution and it remains committed to him.³⁷³

He is then asked whether the clerical rule has the ability to govern a complicated political system within an international political system. Khamenei asserted:

Those who are concerned about clerical rule must be assured that this government is run by both clerics and non-clerics. Therefore, non-clerics also play a critical role in the government. Anyone who is qualified to do the task is part of the system. A cleric does not have a specific characteristic that prevents him from understanding complicated matters. Just like other professions, a cleric is also able to analyze issues, use logic and reasoning, and make decisions. Only those who do not want Islam to govern this regime make such claims. We have many intellectuals, scholars, and non-clerics in our political system.³⁷⁴

The Revision of the Constitution

Ayatollah Khomeini was more determined to assure the survival of his Islamic regime than the world had imagined. Several months prior to his death, Khomeini had appointed then-President Khamenei and the President of the Expediency Council to form a Constitutional Revision Committee (*Majlis-i Baznegari*) and elect its members. Consequently, on April 24, 1989, the 25-member Revision Committee was formed. Among the members were Ayatollah Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Khamenei himself. Khomeini asked the Committee to consider the revision of the following articles: Supreme Leadership, the Executive Branch, the Judiciary, and the management of the Islamic Republic's media, *Seda va Sima*, so that the Judiciary had authority over it. He also asked them to include provisions for revision of the Constitution and change the name of the *Majlis-i Shura-i Meli* (The National Parliament) to *Majlis-i Shura-i Islami* (The Islamic Parliament). Khomeini asked the Committee to complete the task in two months.³⁷⁵

The major issue Khomeini wanted to resolve before his death was the conflict over *marja' iyyat* (religious reference or source of imitation) of the *faqih* (jurist) as a qualification for the *vali-i amr* (Supreme Leader) as stated in the Articles 5 and 109 of the Constitution.³⁷⁶ Based on the 1979 constitution, the *vali-i amr* had to be a Grand Ayatollah (*Ayatollah al-'Uzmā*), which meant that only those who were sources of imitation were qualified to become a supreme leader.³⁷⁷

Initially, Khomeini had considered Ayatollah Montazeri as his heir, but due to political fallout between the two, Khomeini reconsidered his decision. As a more moderate and human rights advocate *faqih*, Montazeri publically criticized Khomeini's arrests, imprisonments, and executions of members of opposition political parties. He believed that the harsh rules of the

Islamic regime had exhausted Iran's resources and the country was in a dire need for a reform of redevelopment and re-strengthening.³⁷⁸ This pushed Khomeini to seek someone who would share his vision for the Islamic government and one who would be an "experienced bureaucratic manager and well-respected."³⁷⁹ Unable to find a qualified Grand Ayatollah from the pool of senior clergy, Khomeini had no other choice but to revise the Constitution and remove the requirements for *marja' iyyat*.

In a response to Ayatollah 'Ali Meshkini's inquires who oversaw the revision process, in a letter dated April 29, 1989, Ayatollah Khomeini clarified his view in respect to the requirements for the supreme leader. He wrote:³⁸⁰

Your Excellency Hojjat al-Islam va al-Muslemin Hajj Sheikh Ali Meshkini:

Greetings. You had inquired about my opinion in respect to the amendment to the Constitution. You, gentlemen, may act however you see fit. I do not wish to interfere. Only in respect to the leadership, we cannot leave our Islamic regime without supervision. We have to elect an individual who would defend our Islamic poise in the global politics.

From the very beginning, I believed and insisted that there is no need for the requirements of *marja' iyyat*. A pious *mujtahid*, who is approved by the esteemed Assembly of Experts (*Majlis-i Khobregan*) shall suffice. Once the people have elected the members of the Assembly of Experts, and the Assembly has ascertained an individual as the leader, then there are no disagreeing issues. In this case, he is the elected *vali* and his decree is binding.

I expressed these views during the formation of the original constitution, but our colleagues insisted on the condition of *marja' iyyat*. I knew then that in near future this requirement could not be implemented. I wish you gentlemen success from the Almighty God.

Regards, Grace and Blessings,
Ruhollah al-Mousavi al-Khomeini
April 29, 1989

The Council revised the constitution accordingly and handed over the final copy to Khomeini for his approval. Khomeini was able to successfully remove the requirements for *marja' iyyat* from supreme leadership. Thus, the 1979 Constitution and the 1989 amendments divided the authority

of the late Imam “between a clerically selected leader and a popularly elected President.”³⁸¹ Despite changes in the structure of the government, the Governance of the Jurisconsult “to rule as continued Imamate (*vilāyat-i amr va Imamat-i ommat*) was declared unalterable, alongside Iran’s established religion and the republican form of government.”³⁸² However, Article 109 gave the Assembly of Experts the power to dismiss the leader in case of impiety. Articles 1 and 19 allowed the Assembly to monitor the conduct of the leader by “supervising the administrative organization of Leadership.” The accumulation of all these powers extended the influence of the Assembly of Experts in the clerical rule.³⁸³

Khamenei’s Election as Khomeini’s Successor

After Khomeini’s death, the Assembly of Experts, led by ‘Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the Speaker of Majlis, met to elect Khomeini’s successor. They already knew that there was no other strong candidate in the Islamic Republic’s leadership to replace Khomeini. After a brief voting period, Sayyed ‘Ali Khamenei was elected as the new Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, allegedly in an effort to follow Khomeini’s wishes for his succession.³⁸⁴ With the exception of the title “Imam,” Khamenei inherited all political powers designated to Khomeini. As Khamenei’s status was elevated so was his rank. Khamenei moved from *hojjat al-Islam* (middle rank cleric) to *Ayatollah* (Sign of God).³⁸⁵ In their attempts to balance out power, the Assembly ascribed greater powers to other factions of the government such as the Majlis, the Office of Presidency (*Daftar-i Ra’is-i Jomhur*) and the Judiciary (*Qoveh-i Qaza’iyeh*).³⁸⁶

No one had expected that Khamenei would become the next Supreme Leader, including Khamenei himself. Although his election as supreme leader was a surprise, he recalls the vote of confidence his mentor had placed in him in a 1981 public statement during his presidency:

Khamenei is the strong muscle of the Islamic Republic, knowledgeable of religion and politics, and is a fighter in the straight path of Islam. He is a solicitor of peace, a faithful soldier at the frontline, and a servant of the oppressed nation. He is a learned teacher, a powerful preacher of Friday prayers, and uncompromising with enemies. He is compassionate towards friends, a sincere servant, a thinker and a learned scholar. He is Imam Khomeini's child – "I raised Mr. Khamenei."³⁸⁷

On June 6, 1989, Khomeini's son, the Late Hajj Seyyed Ahmad Aqa Khomeini affirmed that Khamenei was his father's choice as his successor stating:

When Khamenei was traveling to North Korea [in April 1989], the Imam watched the reports of his trip on the television. He was impressed witnessing the welcome of the Korean people, his speeches and interviews. Then Imam said, "Surely he is worthy of leadership."³⁸⁸

Zahra Mostafa, Khomeini's daughter affirms:

A long time ago I asked the Imam about leadership and he named Ayatollah Khamenei. I asked him whether conditions of *marja' iyyat va 'alimiyyat* are required. He responded negatively. I asked him about his academic qualifications (*martabeh-i 'elmi*) he quickly responded that he possesses the certificate of *ijtihād* required for a *faqih*.³⁸⁹

Hojjat al-Islam Hashemi-Rafsanjani also recalls a discussion with Imam Khomeini:

In a meeting with the heads of the three powers, Vice President Mousavi, Hajj Ahmad and I held a discussion in the presence of the Imam. We were telling Imam that should this happen, then we will have a problem with the constitution since it might cause a void in the leadership. The Imam said: "There will not be a void in the leadership, and you have an individual." I asked: "Who?" In Mr. Khamenei's presence, he said, "This—Mr. Khamenei."³⁹⁰

Khamenei shares his thoughts about his election:

Before the passing of the Imam and towards the end of the presidency, I withdrew somewhat. They were coming repeatedly and suggesting different positions. Irresponsible people had already assigned me to these positions! But I said: should the Imam have a mission for me, since his command is obligatory for me, I will comply without any hesitations. But if possible, I will ask the Imam not to assign anything to me and to allow me to attend to cultural affairs.

I have always counted myself unworthy of critical and high level positions. I have viewed myself lower than them and even much lower positions such as presidency and other responsibilities during the revolution.

Of course those hours after the death of the Imam were very difficult for all of us. Out of their sense of responsibility, brethren were trying to find a solution. They continuously named me as a candidate for leadership, which I continuously dismissed in my mind. At that time I went to God, and on Saturday prior to the meeting of the Assembly of Experts, I prayed to God to remove my name from the list of potential candidates, asking if it was according to His will. From the bottom of my heart I did not want to be designated for this position.

Finally, after lengthy discussions in the Assembly of Experts, my name came up as a candidate and they picked me. I first dismissed it and went to the Assembly to address them on this issue. I talked to them about all the reasons why I should not be picked for this position. No matter how much I insisted, they rejected my proposal. They had an answer for every reason I offered. So I realized it was no use and accepted the nomination.

Even now I consider myself an ordinary student and cleric, not only for this task but any task. But now that this responsibility has been placed on my shoulders, I shall carry it with all my strength, to the best of my ability with God's grace and mercy. So I prayed to God and committed myself to start this position by relying on His help, and He has helped me to this day.³⁹¹

It was with a spirit of uncertainty, lack of confidence and absolute Khomeinism that Khamenei moved to the next phase of his political life as the second Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

CHAPTER 9

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN: THE AUTHORITY OF THE SUPREME LEADER AND THE PRESIDENT

Ayatollah Khamenei operates in a highly factionalized, autocratic regime with political power that encompasses all branches of government. The leadership includes: the Office of the Supreme Leader and the Executive Branch; the legislative branch which includes the Parliament and the Council of Guardians; and the military which encompasses the regular armed forces and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).³⁹² It is the very nature of this shared power that leads to questions about Iran's policies. Often officials within different factions of the government differ about the same policy issue, causing confusion about Iran's posture on any single matter. On one hand, Khamenei does not make national decisions independently, but on the other hand, all the factions of government are submitted to his authority and no key decision is made without his consent.³⁹³

The Authority of the Supreme Leader

According to the amended 1989 Constitution, the authority of the supreme leader is derived foremost from his appointment as the *valī-i faqīh* (Supreme Jurisconsult). The supreme leader is appointed for life or until the Expediency Council decides he is no longer suitable to rule due to flaws in his character. The Constitution has ascribed the leader several powers:³⁹⁴

- To define the general policies of the Islamic Republic and to supervise the proper execution of these policies;
- Ultimate authority over Iran's domestic and foreign policies;
- To ratify the electorate's choice of president and directly appoint senior state officials;

- To serve as the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and appoint commanders of the IRGC, the Artesh, and the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces;
- Authority over the intelligence services and security operations;
- Authority over declaring war by issuing a *fatwā* (decree);
- To appoint and dismiss the heads of the judiciary;
- To appoint the leaders of State broadcasting networks (*Sima va Seda*);
- To appoint and dismiss the clerical jurists;
- To appoint six out of 12 members of the Guardian Council;
- To appoint “numerous so-called special representatives throughout the government and in various religious and cultural institutions who serve as his eyes and ears and enable him to exert influence and control throughout the political system ensuring that his policies are implemented by various agencies.”³⁹⁵ These representatives are directors of cultural bureaus based in Iran’s worldwide embassies which allow the supreme leader to shape Iran’s foreign policy independently.
- To appoint all Friday-prayer leaders, who disseminate his political message and ideology to the larger population; and
- To appoint the directors of Iran’s *bonyads* (foundations), which function as independent economic entities and patronage networks unaccountable to the State.
- The supreme leader “relies on his own powerful secretariat, the Office of the Supreme Leader (*Daftar-i Maqam-i Mo‘azam-i Rahbari*) for advice in all fields,” including defense, domestic and foreign policies. He has final authority on every issue affecting the state and all security matters. No policy decision can be finalized without his consent.³⁹⁶

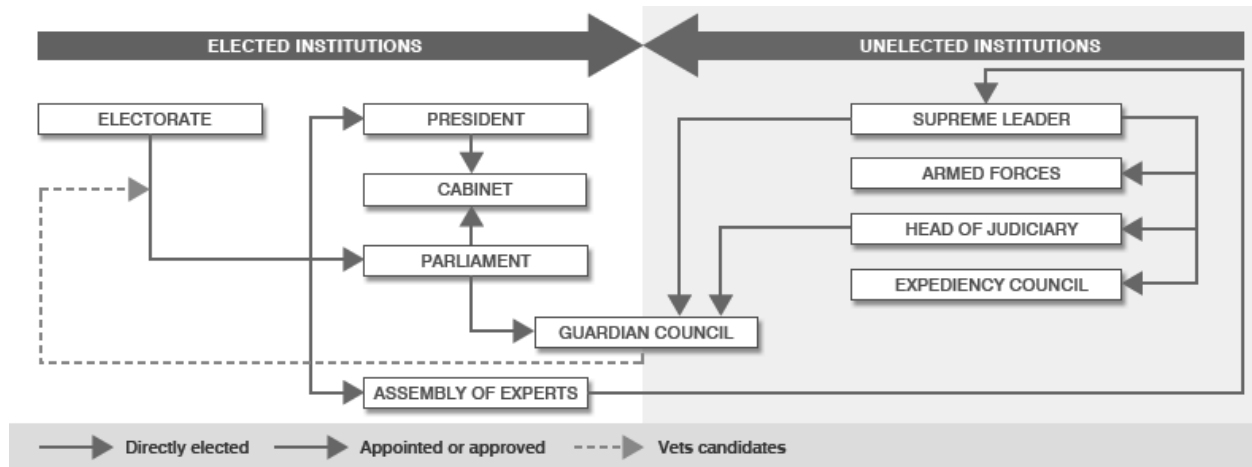


Figure 1. The Power Structure in the Islamic Republic of Iran (2)

Source: BBC News

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8051750.stm

The Power of the President

As the head of the executive branch, according to Article 113 of the Constitution, “the President is the second highest official in the country.”³⁹⁷ While the constitution ascribes the President numerous authorities, the power of the supreme leader trumps the power of the president. No key decision in the land can be made by the executive branch without the final consent of the supreme leader. The following chart lists ministries under the authority of the President.

President	Ministry of Justice
	Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics
	Ministry of Information and Communications Technology
	Ministry of Education
	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance
	Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance
	Ministry of Intelligence and Security
	Ministry of Jihad-and-Agriculture
	Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology
	Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare
	Ministry of Industries and Business
	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
	Ministry of Interior
	Ministry of Health and Medical Education
	Ministry of Energy
	Ministry of Transportation and Housing
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
Ministry of Petroleum	

Figure 2. Ministries Supervised by the President

Source: Based on Federal Research Division Library of Congress
<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/iran/mois-loc.pdf>

The Judiciary

The Supreme Leader appoints the head of the judiciary (*qoveh-i qazaiyyeh*), who “in turn appoints the head of the Superior Court and the Chief Public Prosecutor.”³⁹⁸ He also “nominates the six lay members of the Guardian Council.”³⁹⁹

The judiciary oversees general courts and tribunals (*dadserah-i dadgah-i 'omumi*) or Public Courts, which process civil and criminal matters. The Revolutionary Court (*dadgah-i*

enqelab-i Islami) oversees national security cases and “acts that undermine the Islamic Republic.” Judgments executed by the Revolutionary courts are final and cannot be appealed. The Special Clerical Court (*dadgah-i vizheh-i ruhaniyyat*) oversees cases that deal with alleged crimes committed by the clerics. Functioning independently from the regular judicial framework, the head of the Special Clerical Court directly reports to the Supreme Leader and his decisions cannot be appealed.⁴⁰⁰

The Assembly of Experts

According to Article 111 of the Islamic Republic’s Constitution, the Assembly of Experts (*Majlis-i Khobragan*) is charged with appointing and dismissing the Supreme Leader, should it “become apparent that he had lacked some of the qualifications from the beginning.” The qualifications for the supreme leader are specified in Article 109, which include, “jurisprudential competence, correct political and social perspective, administrative and managerial competence, courage, and adequate power for leadership.”⁴⁰¹

The Guardian Council

As the most influential body in the Islamic Republic, the Guardian Council (*Shura-i Negahban*) consists of twelve members; six clerics or theologians appointed by the supreme leader and six jurists nominated by the judiciary and approved by the Majlis (Parliament).⁴⁰²

Majlis: The Parliament of the Islamic Republic

The Majlis (Parliament) of the Islamic Republic consists of 290 members who are elected every four years. The Majlis has authority over introducing and executing laws as well as impeach the President or ministers serving under the president. All bills executed by the Majlis are subject to review, approval and veto by the Guardian Council.⁴⁰³

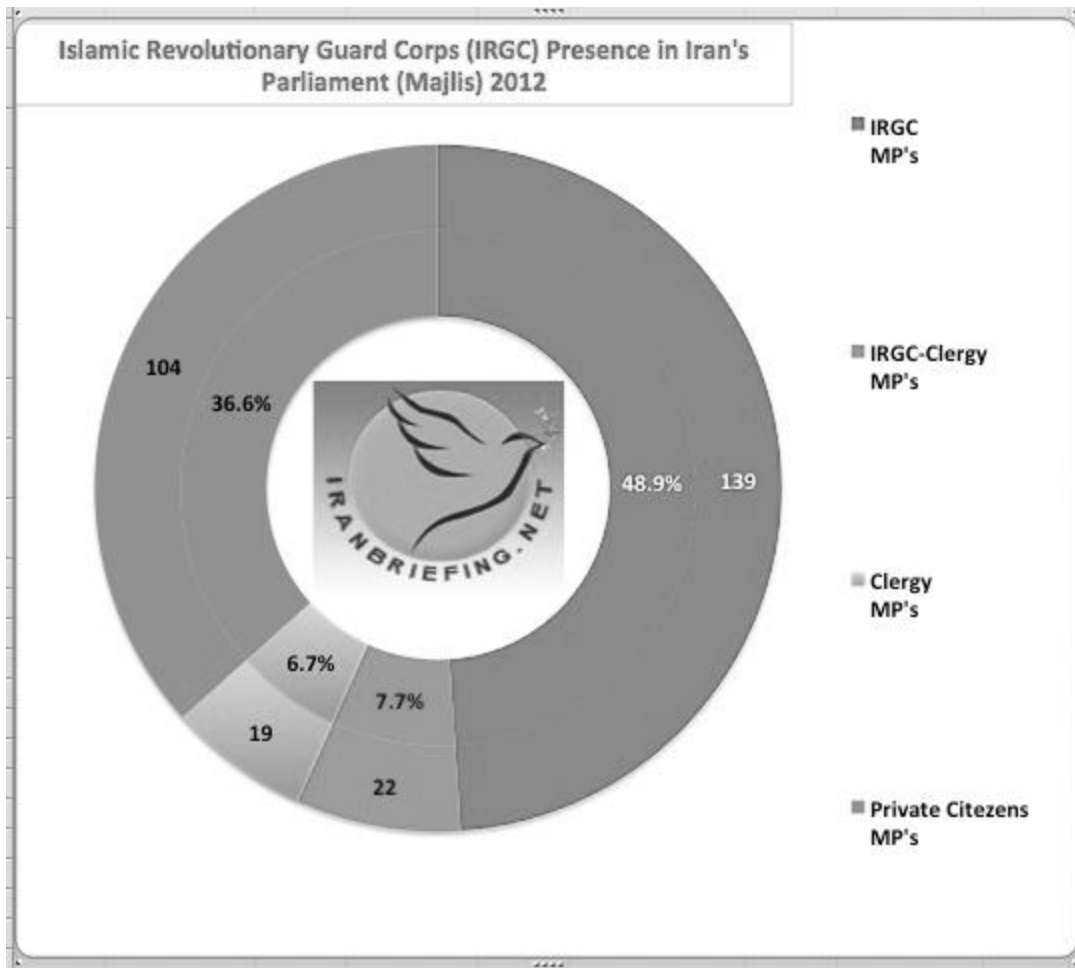


Figure 3. Iran's Supreme National Security Council Permanent Members (1)
 Source: Based on information from <http://iranmilitarynews.org/2012/08/27/irgc-qods-force-in-irans-parliament-2012/> originally published at <http://farsi.iranbriefing.net/?p=24259>

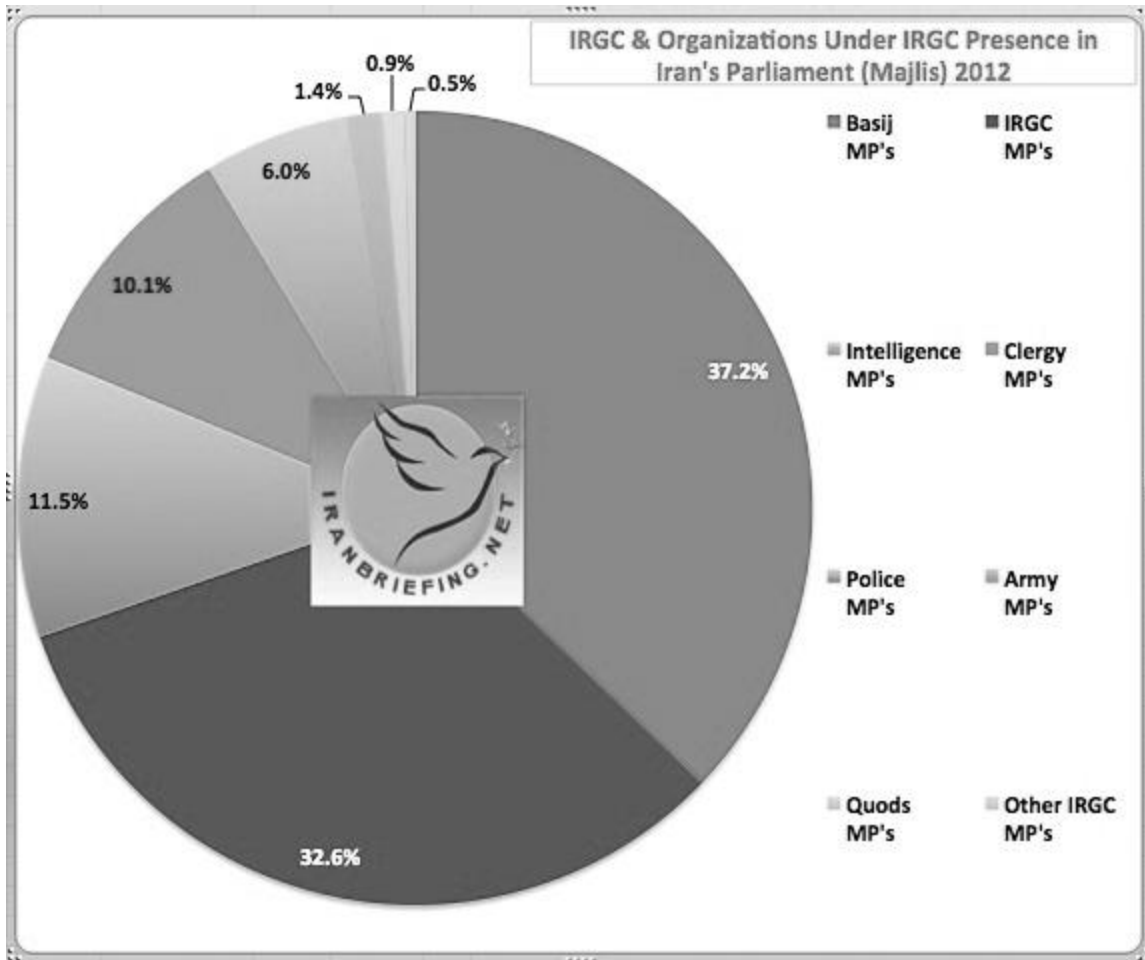


Figure 4. Iran's Supreme National Security Council Permanent Members (2)
 Source: Based on information from <http://iranmilitarynews.org/2012/08/27/irgc-qods-force-in-irans-parliament-2012/> originally published at <http://farsi.iranbriefing.net/?p=24259>

The Expediency Council

The Expediency Discernment Council of the System (*Majma' -i Tashkhis-i Maslahat-i Nezam*) or commonly known as the Expediency Council is an advisory body for the supreme leader based on Article 112 of the Islamic Republic's Constitution. It has the final adjudicating power for resolving disputes between the Guardian Council and the Majlis. In 2005, Ayatollah Khamenei gave "supervisory powers over all branches of the government" to the Expediency Council, which further strengthened its powers.⁴⁰⁴

National Security and Intelligence

The supreme leader oversees the national security and intelligence of the Islamic Republic, which consists of the Supreme National Security Council (*Shura-i 'Aali-i Amniyat-i Meli*), the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS or *Vezeerat-i Etela'at va Amniyat*), and Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic (*Niruha-ye Mosalah-i Jomhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*).⁴⁰⁵

The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran consists of the Army Ground Forces (*Artesh-i Jomhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*), Air Force (*Niruha-ye Havayi-i Artesh-i Jomhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*), Navy (*Niruy-i Daryayi-ye Jomhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*), Air Defense Force (*Qaragah-i Padafand-i Havayi-ye Artesh-i Jomhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*), Aerospace (*Sazeman-i Fazayi-i Iran*), and Law Enforcement (*Niruha-ye Entezami-ye Jomhuri-ye Islamic-ye Iran*), Islamic Revolutionary Guard Council (IRGC or *Sepah-i Pasdaran-i Enqelab-i Islami*) and Quds Force (*Niru-ye Qurds*).⁴⁰⁶

Created in 1979, Article 150 of the Islamic Republic's Constitution charges IRGC to protect and guard the Islamic Revolution.⁴⁰⁷ According to Wilfried Buchta, author of *Who Rules Iran?*

“IRGC is among the most autonomous power centers in Iran, and it has resisted subordination to any civilian authority, from the presidential executive to the clerical control apparatus embodied in the Supreme Leader's representatives.”⁴⁰⁸

Supreme National Security Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The president exercises authority over the Supreme National Security Council (*Shura-i 'Aali-i Amniyat-i Meli*) and the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (*Vezeerat-i Etela'at va Amniyat-i Keshvar*). Iran's nuclear program falls under the authority of the *Shura-i 'Aali-i Amniyat-i Meli*. Article 176 of the Constitution charges the Council with the duties of “safeguarding the national interests and preserving the Islamic Revolution, the territorial integrity and national sovereignty.”⁴⁰⁹ The President presides over the Council and appoints the

Secretary, however all decisions made by the Council must be approved by the supreme leader and can be executed “after the confirmation by the Leader.”⁴¹⁰ Members of the Council include: The heads of three branches of the government, chief of the Supreme Command Council of the Armed Forces, the officer in charge of the planning and budget affairs, two representatives nominated by the leader, ministers of foreign affairs, interior, and information, a minister related with the subject, and the highest ranking officials from the Armed Forces and the Islamic Revolution’s Guards Corps.⁴¹¹ The president’s decisions with respect to critical national security matters or domestic and foreign policies are subjected to the supreme leader’s final decree.

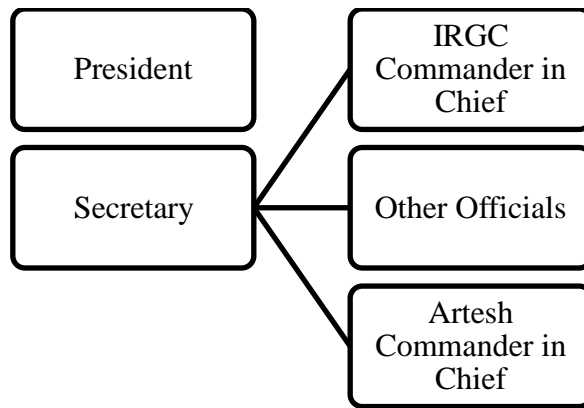


Figure 5. Organizational Chart of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council
Temporary Members

Source: Based on Federal Research Division Library of Congress
<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/iran/mois-loc.pdf>

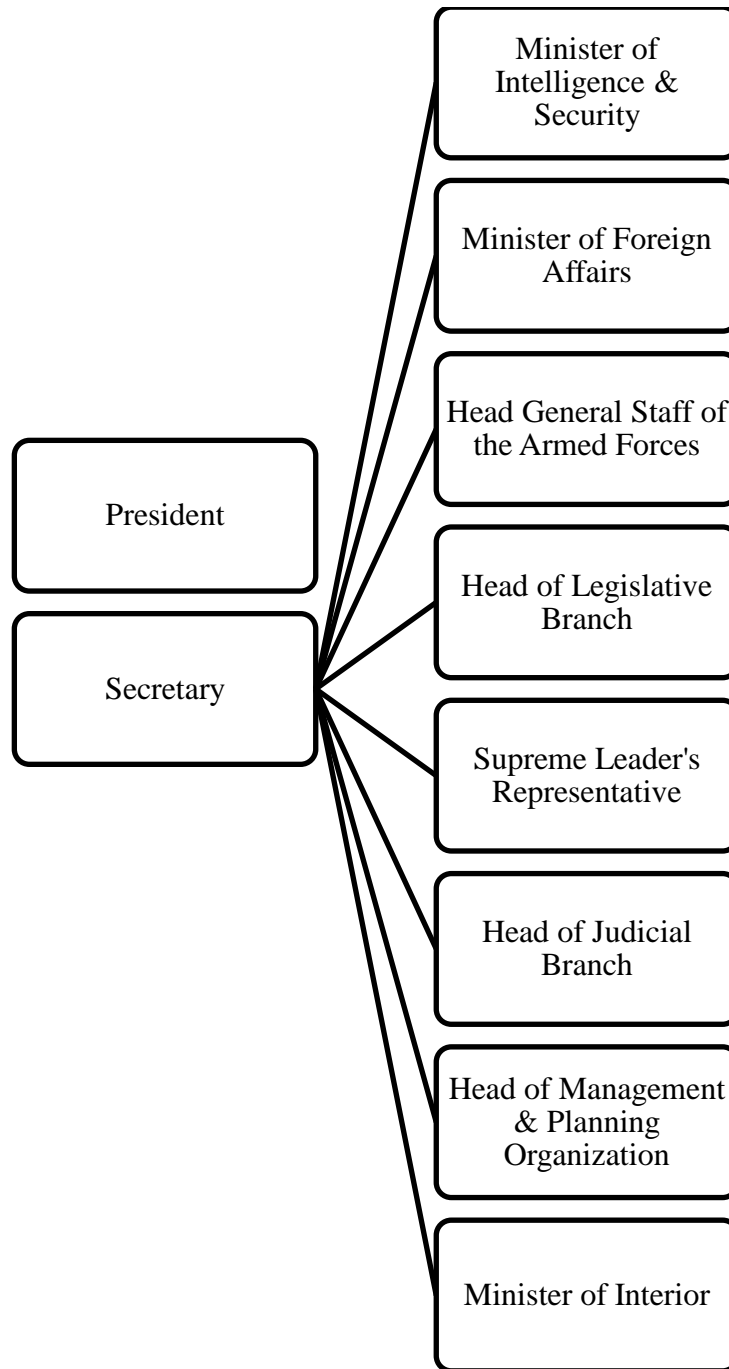


Figure 6. Organizational Chart of Iran's Supreme National Security Council
Permanent Members

Source: Based on Federal Research Division Library of Congress
<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/iran/mois-loc.pdf>

The Supreme Leader and His Presidents

There is no denial that Khamenei lacks the theological qualifications and the general support and appeal his predecessor Ayatollah Khomeini possessed. The *marja' iyyat* (religious reference or religious source to follow) crisis and controversies over his appointment as the successor of Khomeini raised questions among the leading clerics whether he was qualified to occupy the office of Supreme Leader. Khamenei seemed somewhat weak in the eyes of many Shi'ite leaders and Iranian officials. His moderate posture towards his officials, in particular, Iran's conservative President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has often made him appear as an indecisive leader. Yet, his speeches place him on the path of his predecessor and teacher, Khomeini, as a traditional cleric whose political worldview is framed by his religion, rigid ideology, and anti-American/anti-imperialist convictions.⁴¹²

Although the executive branch is subordinate to the supreme leader, over the course of Khamenei's leadership it may have appeared that the Iranian presidents have employed greater influence in Iranian politics than has the supreme leader. For example, for a while it seemed that his pragmatic cleric, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani (1989-97), exerted greater influence in Iran. With his high ranking and political power, he was considered as Iran's most powerful official domestically and internationally. Through his hopeful *Dialogue Among Civilizations*, the moderate President Mohammed Khatami (1997-2005), attracted the attention of the world, giving the impression that Iran may be leaning towards "liberal" democracy and negotiations with its opponents, especially the United States.

But none seemed to exercise as much power and influence as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013). Through his anti-Semitic and anti-U.S. remarks, denial of the Holocaust, and controversial policies regarding Tehran's nuclear enrichment program,

Ahmadinejad became an icon of the more militant aspect of the Islamic Revolution. Following the path of his teacher and the Father of the Revolution Ayatollah Khomeini, Ahmadinejad was determined to transform Iran into a regional power and a competitive global power. As a result, Iran's political image was identified with the radical ideologies of Ahmadinejad, and when the world talked about Tehran they usually referred to President Ahmadinejad as opposed to the Supreme Leader Khamenei.⁴¹³

Khamenei for a season allowed each president to exert greater power while he remained behind the scenes. This has served a dual purpose. First, the international community is confused about the true leader of Iran. While the world remained baffled about Iran's political system, Ayatollah Khamenei and his camp pressed forth their domestic, regional and international agendas. Second, to his domestic and international audience he has given the appearance that Iran is indeed a democratic system and the supreme leader is merely a figurehead. He has sustained his power and protected the Office of Supreme Leader or *vilayāt-i faqīh* (the Governance of the Jurisconsult) in the face of growing domestic opposition, especially among the Iranian youth.

Khamenei is a skillful leader who, after his installation as the second supreme leader of the Islamic Republic, defined his position within the political realm of Iran and among the neighboring Muslim countries.⁴¹⁴ F. Rajaei, the author of *Islamism and Modernism: The Changing Discourse in Iran* explains that by taking ownership of his government, Khamenei established his own foreign policies and made them known to the world. The one clear task before him was the continuation of the 1980s Cultural Revolution (*Enqelab-i Farhangi*). All Western and non-Islamic influences were removed from the educational system in keeping with Shi'i Islamic principles. Iranians rebelled against the notion of "one-world culture," placing

emphasis on traditions, the family and morals. For Khamenei, Western cultural invasion (*tahajom-i farhangi*) and colonization were far more perilous than a military attack on Iran. He firmly positioned himself as the guardian and defender of the Islamic Republic against any Western cultural incursion.⁴¹⁵

Rajaei explains that Khamenei knew that keeping foreign influence out of his country would not be an easy task and he acknowledged it in his speeches. For him, the continuation of the ideals of the Islamic Republic has not simply been a struggle for the current generation, but for all future Iranian generations. Khamenei has been determined to reinforce the Islamic regime and communicate its resilience to the world.⁴¹⁶ Furthermore, Said Amir Arjomand, the author of *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*, explains that Khamenei's theory of Islamic cultural superiority and trepidation of Western cultural invasion has helped shape his domestic and foreign policies and his rhetoric. Just as his predecessor, he strongly believes that the U.S. has "devised a comprehensive plan to subvert the Islamic system."⁴¹⁷ Thus, his direct warnings to the U.S. and the enemies of the Islamic Republic have been witnessed in his discourses. "Let the enemies of Islam spread cultural values instead of artillery, guns and corruption" has been his consistent message to the U.S.⁴¹⁸

Arjomand continues to explain that for Khamenei to further establish himself among Muslim nations, he effectively used his declaration of *marja'iyat* to access the resources of Shi'is in Lebanon, Kuwait and other Gulf countries. Through the collection of endowments (*awqāf*), he supplemented his "discretionary budget of the Leadership Office in Iran."⁴¹⁹ He further extended his political power after the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq through his representative Ayatollah and diplomat Mohammad-'Ali Taskhiri (1948-present) and other Shi'i clerical networks who frequently returned to Iraq and distributed "largess to the *madrasas* and

other religious institutions in the Najaf Learning Center.” The latter, ascribed Khamenei the status of “the spiritual leader of all Muslims of the world” among the Shi‘is.⁴²⁰

Karim Sadjadpour, author of *Reading Khamenei: The Worldview of Iran’s Most Powerful Leader*, explains that domestically, Khamenei has utilized several calculated tactics to strengthen his power. First, he established “a vast network of commissars stationed in strategic posts throughout government bureaucracies, dedicated to enforcing his authority.”⁴²¹ For example, to increase his influence in Iraq, Khamenei “used the Iraqi exiled clerics of Iranian descent or so-called returnees (*mo’avedin*) to strengthen his power.”⁴²² Among these influential clerics was Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi (1948-present), whom he appointed to the Guardian Council in 1995 and who became the Head of the Judiciary in 1999. The next prominent returnee was Mohammad-‘Ali Taskhiri, who was appointed a diplomat to the newly-formed Office of the Supreme Leader in 1989 and was placed in charge of international relations with the Muslim world as Iran’s representative at the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).⁴²³ Second, to increase his power, Sadjadpour explains that Khamenei began replacing members of then-President Hashemi-Rafsanjani’s administration (his chief rival) with conservatives and pressured incoming presidents to accept his selections for key Executive positions.⁴²⁴ In an attempt to gain tighter control over the reformists such as President Mohammad Khatami, Khamenei increased the politicization of the Judiciary and other governmental organs. Soon, he turned the “constitutional theocracy” into “a system of neo-patrimonial personal rule by the leader.”⁴²⁵ Thirdly, Khamenei tapped onto the rising influence and power of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) who have always been “publically differential to him.”⁴²⁶

According to Sadjadpour, Khamenei began appointing members of IRGC to high level positions such as the Interior Ministry or the head of television and radio to exercise greater control over the media and foreign cultural influence.⁴²⁷ The victory of the conservatives and the leader's camp in the 2004 and 2008 Majlis elections empowered Khamenei even further. The greatest triumph for him was the 2005 elections which brought conservative Ahmadinejad to power while defeating Khamenei's rival, Hashemi-Rafsanjani. Khamenei surrounded himself with "military-intelligence men" and conservatives who supported the Governance of the Jurisconsult and seemingly deferred to his power. He reaffirmed his authority in the 2009 and 2013 elections by exercising greater control over the presidential elections.⁴²⁸ The election of the so-called moderate cleric, Hasan Rouhani, in 2013 and the appointment of Ahmadinejad to the Expediency Council in August, 2013 reinstated Iran's political class which consists of the clerical elite and Khamenei's military-security apparatus. This guarantees that the regime remains in the hand of the clerical rule supported by the military.⁴²⁹

In summary, Sadjadpour argues that the political disengagement of the Iranian youth who were distraught "by the unfulfilled expectations of the reformist era" of 1997-2001 and their suppression during and after the 2009 elections, has become another strategic tool for the supreme leader.⁴³⁰ Despite changes in the political atmosphere of Iran, Khamenei's "domestic vision for Iran (more Islamic than republic) and his foreign policy views (neither confrontation nor accommodation)" has remained unchanged and prevailed.⁴³¹ His ideals of the Islamic Revolution—justice, freedom, independence, self-sufficiency, supremacy of Islam, disdain for Israel and opposition to the ambitions of the United States—are evident in his speeches. Khamenei's message remains the same whether his audience is students, clerics, military, policy-makers, or Muslim or non-Muslim foreign dignitaries. It is safe to say that Khamenei's

discourses “present arguably the most accurate reflection of Iranian domestic and foreign policy aims and actions.”⁴³²

CHAPTER 10
THE PRESIDENCY OF HASHEMI-RAFSANJANI:
THE ERA OF NEW IRANIAN IDENTITY
(1989-1997)

When Hashemi-Rafsanjani became President, the Iraqi-Iran War had ended the previous year in August 1988, and Iran was occupied with nation re-building economically and psychologically. In terms of its foreign relations, Iran was occupied with the recovery of its relations with the regional Arab states. Iran's domestic and foreign policies were focused on economic reconstruction, self-sufficiency, national security, peace-keeping, national identity and political independence, balance of regional power, military expenditures and their economic effects, and the policies of the United States and the European Union (EU) toward the Gulf states.⁴³³

After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the U.S. retaliation through Operation Desert Storm in January 1991, Iran placed further emphasis on national security. Throughout the Gulf war, Iran maintained a neutral posture. President Hashemi-Rafsanjani offered to mediate the U.S.-Iraq war, but in February 1991, President Bush Sr. declined Tehran's offer and the Gulf War ended in late February 1991.⁴³⁴ The U.S.'s policy of "dual containment" (of Iraq and Iran) in 1994 caused Iran to place further emphasis on national security, sovereignty and U.S.-Middle East foreign policy.⁴³⁵ As a result, the speeches of the supreme leader resound with revolutionary slogans that take his audience back to Islam and to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution including resistance against Western occupation, imperialism and oppression.

The Israeli-Palestinian peace process began in October 1991 through the Madrid Conference in Spain. When President Clinton was elected into office in January 1993, he further advocated an Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The Oslo I Accord in September 1993 brought the Palestinian Leader Yaser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for the first face-to-face Palestinian-Peace negotiations. The PLO (the Palestinian Liberation Organization) accepted the U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 that was drafted at the Six Day War in 1967.⁴³⁶ In 1994, a bomb in the Jewish-Argentine Mutual Association (AMIA) killed 85 people, including several Iranian opposition activists. Later, in 2006, the Argentinian government accused President Hashemi-Rafsanjani for the terror attacks, which Iran denied.⁴³⁷ This gave rise to the international discourse about Iran's possible engagement in terrorism, which resulted in supreme leader's emphasis on enmities with the West and Israel in his speeches. In retaliation, he designated Israel as the chief terrorist regime in the world and the U.S. as its accomplice.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani's Presidential Elections

As a pragmatic conservative presidential candidate, Hashemi-Rafsanjani received nearly 95% of the votes during the July 28, 1989 presidential elections. His primary goal was economic recovery by modifying post-war economic policies. By adopting détente in international relations, he proposed reopening Iran to foreign investments and reviving free-market principles.⁴³⁸ In his advocacy for reestablishing Iran as a regional power, Hashemi-Rafsanjani perceived improved relations and dialogue with the West to be critical. Domestically, he pursued pragmatic social policies, which entailed liberalization of laws concerning women's rights. Internationally, he pursued a rapprochement policy with the United States. Both policies faced fierce opposition from the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, who maintained his conservative position.⁴³⁹ Hashemi-Rafsanjani was re-elected for a second term on June 11, 1993

with 63.2% votes. It is argued that Hashemi-Rafsanjani's inability to deliver his economic recovery promises led to a poor showing at the voting booths.⁴⁴⁰

The Supreme Leader's Policies during Hashemi-Rafsanjani's Presidency

With the demise of the Father of the Islamic Revolution and the Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Khamenei's Supreme Leadership was under an international microscope. Many within the international community had suggested a possible end to the Islamic Republic and the beginning of a "new era" in Iran. Ayatollah Khamenei perceived these suggestions as opposition and enmity towards Iran.⁴⁴¹ His speeches were primarily focused on national security, national unity, adherence to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, resistance against the U.S. and Israel, economic and technological progress, and Muslim unity.

The supreme leader's focus during Hashemi-Rafsanjani's first term was two-fold: commitment to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution and nation-building. During Rafsanjani's inauguration speech on August 3, 1989, the leader emphasized that in addition to creating prosperity and construction of the ruins post Iraq-Iran war, nation-building meant the implementation of social justice, public safety, respect for the poor and the disadvantaged, maintaining Iran's Islamic spirit, brotherhood and sacrifice, and exporting it to the deprived Muslim nations, primarily Palestine.⁴⁴²

In the face of uncertainties at home and the reaction of the global community to the "new Iran," Khamenei called upon strong national unity both at the leadership and citizenry levels. To the external opponents (especially the U.S. and Israel), Khamenei sent this message: "There are those who suggest that Iran has entered into a new era with a new orientation. I assure you, Iran continues on the path of the Islamic Revolution and has not diverted from its [revolutionary]

ideals.”⁴⁴³ To his domestic audience, Khamenei affirmed the Islamic Republic’s unwavering commitment to Ayatollah Khomeini’s ideals for the nation.⁴⁴⁴

1. Resistance against the imposition and influences of foreign powers and lack of reconciliation with superpowers;
2. Diligence in devoutness and personal action and resistance to the dominion of satanic self and satanic temptations;
3. Acknowledging the abilities of other nations and respecting their principles;
4. Insistence on Muslim unity and fighting against the perpetuated discord by domineering powers;
5. Insistence on establishing strong and peaceful bilateral relations with other nations unless there are logical and affirmative reasons for the lack of such relations;
6. Insistence on breaking barriers to Muslim unity and pledging to pure Islam;
7. Acknowledging that advocating for the deprived and securing social justice is pivotal;
8. Maintaining resistance against the occupying and tyrant Zionist regime;
9. Safeguarding national unity and opposing any discourse of dissent and discord;
10. Protecting the populist nature of the regime (*mardomi budan-i hokumat*) and continuous efforts in establishing and safeguarding relations with citizens.
11. Insistence on reconstruction of the country and presenting a tangible model to the world, which occupied a critical place in Imam Khomeini’s political thought during the last months of his life.

Based on his foregoing domestic and foreign policies, the leader showed absolute Khomeinism with no new policies of his own during the early stages of supreme leadership. At this stage, Ayatollah Khamenei is simply the “Acting Manager” of Khomeini’s Islamic

government. His primary goal is to continue the Islamic Revolution by maintaining Khomeini's established policies and upholding his revolutionary ideals. Although President Hashemi-Rafsanjani was ready for changes, especially in the realm of relations with the West, the leader maintained stern Khomeinism. As a result, Khamenei's foreign policy remained the same as it was during his own presidency: the establishment of bilateral relations with *all* nations with the exception of America, Israel and South Africa, without interference or imposition of Tehran's will on any nation.⁴⁴⁵ In respect to diplomacy with the U.S., Khamenei explained his position during his August 1989 address:

Questions have been raised, until when Iran will refuse diplomatic relations with the U.S. The answer is the same as Imam Khomeini gave—until such a time that the U.S. terminates its policy of force, tyranny, oppression and hostility, and support of the enemies of the Islamic Republic and the Zionist regime. The Imam said, “Until they have learned their lesson (*ta vaqti keh adam beshavand*)”. That means until such a time that they correct their wrong strategies. No one in Iran is inclined to negotiate and associate with America. The U.S. has unpaid debts towards Iran and needs to pay them back. The U.S. has blocked Iranian properties and needs to open them up and give Iran's rights back to its nation. America's debt to us has nothing to do with diplomatic relations. The owner must receive his right. The intentions of the Islamic Republic are open and amicable relations based on mutual interest, without bullying and domination. Unfortunately, the policies of the Western and Eastern nations are the opposite.⁴⁴⁶

Contrary to the supreme leader's U.S.-policy positions, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani pursued his moderate approach towards the U.S., and in a newspaper article, his Vice President Ayatollah Mohajerani “proposed resumption of diplomatic relations with the U.S.”⁴⁴⁷ Shortly after, Hashemi-Rafsanjani and his Cabinet were sharply rebuked by the leader. Instead, the supreme leader called upon the president to focus on nation-building both economically and morally. Consequently, Khamenei placed special emphasis on adherence to Islamic principles, revolutionary ideals and national unity.⁴⁴⁸ He cautioned the leaders against the manipulations of America and the enemies of Islam asserting:

Our enemies believe that rebuilding this country contradicts the goals of the revolution. Our friends mistakenly repeat this idea. Rebuilding this country is a part of the revolutionary ideals. Our efforts in economic development and nation-rebuilding will be successful only if they are originated in Islamic principles and values, and upholding the values and ideals of the Islamic revolution.

Internally, the implications are the implementation of social justice in our domestic policies. Without safeguarding social justice, our society will not be an Islamic society. Social justice means eradication of major gaps in different social classes, between the unjustified wealthy and affluent, and the deprived and the poor, who have always been the most loyal defenders of the revolution. We need to take serious steps in closing this gap of deprivation.

Externally, the propaganda of the enemy claims that termination of relations with America will place the Iranian people at a disadvantage! No Sir! It is one hundred percent to the advantage of Iranians. It is a false representation that nations who have good relations with the U.S. have no economic or financial problems. No experience throughout the world has proven this claim. If the Iranian nation wishes to amend its economic and financial standing, which they will definitely do, all they need is a strong will, decisiveness and cooperation between the different factions of the society, and avoid being impacted by Western media and their propaganda machines. These are the values that build a nation, not relations with America.

Those who think we should negotiate with the head of oppression, America, are either naïve or intimidated. Oppression lives by intimidation. What does negotiation mean? Just to say that you should go, sit and negotiate with America?! Will the problems resolve with negotiation? No they will not! In a common political term, negotiation means exchange. Negotiation with America means exchange with America and exchange means give-and-take. Tell me, what do you want to give to the U.S. from the Islamic Revolution and what do you want to gain in return? Do you know what they want?

America is simply disturbed by the commitment of Iranians to Islam. For both us and our enemies, the issue is Islam. It is because of Islam that we are firmly standing against oppression. The world of oppression means America as the leader and a system that strives for its interests. There is no other issue between America and the Islamic Iran other than Islam. We are fighting for humankind. We have proven and will continue to prove that Islam can save humanity, and can confront the world powers and disrupt their ruthless world order.⁴⁴⁹

While maintaining his predecessor's two chief foreign policies of "enmity and opposition toward the U.S. and Israel," Khamenei formulated his domestic and foreign policies based on these outlooks.⁴⁵⁰ The U.S.'s dual-containment policy gave rise to Khamenei's suspicions that the intentions of the U.S. towards Iran were regime change and not behavior change. This perception alone led to intimidation and mistrust. Furthermore, like Khomeini, the leader perceived the U.S. hostility was directed at the very essence of the Islamic Republic. Thus, opposition to the U.S. and a "policy of provoking deliberate confrontation" became paramount foreign policies of Tehran, despite Hashemi-Rafsanjani's political goals.⁴⁵¹

Based on an examination of the supreme leader's discourses, several historical and contemporary factors contributed to Khamenei's ill-will towards the U.S.:

1. The 1953 Iranian coup d'état;
2. Support of the Shah, especially after the Revolution;
3. Support of Saddam Hussein during Iran-Iraq war;
4. Support of Israel, which means a violation of the rights of the Palestinian people;
5. refusal to recognize the Islamic Republic as a sovereign state and its continuous interference in Iran's domestic affairs;
6. Accusations that Iran has ambitions for nuclear weapons;
7. Accusations that Iran is supporting terrorist activities because of Iran's ties to Hizbullah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine;
8. Accusations that Iran is working towards the destruction of Israel;
9. Accusations that Iran is obstructing the Israeli-Palestinian peace process;
10. Accusations that Iran is supplying lethal arms to Iraqi Shi'a militias after the 2003 U.S.- Iraq invasion;

11. The military presence in the Persian Gulf;
12. The inclusion of Iran in the Axis of Evil by President George Bush;
13. Threats of preemptive military strikes against Iran (hot war);
14. Support of Israeli threats of air strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities;
15. Imposition of economic sanctions, the continuing freeze of Iranian assets, and diplomatic pressures against Iran through international organizations such as the U.N., EU or IAEA (international Atomic Energy Agency);
16. Objectives for regional and global hegemony; and
17. Perceived U.S. wars against Iran such as:
 - Psychological war – to dismay the Iranian people and turn them against their government;
 - Propaganda war – to impose fear of Iran in the hearts of the Muslim world, regional countries and the international community;
 - Economic war (the war of sanctions) – to cripple Iran's economy and dismay the Iranian youth;
 - Cold war (war of wills) – to impose its will on Iran;
 - Soft war (war over the hearts and wills of Iranian youth) – calling the youth to an uprising against their government.⁴⁵²

Thus, the supreme leader perceives that the greatest foe before the Islamic Republic is the regime's continuous struggle against global hegemonic powers. It is this negative perception of the U.S.-Iran relations that shapes Khamenei's stark descriptions of America in his speeches.

CHAPTER 11

AMERICA IN THE VIEWPOINT OF THE

SUPREME LEADER AYATOLLAH KHAMENEI

Resistance against the imperialists was Ayatollah Khomeini's chief ideology, which led to his stern "Neither East, Nor West" policy. Together with the supremacy of Islam, this resistance inspired every domestic and foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Khomeini believed that due to the colonization, oppression, domination and opposition (CODO) and secular policies of foreign powers, Islam was suppressed and had lost its influence within the Muslim world. He believed that the goal of the imperialists was to annihilate Islam, since they were threatened by Islamic principles. By Islam, Khomeini meant Islamic ideals and ordinances, and principles Islam defended including peace, justice and equality. As a result, Khomeini made Islam the enemy of the imperialists. Since he believed Islam was at the core of the Islamic Republic as a government established on Islamic principles, Khomeini concluded that those who opposed the regime (whether internal or external enemies), opposed Islam. Therefore, the enemies of the Islamic Republic became the enemies of Islam.

Khomeini's hatred for America (as the *Greater Satan*) and the Israeli regime (as the *Lesser Satan*) were evident in his public pronouncements during his revolutionary movement and his tenure as the Supreme Leader and Father of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Khomeini declared *America is at war with Islam (Amrīka ba Islam dar jang ast)* due to the U.S.'s perceptions that Islam had become an obstacle to its "materialistic ambitions."⁴⁵³ With his vision of extending the Islamic Republic's ideals to the Muslim world, Khomeini declared Islamic states that were governed by non-Islamic systems as regimes under a *kūfr* (infidel, atheist) system. Hence, he

considered it the religious duty of every Muslim to remove and destroy *kūfr* from their society. Khomeini laid the blame on the inept rule of Muslim leaders and the lack of unity, vigor and vigilance among the *ummah* (Muslim community). Thus, he called upon all Muslim nations to act in harmony to “achieve the triumphant political revolution of Islam” and establish their divinely-appointed Islamic government.⁴⁵⁴

As the sole heir to Khomeini’s Supreme Leadership seat, Ayatollah Khamenei not only inherited Khomeini’s political authority, but also his ideologies as well. Like his predecessor, he placed resistance—hatred for America and opposition to the U.S.—at the center of his political ideology, only second to the supremacy of Islam. He, too, believes that “Islam” is the “chief enemy” of the U.S. and when U.S. policymakers oppose the Islamic Republic of Iran, they indeed oppose Islam. It is with this strong conviction at the center of Ayatollah Khamenei’s political ideology that he formulates his political posture towards the U.S. and expresses them in his public pronouncements.

The examination of Ayatollah Khamenei’s public discourses demonstrates the supreme leader’s intense occupation with America and America’s policies towards Iran, the Middle East and the Muslim world as a whole. The U.S. appears in almost every speech of the supreme leader regardless of the topic of discussion or his audience. The leader attributes to the U.S. almost every domestic, regional and international problem in the Islamic Republic or the Muslim world. For him, America is the source of every calamity in Iran, the region and the Muslim world, and is the major obstacle to “Palestinian freedom,” because of its support of Israel.

Views On America

The following section is a summary of statements made by the leader. These speeches have been selected from, “*Amrika az Didgah-e Hazrat-i Ayatollah al-‘Uzma Seyyed ‘Ali Khamenei*” (“America in the View of His Excellency Grand Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Khamenei”), which is a collection of Khamenei’s statements about America and his interpretations of U.S. policies towards Iran, the Middle East and the Muslim world.⁴⁵⁵

Definition of Domination in the Iranian Culture

The supreme leader provides the following definition for foreign domination:

In the Iranian culture, foreign domination (*estebkār*) is defined as powers that colonize other nations through political, military, scientific and economic force, under the pretense of safeguarding human rights or advocating freedom and democracy. By colonizing “the weaker” nations, they interfere in their domestic affairs and exploit their wealth. They inflict their will on their governments and oppress their people by imposing their [foreign] cultures and traditions on them.⁴⁵⁶

Coupled with his inherited views on Khomeinism according to his biography “*Sharh-i Esm*,” the supreme leader’s definition of domination has been influenced by many factors including his childhood experiences. Khamenei’s upbringing was concurrent with WWII and Iran’s occupation by great powers. Khamenei recalls his early years filled with lack of food and “sorrow for bread”:

I remember the days that bread was rare. It was during war (WWII), 1942, 1943. I was three-four years old. At the time in Mashhad everything was abundant, but we were unable to eat wheat bread, because wheat bread was more expensive. Of course we would buy one wheat bread for my father alone. We would eat bread made out of barley. The situation was not very good. I remember there were nights that we did not have dinner at home! My mother would prepare us dinner with much difficulty and...that dinner was often bread and raisins.⁴⁵⁷ Sometimes my mother would buy bread with the change my grandmother would give the grandchildren. We were so poor that often my grandmother would use my father’s old clothes to prepare clothes for us.⁴⁵⁸

Khamenei was also born into a family where both grandfathers were political activists during the Constitutional Revolution. Khamenei's father expressed grievances towards the Western cultural domination of Iran and the Shah's *Amrīkadusti* (pro-American) policies. One may conclude that his interpretations of domination are not limited to Khomeinism alone, but also to personal and childhood experiences as well. This compilation of historical facts, family influences and personal experiences provide insight to his inclinations towards Khomeini's revolutionary movement – a movement that in its very essence is a struggle against the CODO of foreign powers.

Treatment of Domination in Iran's Foreign Policy

Resistance against foreign domination comprises a large part of Iran's foreign policy because it is mentioned in the Qur'an, asserts Khamenei.

Domination (*estebkār*) has a broad meaning. *Estebkār* is nothing but arrogance (*takabor*) and haughtiness. *Takabor* points to the quality of one's heart and soul – when someone considers themselves superior to others. As one falls prey to a sense of arrogance and haughtiness, such an attitude taints all their actions. They humiliate others, interfere in their affairs and exert control [Surah Fatr (42-43)].⁴⁵⁹

Since Iran is an Islamic government and its laws and policies are based on Qur'anic principles, *estebkār* is vital to Iran. The Prophet himself had to battle domination. He defined it as those who consider their rights above the rights of others. So, it is not surprising that the concept of *estebkār* has become a critical component of Iran's Islamic Revolution.⁴⁶⁰

Islam stands firmly against foreign domination and arrogance. When colonization was first introduced, Muslims understood its intentions and it resisted its powers. *Mostabkeran* (hegemonic powers) recognize and understand the values of Islam. That is why they consider Islam the enemy and oppose its divine principles.⁴⁶¹ Confrontation and resistance to *mostakberan* by Muslims is an obligation. This is not a temporary or short-term policy but a mainstay of the Islamic Republic.⁴⁶²

Like his predecessor, the leader affirms that Islam is the opposing party in this “War of Domination.” He further views Iran's battle with domination similar to the battle of the Prophet

with his enemies. What is critical to note is that the enemies of the Prophet were those who opposed Islam, Islamic rule, Mohammad's Prophethood and his Islamic government. When equating Iran's political state and the enemies of Iran to those of the Prophet's, including Islam and an Islamic state under the Prophet, Khamenei is elevating his authority and legitimizing his opposition to his enemies. This type of connection made by Ayatollah Khamenei is repeatedly underscored in his speeches.

America the Model of Domination

Ayatollah Khamenei defines the U.S. in the image of domination:

If we want to accurately define *estebkār*, today, we compare it with the aggressive and arrogant U.S. government. *Estebkār* refers to an existing power within the global community that disregards the will of people in other nations. It ignores human dignity, making itself the only important element, and dominates others with a sense of superiority. It bullies other nations with force and cruelty. This is America's purpose today. For the Iranian nation, *estebkār* has specific meaning during, before and after the revolution. It consists of dominating global powers that have interfered in our domestic affairs and have treated our nation cruelly. If we want to find the arrogant in the midst of the global community, we look towards America. It was America's continuous arrogance towards the Iranian nation that caused Imam Khomeini to label it the "*Great Satan*."⁴⁶³

Khamenei seems to neglect a critical fact: America's generosity provides military and economic assistance through contributions to international organizations, including independent agencies for humanitarian efforts, global health programs, international disaster assistance, migration and refugee assistance, international peacekeeping activities, and international security assistance, including anti-terrorism and related programs. The projected foreign aid budget for 2013 was 56.1 billion, and the U.S. spent 47 billion in 2012.⁴⁶⁴

Estebkār as Imperialistic Power

In his promotion of Muslim unity, the supreme leader places emphasis on the importance of building alliances. In his perception, global domineering powers do not act alone but in groups, which adds to their political power. He states:

Global domination (*estebkār-i jahani*) does not consist of a single nation, but a group of powers. We do not claim that there is always cooperation among these nations. But, there is one fundamental common denominator among this group, and that is when a country with our strategic geographic location revolts against *this group*, the entire group battles that nation. This is global arrogance. Whether this group declares war against this nation or refrains from military conflict, they nonetheless band together against that nation. But, today's world is a world that has people who can resist arrogance and defend their culture, independence, pride, freedom and dignity. The arrogant powers intend to turn our country into a third-world country and return it to its pre-revolution state. The purpose of their false propaganda against the Islamic Republic is to turn Iran into a dominated nation.⁴⁶⁵

The global powers have built their power upon injustice and force, and laughed at humanity with loudspeakers. They make a mockery of every right ascribed to human beings: justice, humanity, dignity, etc. When we talk about humanity we refer to the billions of people in the world, several millions who reside in their own country. These global arrogant powers call upon other nations to join their vain and erroneous movement, where they have no regard for the rights of others. They have combined force and deception together. They possess intelligence as well. This is a sad reality.⁴⁶⁶ In the modern world, knowledge is the tool for human progress, but the domineering arrogant powers have used knowledge as a tool for domination. They use knowledge in every corner of the world for their own interests by exerting a powerful presence.⁴⁶⁷

Based on the supreme leader's speeches, the rights he seems to be referring to are as follows:

1. The right to sovereignty;
2. The right to acquiring knowledge;
3. The right to progress economically, politically, technologically, and acquire advanced intelligence and military power;
4. The right to be an important part of the global community;
5. The right to politically (and positively) influence the global community like the U.S., or to be a critical, influential member of the global community;

6. The right to spread the ideals of the Iranian Revolution and the “Islamic” ideals to the global community, unlike the U.S. which attempts to spread its “secular” ideals;
7. The right to make policies or veto them within the international community;
8. The right to fight terrorism on their own terms by designating countries and organizations they perceive to have a terrorist nature.

It is safe to conclude that based on these statements, the supreme leader seeks domestic, regional and global power which will assure Iran of strong alliances and an enhanced political posture towards the U.S., especially with respect to Iran’s nuclear program.

America the Pinnacle of Domination

When speaking about the U.S., Khamenei often expresses a “dread of America,” which seems to be one of the underlying causes for his urgency to progress scientifically, technologically, economically and politically. Based on his statements as reflected in his speeches, the leader believes that the reason for America’s “bold global behavior” is its source of political, financial and military power. In his refusal to submit to a “unipolar” global order, the supreme leader continuously urges the Iranian leaders to focus on progress and attain power in every aspect. He believes that the solution to stopping the “arrogant behavior” of domineering powers is acquiring sufficient political, financial and military power. He explains:

Domination never apologizes. It never comes to say, “I am sorry.” The more one humbles and succumbs to domination and colonization, the more it imposes pressure on them, to a point that they fall before its feet in humility and veneration. And, once it finds them on the ground prostrated, it will push them down with its foot. This is the characteristic of *mostakberan* and aggressors.⁴⁶⁸

As the leader of the most perilous imperialistic powers, America is equipped with science, technology and weaponry. This is an enormous threat for Iran and we should not take it lightly.⁴⁶⁹ This system uses force and bullying in order to dominate other nations. They divide the world into domineering powers and dominate nations.⁴⁷⁰

Today, America is the source of this hegemony, which means if America decides that a particular part of the world would serve their interests, they will do everything to build a coalition, and anyone who revolts against their interests will be oppressed and destroyed by them.⁴⁷¹ Today's problem is the *new world order*, which is America's supremacy and hegemony. Such powers believe that they must interfere in the Persian Gulf, Europe and Africa, to build a military presence in those areas.⁴⁷² What the arrogant power means by a *new world order* is that America remains the sole power. In this perceived unipolar world order, America increases in power and influence, which means those who want Islam and freedom do not have rights. However, due to the awakening sparked by the Islamic Revolution, the Muslim community refuses such domination.⁴⁷³

America the Principal Enemy

Ayatollah Khamenei believes that the source of U.S. animosities towards the Islamic Republic of Iran is the very ideals of the Islamic Revolution. In his speeches, the supreme leader outlines these ideals as:

1. Islamic policies that removed the U.S. influence in Iran;
2. Iran's refusal to submit to the will of the U.S.;
3. Iran's intentions of influencing the Muslim world through its Islamic culture;
4. The "Iran threat" that other nations may follow its lead and acquire the same anti-domination policies.

In his own words, he further explains:

America is a government that is the oppressive nation and is far from just. Therefore, America is Iran's principle enemy. This is how the U.S.-Iran enmity began.⁴⁷⁴ Today, the domineering policies (*siyāsatha-ye estebkārī*) and American policies against the Islamic Republic are focused on Iran's strengths. These are strong areas of our political and diplomatic systems. They focus on these areas and want to weaken them and remove them from the authority of our system. That is why we can never compromise with them and be lenient towards them.⁴⁷⁵

Today Americans have conquered and occupied many lands, but they have not been able to conquer ours. The reason for America's animosity towards Iran is because our nation has not taken America's orders regarding economics, exports and imports, cultural politics or relations with other nations. Such behavior is intolerable for a domineering superpower. These are their problems with Iran. The rest are just excuses.⁴⁷⁶

In a world where all the elements are moving towards achieving absolute autocratic and individualistic powers, suddenly a nation rises with reliance on the power of faith and its genuine authentic culture and innate power, without receiving aid from any government. All the while we believe in our national character and humanity, and free ourselves from the strongholds of the domination and snares of occupation. Do you expect they would not be in enmity with such a nation whose messages have awakened their people? Do you expect they would not use propaganda against those who through self-reliance have helped this nation gain courage and dignity so that they could stand against the enemy? It is obvious the hegemon will be in opposition with such a nation, government and a leader who proclaims such mantras.⁴⁷⁷

America's Dread of Iran

In his speeches, Ayatollah Khamenei continuously emphasizes the dread of the U.S. about the spread of Iran's revolutionary ideals throughout the Muslim world. In his call to Muslim awakening, the leader seems to call the Muslim world to an "Islamic uprising" or an "Islamic revolution" that would overthrow their pro-Western leaders, exile Western cultural domination from their nations, and replace them with Islamic leaders and principles. He further states:

America is indeed afraid of Iran. The U.S. may have military capabilities, atomic bombs and missiles to threaten Iran, but Iran is equipped with its Muslim faith and courage. This ensures Iran's continuous growth in faith and upholding Islamic principles, despite America's biggest hope that Iran will turn away from its Islamic faith.⁴⁷⁸

America is afraid of Iran, the Iranian people and Islam. It is not that they are afraid of individuals or people, but the deep faith that exists in their hearts and souls. They are afraid of people's participation. The Muslim world must awaken and appear on the political scene and participate in elections. People's participation is a testimony to the blessings, teachings and guidance of Islam. Without God's guidance and strong Islamic faith such resistance against the enemies' deceitful tactics would be impossible. The reason our nation is still standing is because of its spirituality and faith. Hopefully through the power of the divine the faith of the people will increase daily and the people's protection of the system will increase.⁴⁷⁹

The Illusions of America as the Overseer of the World

America considers itself the possessor of rights, privileged to interfere in the affairs of every nation. It interferes in the one place saying: "We want to establish democracy

here!” It interferes in another place saying: “We want to prevent the influence of Communism here.” In another place they interfere claiming: “We want to maintain security there.” In another they claim their interests are at risk in the area. They consider themselves the owners of the world; as if the responsibility of safeguarding global democracy belongs to them.⁴⁸⁰

The American government is under the illusion that the authority and protection of the world belongs to them! They do not even consider the rights of other nations. If one analyzes their policies accurately, he [or she] will determine that they have no respect for humanity.⁴⁸¹ The addiction of the United States of America to domination is a moral issue, and for *estebkār*, it is a corrupt morality. They have no justice, compassion or humanity. If they did, they would not have dealt with other nations in the manner in which they have.⁴⁸²

America is the *international dictator* who thinks of no one’s interests other than America’s, not even the American people, but instead supports the cartels and trusts – the large investment and influential companies that support the interests of the American government. America’s global policies are based on the interests of these large organizations and companies who are active in American politics.”⁴⁸³

The notion of “political rights” is a topic often discussed by Khamenei in his domestic and foreign policies. The concept of rights (*ḥaq*) is fundamental to Shi‘i Islam and deeply rooted into the Iranian Shi‘i culture. National pride (or Persian pride), justice, rights, honor and respect are key elements that motivate the Iranian leaders to stand strong against the U.S. and the West while defending Iran’s rights, especially with respect to its nuclear enrichment program. By effectively using Iran’s “nuclear card” and the U.S. Middle East policies (recent invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan) to his advantage, Khamenei attempts to signal to his Iranian audience that he will stand up for the nation’s rights and will not be seduced by the West (as was the Shah). The leader’s speeches show his strategic use of selective U.S. policies towards the Middle East to increase his power and calm any internal dispute.

America the Puppet in the Hands of the Zionists

While the U.S. and Iran agree on the designation of al-Qaeda as a terrorist group, Khamenei disputes with the U.S. over the designation of Hizbollah and Hamas as terrorist

organizations. Based on his speeches, the supreme leader believes that they are peaceful Muslim organizations that fight for the rights of the deprived and oppressed Muslims (both Lebanese and Palestinians people). In turn, Khamenei has designated Israel as the chief terrorist nation (due to Palestine) and often includes the U.S. in the list, due to accusations of U.S.'s pro-Israeli policies.

He states:

Unfortunately, the American leaders are completely under the influence of the Zionists and their propaganda.⁴⁸⁴ The United States of America with its scientific progress, and being a large nation and country, is the puppet of the Zionists. The American government, with all the enormity of its wealth, experience, political influence, economy and military, is the puppet in the hands of the Zionists and the Israeli government. When the U.S. President expresses a decision with respect to Iran, he reports it in the gathering of American Zionists and broadcasts it to the world. This is a disgrace for America.⁴⁸⁵

The Zionist regime is the most terrorist nation of the world and America supports it. Today, there is no other system or regime that acts worse than the Zionist regime in terms of discrimination, injustice, fascism and terrorism. The Zionist regime is terroristic, murderous, racist, unjust, fraudulent, deceptive, and seditious. If one looks into their documents (*asnād*), he [or she] will see evidence of these facts. They openly commit the gravest injustices against the Arab Muslim owners of that land. They commit all kinds of injustices and the sad part of it is that when the U.N. Security Council issues a manifesto against them, America vetoes it.⁴⁸⁶

May God have mercy on the country that has oil, uranium, minerals or possesses a special situation in an industrial trend. They have to submit themselves to arrogant powers. The arrogance will make their lives miserable. The relationship will not be as two states who engage in trade. No, the arrogant nation has to have its own way. The discussion is not about buying and selling, but global dictatorship.⁴⁸⁷

Maintain Vengeance Towards the Enemy

Do not let go of your hatred for the enemy. When animosity and hatred towards the enemy decreases in your hearts, it is a dangerous sign. That means your faith is diminishing. Everyone, young and old must maintain their hate and abhorrence for the enemy in their hearts.⁴⁸⁸

Once again, the leader considers that the Islamic faith is a target since he views American policies to be in opposition with the Islamic religion and ordinances. His political posture

becomes more severe over time as demonstrated during Khatami's presidency and during Ahmadinejad's presidency.

Confrontation with America Not the American People

On rare occasions, Khamenei tries to identify Iran's enemy as the American government and not the American people.

In our struggle against America, we are confronted with the American government, not the American people. But, the American regime is confronted with the Iranian people, not just with the Iranian government. Its antagonism is against the Iranian nation.⁴⁸⁹

We have nothing to do with America. We have no animosity. They are like the rest of world to us. Of course, for many years, the American government has brain-washed its people through false propaganda. Many Americans do not know what is going on in Iran or what the issues are. They have simply heard accusations such as violations of human rights! Their government and their propaganda have told them and the people have believed them. We have no enmity towards any nation. The American nation is like all other nations. They have good and bad points. That is their business."⁴⁹⁰

Similar statements directed to the American people may appear during Khamenei's New Year messages or in the face of confrontations with the U.S., especially after U.S.-imposed sanctions.

In his view, he is sending "diplomatic messages" to the American people or extending "Iran's hand" to America. However, Khamenei's rhetoric calling upon "Death to America" or his wishes for an end to America, even if it means an end to American influence, seem a contradictory approach to "soft power." By making derogatory statements about America, he positions himself in a way that makes it unlikely that any peaceful U.S. citizen would be willing to receive his "extended hand." Khamenei might re-evaluate and re-consider both his rhetoric and his isolation policies—policies that are based on a half century-old ideology and policies that today are incompatible with the U.S.-Iran relations or with the current U.S. administration.

CHAPTER 12

**MUSLIM UNITY IN THE VIEWPOINT OF THE
SUPREME LEADER AYATOLLAH KHAMENEI**

In his opposition to the U.S., Khamenei looks to the superiority of Islam, Islamic law and its principles. From the early days of his supreme leadership, he focused on five critical principles: 1) the revival of Islam through the Islamic Revolution of Iran; 2) the Islamic-based ideals of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic of Iran; 3) Iran as the grander model for the Muslim world and the flag-bearer of Islam; 4) the importance of the religious and political coalition of the global Muslim community; and 5) the anticipation of the final obliteration of the enemies of Islam, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Palestinian people, and the rest of the Muslim world.

Muslim Unity Under the Banner of Islam

The concept of Muslim unity and spreading Islamic justice was at the center of Khomeini's revolution. In order for his revolution to succeed, Khomeini called upon every Iranian Muslim to join his battle against the monarchy. This meant both Shi'i and Sunni Iranian citizens would fight for this common cause. In order to attain national unity, Iranians had to be willing to do two things: first, submit themselves to a united front despite their theological differences; second, be willing to forego the Shah's "Westernized Islam" and embrace the "true" Islam.

To accomplish this insurmountable task, Khomeini needed the cooperation of every element within the Iranian society, in particular, the backing of Iranian scholars, intellectuals, religious leaders and the youth. This led to a colossal growth in the clerical activism in Iran

during the revolution. Khomeini's clerical team began preaching Khomeini's newly-defined multi-dimensional Islam, and called upon Iranians to reclaim Islamic principles and reject the Shah's "American Islam" (*Islam-i Amrīkayī*). Khomeini's team also advocated unity among Iranians despite religious and/or doctrinal differences. Khomeini's outreach crossed the aisle and extended to both Shi'i and Sunni mosques. In a speech in 2000, while calling Muslims to unite under the banner of Islam, Khomeini claimed: "I have always said before the revolution and after the revolution, Sunnis and Shi'is must set aside their ancient religious disputes, wars and conflicts, and focus on their commonalities."⁴⁹¹ The success of this directive brought the Islamic Revolution to its final victory and established an Islamic government. For Khomeini, the critical factors were the Islamic faith and the political will of the entire nation, which gave rise to this "divine" miracle:

The Islamic Revolution is an immense miracle that occurred through the late righteous and holy Imam (*Imam-i Faqīd-i Quds-i Šerah*) [Imam Khomeini]. Since he relied on the divine revolution, God assured such immense transformation through his able and miraculous hands. It is now up to us that we always consider God in all our actions, doings and sayings (*harekāt, a'āmāl va goftar*), and for Him, we become enemies to His enemies, and friends to His friends.⁴⁹²

From Unity to Cultural Revolution

The Khomeini-Khomeini call for Muslim unity is two-dimensional: religious and political. Religiously, Muslims need to realize and embrace the supremacy of Islam, Islamic law and rule. Politically, they need to be willing to put this supremacy into practice and change their world.

Cultural Revolution has always been at the core of Iran's call for Muslim unity, as evidenced in Iran's domestic policy. Shortly after establishing the Islamic government, Khomeini created the Council of the Cultural Revolution (*Shura-i Enqelab-i Farhangi*) to

implement cultural changes within the Iranian society.⁴⁹³ The goal of this implementation, or *Shura*, was to change a semi-Islamic or Westernized Iranian society into an Islamic society, and echo the newly-formed Islamic culture outside Iranian borders.⁴⁹⁴

Domestically, the intent of the Cultural Revolution Policy was to abolish Western colonization politics and implement a “behavior change” in the hearts and minds of the Iranian people, particularly the youth.⁴⁹⁵ In Khamenei’s view, in a sense, the Islamic Revolution was a cultural revolution.⁴⁹⁶ During Khomeini’s memorial service in June 2008 Khamenei asserted:

The Islamic Revolution was different from all other revolutions. It was neither a spiritual or a cultural revolution, nor an economic or political revolution, but it was a multi-dimensional revolution akin to Islam. Just like Islam has different spiritual, moral, divine, economic, political, and social dimensions, so does the Islamic revolution.⁴⁹⁷

It is because of this multi-dimensional aspect that the Iranian Islamic revolution continues to influence Iranian society and expand its reach to the global Muslim community. The call for Muslim unity was not limited to Muslims alone, but non-Muslims as well. During the 1996 International Muslim Unity Conference, Khamenei explains:

Accepting Islam’s invitation does not mean officially accepting Islamic religion. This is one step. The other step is for the global community to accept the message, culture, truths and recommendations of Islam.⁴⁹⁸

Due to the blessings of the Islamic Revolution, today, Muslim nations feel affiliation (*‘alaqemāndī*), compassion (*delsūzī*) and closeness (*nazdīkī*) towards one another, and the spirit of Islam and brotherhood (*baradarī*) has been revived within. Today, Arab and Muslim nations, especially in the African and Asian Continents, take pride in being Muslim.⁴⁹⁹ Primarily, because the message of Islam is applicable to all aspects of life, the arrogant global powers attribute Islam’s message as harsh.⁵⁰⁰

The Islamic Revolution has put pride in the hearts of Muslims everywhere and fear in the heart of America. Fear and intimidation of the message of the Islamic Revolution cripples America to a point that America devises all kinds of Middle East policies in order to overcome “the threat” of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Mainly because the global *estebkār* (domination), specially the aggressive (*tajavozkar*), plunderer (*gharatgar*) America, which whole-heartedly opposes Islam, is terrified by Muslim unity (*vahdat-i Islami*) and the closeness of Muslims with one another.⁵⁰¹

The Call to a Global Islamic Revolution

In a 1982 interview, then-President Khamenei commented on the divided state of the Muslim world: “The current state of the Islamic world is divided into Muslim nations that have responded to the unity call of the Islamic Republic and proclaimed a global Islamic Revolution, and Muslim nations that unfortunately under the fabricated banner of Islam have deserted to global *kūfr*.”⁵⁰² He further states during his supreme leadership:

The global community is suffering from a known pain with an unknown cure, and that pain is the hegemony of domineering governments (*solteh-i neẓamha-ye estebkārī*). The cure that we are proposing is Islam and an Islamic system (*neẓam-i Islami*). However, if people are not aware of this cure, we cannot expect that they will turn to it and embrace it. The most important commission before us is to make this cure known to the world. This task is possible in multiple ways. From among these tools we have selected, the most important is the establishment of an Islamic government. For years, Islam was discussed, but the possibility that this internal thought could become an external reality could not be conceptualized (*taṣavor nemīraft*). We interpreted this undefinable dream and created (*vojud āvardīm*) an Islamic Republic based on Islamic principles. In our Republic, a government that was formed based on the fundamentals of Islam, was the best way to propagate Islam. This goal was finally accomplished. The Islamic Republic is testament to Islam and the most effective model for introducing Islam to the world.

We created an Islamic government in one of the most strategic locations in the world where Iran connects the East and the West. Now, the only thing left is our battle against false propaganda, which attempts to cloud the image of this Revolution. To counter it, we must propagate our Islamic system until this Republic and Imam Khomeini are known to the world. However, the global domination has its finger on this effort and prevents the accomplishment of our goal. The massive global Zionist-Imperialist propaganda networks have joined their efforts so that the “true” image of the Islamic Republic of Iran is kept from the world. They present our Republic as a reactionary and cruel regime. They do not hesitate to use superficial Muslims and scholars to accomplish their goals. The response of the Islamic Republic is to show its innocence (*mazlūmiyyat*) to the world – to show that it is progressive and not reactionary, seeks justice and advocates justice, and is not oppressive and cruel. The global domination is seeking vengeance from us because of our faith in the Beloved, Praiseworthy God. We have to make this known to the world and help others realize the innocence and meekness of the Islamic Republic, which will be one of our biggest efforts in expanding Islam.⁵⁰³

Iran, the Model for Muslim Unity and the Cultural Revolution

Khamenei views Iran as the forerunner of the new Islamism in the Middle East for several reasons: First, due to the supremacy of the religious principles at the core of the Islamic Republic. All the Islamic principles are found in Iran's political and social framework.⁵⁰⁴ This is the core reason why Iran has become the most powerful regional nation, declares Khamenei:

Remaining loyal to the teachings of Islam and the Holy Qur'an, and making efforts to implement those teachings, have raised Iran's position among Muslim nations. Therefore, all Islamic communities now support the Islamic Republic. And this is a decisive fact which should not be ignored under any circumstances.⁵⁰⁵

Second, Iran is a role model for "Islamic progress." Instead of caving into the threats of the arrogant powers, the Iranian nation stood in strength, thus, becoming a fountain of hope for other Muslim nations in the region.⁵⁰⁶ The leader further affirms:

Muslim nations have witnessed the values the Islamic Republic has exerted domestically and internationally, contributing to its victories and progresses, without any reliance on Western domination. Islam and Islamic values are at the core of the Islamic Republic. Thus, the divine has been the guiding light for the nation and has manifested His Will to the Iranian people through the ideals set by the Founder of the Revolution Imam Khomeini. Iran has made various domestic progresses in the course of the past 33 years in the areas of science, technology, economy, education, women's rights, etc. outside its borders and within the region. Iran has influenced other Muslim nations through its Islamic values and ideals. On the international level, through its resistance against Western dominance, Iran has exposed the wicked policies of the U.S. and the West towards Iran and the Middle East and other Muslim nations.⁵⁰⁷

Third, Iran has been able to teach Islamic principles and progress to other Muslim nations, by encouraging them to implement changes. Such Islamic principles include resisting global domineering powers and demanding their total independence. Therefore, Khamenei calls upon other Muslim nations to model after Iran and become powerful nations.⁵⁰⁸

In order to achieve regional influence, especially in the Sunni Arab countries, Khamenei has made attempts to achieve three objectives: First, he has tried to convince the Muslim world that they share common interests and enemies. For example, when referring to Iran's nuclear

ambitions, he portrays it as an achievement for the benefits of the entire Muslim world. And, when speaking of the enemies of Islam, he brings the U.S. as an example of the chief oppressors of the Muslim world.⁵⁰⁹

Second, according to Karim Sadjadpour, Khamenei believes that Iran is the “catalyst of the Islamic awakening” and “Iran’s best vehicle to spread its power and influence throughout the region is democratic elections.”⁵¹⁰ For example, Iran supports Hamas in Palestine and Hizbullah in Lebanon, because the two nations have strong electoral processes. Likewise, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Shi’i coreligionists in Iraq have shown great support for Tehran.⁵¹¹ Thus, Khamenei believes that Iran is able to win the heart and soul of the Muslim world through its soft power.

The third strategy Khamenei employs is Iran’s regional hegemony through its cultural and political influence in the region. Khamenei believes that the problems in the Middle East (Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Arab-Israeli peace, and Persian Gulf Security) will not be resolved without Iran’s intervention, despite the military and financial power of the U.S. and her allies.⁵¹²

Defining Muslim Unity

In the Islamic Republic, Muslim unity has defined domestic and foreign policies and has also been defined by them. Khamenei describes what Iran means by the unity of the Muslim world: Rule and governorship of Islam with a Muslim leader by Islamic principles, independent from Western or foreign values. Muslim nations must rely on their own resources, improve their industry, and advance in science and technology. He advocates for the sharing of human technological and scientific knowledge amongst Muslim nations, creating unity and working towards a central goal in this struggle for independence and progress. Islam and the Muslim world will be able to once and for all free Palestine from the Zionist regime and reclaim the

Muslim lands – reclaiming what belongs to Islam and to all Muslims. These are the fruits of Muslim unity and the dream of Khomeini the founder of the Revolution. This is the ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran – the ideology of its leaders, in particular Supreme Leader Khamenei, which together form part of Iran’s foreign policy.⁵¹³

A Call to Muslim Unity

During the October 1989 Muslim Unity Conference in Iran, Khamenei called “unity and integration among Muslims an Islamic and Revolutionary principle.”⁵¹⁴ He called Muslim unity an existential issue (*maṣaleḥ-i ḥayaṭi*), not just for the Islamic Republic, but for Islam and the Muslim world. Khamenei asserted that the global community is moving towards building alliances (*bolūk bandī*) in different parts of the world for military, economic and political cooperation. For example, the European Union (EU), the East Asian Union (EAU), the Union of South American Nations (Unasur), the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Member countries are well aware that single-handedly they do not have all the necessary resources to meet their security issues. As a result, they form alliances with other like-minded countries in order to empower themselves by combining their economic, military, political, and manpower resources.⁵¹⁵ Therefore, Khamenei called for a United Muslim Alliance (UMA), where all Muslim countries, despite their religious doctrinal differences or political ambitions would join forces and create an Islamic organization. These member Muslim nations would protect their “Islamic” interests against the enemies of Islam.⁵¹⁶

In defense of his proposal, Khamenei asserts that Islamic unity is not a new phenomenon or a novel Islamic Republic concept.” He states:

This concept has been quietly discussed for years, but the global arrogance (*estebkār-i jahānī*) opposed it. From the very beginning of the victory of the success of the Islamic Revolution, global arrogant powers realized that if Muslim unity is attained, the attention

of Muslims will turn to the *Command Center of Muslim Unity*, Iran. Therefore, reactionary governments and those affiliated with domination (*estebkār*), have spent a lot of money to cause conflict [among Muslims], including Arab nations, those [who] speak Urdu, and even within the Iranian Muslim nation. Through invisible and concealed hands, they oppose this unity and is the message of the Revolution. We declare that this unity must be considered important.⁵¹⁷

Hence, the global arrogance has responded to Muslim unity and its leader, Iran harshly:

While the world is moving towards alliances and unity, the global arrogant powers make every effort to sabotage the spirit of Muslim unity among Muslim countries. They highlight Sunni-Shi'i differences, which existed for centuries, in order to create discords. For the enemies of the Muslim world, the issue is not doctrinal differences, but the political power of a united Muslim world. It is for this very reason that the domineering powers have intensified their opposition to Iran after the victory of the Islamic Revolution because they are afraid of the ideals of the Islamic Revolution and the continuous existence of Islam. It is for that reason when Islamic Republic of Iran calls upon Muslim unity, the global arrogant powers, make the *Islamic* Revolution sound like a *Shi'i* Revolution. Thus, they make every effort to stop the Muslim World calling Islamic Republic of Iran's revolution, *a revolution in the name of Islam* and Iran's government, an *Islamic Republic*, not a *Shi'i* Republic. When Sunni Muslim leaders visit Iran or build relations or alliances with Iran, they do not do so based on the fact that Iran is considered the *Shi'i* Republic of Iran, but the *Islamic* Republic of Iran. Therefore, Iran does not distinguish between Shi'is and Sunnis, but sees all Muslims as one, under the same banner of Islam.⁵¹⁸

When the Islamic Republic of Iran invites Muslims to unite, it does not intend that Muslim sects – including Shi'i and Sunni sects – forgo their beliefs. This is not up to the Islamic Republic and is not a consideration. This is a personal issue that each Muslim may consider based on his or her research, studies and investigations. Our argument is that we want to remind Muslims everywhere – both Shi'i and Sunni – that you have some commonalities and some differences. In certain things you think and act in the same manner and in other things each sect has its own method. The commonalities are greater than the differences. Muslims believe in the same Islamic principles of one God, one *qebleh* (direction of Mecca; towards prayer direction), one Prophet (*yek peyghambar*), prayer (*do 'ā*), fasting (*rūzeh*), alms-giving (*zakāt*), pilgrimage (hajj), etc. We are not advocating for Sunnis to become Shi'is or Shi'is to deny their beliefs. Being united does not mean that we abandon our beliefs or resolve our theological differences. But we must come together as Muslims while accepting our theological, legal or interpretative differences. It is not about any particular Muslim country or preference over another. Unity is about all Muslim nations together equally under the umbrella of Islam – one God, one Prophet, one faith, one community, with one scripture to guide.⁵¹⁹

The common denominator for all Muslims is three-fold: Islam and the enemy. The enemy is the collection of nations who used every resource to dominate the Muslim world for centuries through colonization and occupation. They robbed Muslims of their will,

political and financial power, and their influence in the local and global community. They have stolen their resources both natural and manual. They have financially benefited from the oil resources of Muslim nations, and as a result, have advanced their nations, military and alliances to continue to dominate the Muslim world. Muslim nations that rebel against these powers stand no chance. This is the common enemy of every Muslim nation in the world.⁵²⁰

Now, the common goal Muslims hold is to eliminate this enemy, to cut off its root so that it no longer raises its head against Islam and the Muslim world. So that it cannot see, hear, think or speak strategies against Islam. The goal is to cut off the enemy's hands so it can no longer steal Middle Eastern resources from Muslim generations. And, the goal is to cut off the enemy's feet so it can no longer step into the Muslim countries and occupy them, take over their lives, and dominate their lives politically, socially, and culturally.⁵²¹

The only difference among Muslim nations is the question of which nation is willing to take the initiative to face the enemy and cut its umbilical cord; throw the enemy out and shut its doors politically, socially, culturally and religiously. Then, turn their faith to the Prophet, unite as a nation, and form an Islamic government that is only subjected to the Qur'anic principles and divine rules; not the rules established by foreigners, superpowers or Westerners.⁵²²

The third critical factor is the question of which Muslim nation is willing to take the initiative and advocate Muslim unity and strive to bring Muslims in the global community together by reminding them of their Qur'anic principles, educating them about their Islamic values and the call of the Prophet, and reveal the intentions of the enemy. In these cases Iran has taken the lead. Through the Islamic Revolution, Iran has said "No!" to the enemy and has destroyed every presence and influence of the enemy. Iran has also shown the enemy that as a Muslim nation, Iran is unwilling to submit itself to the will, influence, dominance and decisions of the enemy. Iran will no longer act as a slave to foreign powers. Iran ended "American Nation-slavery." Iran is well aware of the strategies of the enemy and is not willing to submit itself to unwanted interferences and influences.⁵²³

The Islamic Republic will never again allow the enemy to re-enter Iran in any shape or form. Iran is determined and will continue this path despite any pressures, opposition, or accusations by the enemy. After the success of the Islamic Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic, the enemy weakened, became angry, frustrated and exasperated, and tried to destroy the Islamic government. The enemy used another Muslim nation to attack the Islamic Republic. The enemy knew the best way to destroy unity was to attack from within and cause war between brethren. During the imposed war, the enemy did not remain silent. It verbally attacked Iran while providing Iran's Sunni brother with military weapons, planes and equipment. Despite their efforts, the Islamic Republic was protected under the banner of Islam, was guided by the divine, who had given His promises of protection in His Word, and a spirit of national unity across age, religious preference, etc. The nation came together and fought the enemy. The Islamic Republic was victorious for the second time in recent history. The enemy thought

it could destroy Iran and remove the Islamic government, which he was threatened by, but was unable to because God was with the Islamic Republic. So helpless and frustrated the enemy has been inventing ways to destroy the Islamic Republic. But the other important factor about Iran is its willingness to take the initiative and the will to guide Muslim nations to the same thing Iran has done (to follow Iran's example). Iran is willing to provide them the tools – not tools of warfare, but religious, where they can discover the greatness of Islamic faith to hear the calling of the Prophet, who created, governed and guided one Muslim Community under the banner of one religion and one God, guided by one Book.⁵²⁴

It seems that the supreme leader in his call to unity of the Muslim world is insisting on the acceptance of the Islamic Republic's revolutionary principles, ideals and political philosophy as interpreted by the leaders of the Islamic Republic (the supreme leader and his camp). Although he calls Muslim leaders to set aside sectarian differences, by declaring Iran as the leader of the Muslim world and the flag-bearer of Islam, he subjects the Muslim world to Iran's political worldview and leadership. It seems that little compromise is offered by the leader for Iran to accept other political philosophies within the Muslim world. He insists that the Iranian politico-religious system is the final and most accurate for the Muslim world. Inadvertently, this places restrictions on Muslim unity and makes it nearly impossible to accomplish. He is not proposing a united definition of Muslim unity or an agreed-upon Muslim political philosophy or Islamic system, but an Iranian ideology that he insists must be embraced by the entire Muslim world.

Muslim Awakening

In the wake of the 2011 Middle Eastern and North African uprisings or the "Islamic Awakening," the supreme leader perceives the current state of humanity as one moving towards religion and reliance upon God in order to attain salvation. It is a forward moving path towards, faith, love of God and salvation. Therefore, he concludes that the world has moved beyond Marxism, liberal democracy and secular nationalism. The supreme leader defines this Islamic Awakening as a cry for salvation and independence from oppression of the imperialistic powers.

Such salvation is reached through steadfast reliance on God. The leader further defines it as a “Battle against the global Zionist dictatorship.”⁵²⁵ It is “the introduction of the ultimate campaign against world arrogance, the main sponsor of oppression in the international community.”⁵²⁶ The Muslim Awakening is a campaign by Muslim countries against U.S. domination and oppression. It is a step towards independence from the West.⁵²⁷

The wave of Islamic awakening has reached numerous countries in the region including Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Lebanon, Yemen, Bahrain and Palestine. The fall of dictators in these nations and the victories in the Middle East and North Africa are a result of the might and power of God, and not men. Therefore, the Zionists, the Great Satan and the Western powers were powerless in the face of the Islamic Awakening.⁵²⁸

Khamenei encourages each nation to consider its own path of cutting the cords of “U.S.-slavery.” This is an effort to free themselves from the dominance of “the Zionists and the U.S.” Once “the corrupt network of global dictatorship” collapses, Islam will once again experience “renaissance in glory and prosperity.” Therefore, these regional developments or movements in Muslim countries are the pathway to victory and independence made by God.⁵²⁹

In his comparison of the spirit of the current awakening to that of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Khamenei calls upon these nations to follow the model of the Islamic Republic, its revolutionary ideals, independence from the West, its resilience, and progress in science and technology and economic prosperity.⁵³⁰ The assumption is that if these nations follow Iran’s model and submit themselves to the will of God, they too will experience religious democracy. In his view, the significance to this Islamic awakening is that it is neither a Shi‘i nor a Sunni awakening but an Islamic awakening. He attempts to create a sense of unification among the regional Muslim countries despite their differing political views and religious sects.⁵³¹ He sees a tie between the Muslim Awakening and the ideology of the Islamic Republic. He perceives that Iran’s ability to withstand foreign powers, despite sanctions and threats of preemptive military

attacks, has awakened a wave of Muslim fortitude that is more powerful than any weapon the West. While most Westerners characterize the recent uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa as chaos, Khamenei defines it as a promise of hope for the future of Islam, which will bring unity, Muslim brotherhood, and freedom from oppression.

The Ultimate Benefits of Muslim Unity

Khamenei's call to unity is a politico-religious call. In terms of its religious component, every Muslim, Muslim leader and Muslim nation ought to believe in the true values of Islam and be governed by its principles. Politically, based on the supreme leader's statements, Islamic power might accomplish the following for the Muslim world:

1. It will free every Muslim from the oppression of Western, foreign, and any oppressive power.
2. This freedom from oppression will lead to independence. All Muslim nations will finally and forever attain their independence, and occupied Muslim nations will be freed. The most critical of them all is Palestine.⁵³²
3. Palestine's freedom from the "satanic grip of the Zionist nation" and its supporters will be the greatest accomplishment of the modern political Islam. Palestine's victory over the Zionist nation will forever remove the "deadliest disease" in the midst of the Muslim world. This removal may not result in "wiping Israel from the map of the world," but it will certainly remove its power and dominion over the fragile Muslim nations.⁵³³
4. Once Palestine is freed and its occupied lands are reclaimed, then the flag of Islam can proudly wave in the bright blue skies of the Islamic world. Islam will proudly stand and raise its head over the globe. Muslim nations will move under this glorious divine flag so will non-Muslims.⁵³⁴

5. Once the Islamic flag is flown over every Muslim community in all corners of the world, every non-Muslim will be subject to common principles. Islam, with its liberating powers, will enter the lives and hearts of all humanity and change them – change their desires, their beliefs and turn them towards Islam.⁵³⁵
6. Once the global community has turned to Islam there will no longer be room for CODO (colonization, oppression, domination and opposition). Their CODO will end forever and be wiped off the earth. The enemies of Islam will become weak and no longer threaten Muslims or Islamic nations.⁵³⁶
7. Since the world will be under the banner of Islam, and the Muslim world will be united under the one Islamic faith, they will return back to the times of the Prophet, united in one spirit, under one banner, one faith, one law, one Word and community.⁵³⁷
8. This newly emerged Muslim community will be led by one leader. Since the Islamic Republic of Iran is the first Muslim nation who united in one voice, answered the Prophet's call through his servant Khomeini, did not fear the powerful forces of the world, and established an Islamic government governed by the divine, the Islamic Republic of Iran receives the honor of leading this novel Muslim world.⁵³⁸

This is what the supreme leader means by unity – politico-religious unity – and this is how Iran will become the leader of the Islamic world.

CHAPTER 13
PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD KHATAMI
(1997-2005)

August 1997 marked the end of Rafsanjani's Presidency and the beginning of a new political era in the life of the Islamic Revolution. Nearly two decades after the birth of the Islamic Revolution, a major cultural transformation and ideological shift swept Iran. Mohammad Khatami's (1997-2005) election marked "the first time since the Islamic revolution of 1979 that a figure associated with moderation had won a broad mandate."⁵³⁹ Scholars describe President Khatami's era as the *Reform Era* of the Islamic Republic of Iran, or the *era of the Iranian Reform Movement (dowrān-i jonbesh-i eṣlahāt-i Iran)*. Ata Hoodashtian, Canadian professor of philosophy and political science, describes it as the re-birth of intellectual activism in Iran's post Islamic revolution, where the support of religious intellectuals was witnessed. He further defines it as, "a rare period in Iranian history after the revolution where a co-habitation between intellectuals and the society was witnessed."⁵⁴⁰ The government and the institutions that governed the society opened the door to intellectual activities and the term "civil society" was radically developed when common interests between Kahtami's government and religious intellectuals is noticed. The rise of the civil society both as an idea and a social sphere in this period created a new dynamism also for the women movement, student activities and artistic presentations. Books and journals were published with less censorship. Also, this period demonstrated improved communication between Western and Iranian intellectuals.⁵⁴¹ This researcher characterizes Khatami's presidency as the era of war over the hearts and minds of the

Iranian youth or the era of struggle over the interpretations and preservations of the revolutionary ideals.

Khatami's Election and His Proposal of Reform

On May 24, 1997, the moderate clergyman Mohammad Khatami who campaigned for tolerance and social reform, won the Iranian presidential elections with 69 percent of the votes against the supreme leader's favored conservative candidate, Ali Akbar Nategh-Nouri.

Khatami's call for a new era of democratization, reform and civilized society, created such enthusiasm among Iranian citizens that nearly "90 percent of eligible voters went to the polls."⁵⁴²

During the 1997 election, nearly 70 percent of the Iranian population was under the age of 25; a population that was neither emotionally nor ideologically bound to the ideals of the 1979 Islamic revolution. Khatami garnered the support of three critical groups: the liberal reformist intellectual camp, women and youth.⁵⁴³ Khatami also enjoyed the support of three major reformist political parties: the Islamic Iran Participation Front (*Jebheh-i Mosharekat-i Iran-i Islami*), The Association of Combatant Clerics (*Majma' -i Rohaniyun-i Mobarez*) and the Mujahedin of the Islamic Revolution Organization (*Sazeman-i Mujahedin-i Enqelab-i Islami*).⁵⁴⁴

President Khatami attempted a reform movement and restructuring of the political and social culture of Iran, by implementing the rule of law, democratization, civil society, and the inclusion of all Iranians in the political decision-making process. "This principle was increasingly referred to as the republicanism of Iran, in contrast to Islamic-ness."⁵⁴⁵ His proposal was warmly welcomed by the international community and enthusiastically received by the Iranian people, with the exception of one group – the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and his conservative camp.⁵⁴⁶ While most revolutionaries were shifting from Islam to reform, Ayatollah Khamenei and his supporters were moving in exactly the opposite direction. To

discredit him, conservatives and the pro-government press labeled Khatami “a liberal with weak Islamic credentials.”⁵⁴⁷

Khatami’s Open Door Policy

The newly-elected President Khatami promised an “open door policy” towards political parties and called for the removal of restrictions on the press and media.⁵⁴⁸ As a result, there was a proliferation of newspapers and periodicals in Iran. Khatami also promised to respect the private lives of Iranian citizens. He vowed to limit police power and decrease incidents of religious militia patrolling the streets and searching those who violated the Islamic Revolution’s social codes. Khatami pledged to counter misconception, extremism and assure civil rights and freedom.⁵⁴⁹ More controversially, he vowed “to combat the view that politics should be monopolized by a specific group,” and also promised to end “unfair economic concessions.”⁵⁵⁰ Like his predecessor President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, he too maintained a position of rapprochement towards the West.

In 1988, Khatami introduced his theory of “Dialogue Among Civilizations and Cultures” (*Goftegu-i Tamadonha va Farhangha*) as a counter proposal to Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” theory. Khatami’s theory promoted peace, unity, security, equality, mutual respect, justice, freedom, liberty, and the embrace of a multi-polar world. He sought to engage the global community in dialogue, exchange of knowledge, experience and understanding of the diverse cultures, traditions and civilizations. He believed that it was this very “absence of dialogue among thinkers, scholars, intellectuals and artists from various cultures and civilizations” that promoted “cultural homelessness.”⁵⁵¹

Khatami's U.S. Rapprochement Policy

Like his predecessor, President Khatami was open to relations with the United States. During his January 1998 interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour, Khatami suggested a "warmer relation with the U.S." and advocated soft power, which promoted a constructive U.S.-Iran dialogue. He believed this would encourage thinkers, intellectuals, scholars and artists to exchange thoughts and ideas.⁵⁵² Khatami envisioned a new era in U.S.-Iran relations, where tensions could be reduced. Despite his advocacy for rapprochement with the U.S., he maintained that his open door policy would not include Iran's dependency on the U.S. or its political need for close ties with the U.S. Instead, the intent was merely an open dialogue between the two cultures where ideas could be exchanged. Khatami tried to take every precaution to prevent offending the supreme leader and his authority by making a "clear distinction between political reliance and discussions among individuals."⁵⁵³ Hence, his proposal was a mere application of soft power.

Khatami's Criticism of the U.S.-Iran Policy

While advocating cultural ties with the U.S., like other Iranian leaders, Khatami had his own criticisms of U.S. policy towards Iran. During his address before the 53rd Session of the U.N. General Assembly on September 21, 1988, Khatami criticized the U.S. foreign policy as a "flawed policy of domination" with a "cold war mentality."⁵⁵⁴ He accused the U.S. of not being able "to move beyond the collapse of the bipolar world order" by targeting Islam and Islamic principles, and making it the "new enemy," instead of focusing on specific "regressive interpretations of Islam."⁵⁵⁵ Therefore, he called upon "a sober revision of the mentality of the Cold War" and an end to "domination, unilateralism, confrontation and exclusion."⁵⁵⁶ Since the fall of the bipolar world order⁵⁵⁷ within the last decade, Khatami believed that the world had

moved towards a new world order of diversity, equality and independence. A unipolar world had become nothing but a mere fantasy, he asserted. In response to this “evolving global climate,” and in the name of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Khatami proposed to the members of the United Nations “a dialogue among civilizations and cultures instead of a clash between them.”⁵⁵⁸ On the domestic front, Khatami’s novel soft power theory gave rise to a great deal of enthusiasm within Iranian society. Internationally, the global community responded with anticipation and optimism. As a result, the U.N. designated 2001 as the ‘Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations.’⁵⁵⁹ Despite the positive reaction of the global community and the Iranian people to the *new Iran*, the supreme leader maintained his conservative position and stern opposition to the West.

The Combat of the Supreme Leader

The leader interpreted Khatami’s proposal of a cultural exchange with the U.S. and implementation of public diplomacy, as an open door to a U.S. cultural plot that would ultimately lead to the destruction of the foundations of the Islamic government. The power and political clash between the conservative camp and the reformists intensified during the two terms of Khatami as President and the result of these clashes came to a head during the 2005, 2009 and 2013 elections. The clerical rule made every effort to suppress the reformist movement or the so-called *cultural invasion*. The battle over reform and democratization of the Iranian society began during Khatami’s first term, and by 2001, the spirit of reform and cultural transformation was extinguished.⁵⁶⁰

Said Amir Arjomand, highlights two factors that contributed to the defeat of Iran’s reform movement and the fall of Khatami during his second term. First, it was a combination of the forceful opposition of the leader and his clerical camp, including “the commanders of the Revolutionary Guards and its Mobilization Corps, the Judiciary in conjunction with the Helpers

of the Party of God, who were able to successfully defeat the President, the reformists, the excluded clerics, the disenfranchised middle class and the technocrats for reconstruction.”⁵⁶¹

Next was Khatami’s weak personality and lack of strong impetus on reformists and advocates of reform in Iran to restructure the political culture.⁵⁶² According to Ata Hoodashtian, unlike Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Khatami never dared to radically oppose the leader and directly battle him. Therefore, in terms of implementing his ideas, he could not go very far.⁵⁶³ Despite his beliefs and commitment to improve the system, Khatami failed to see his vision for Iran through successfully.

The Trepidation of Cultural Invasion

The dread of cultural invasion has been at the center of the Khomeini-Khamenei ideology. Resistance to Western cultural invasion became the slogan and Islamist discourse of the 1979 revolution pioneers. As a result, anti-westernization, especially opposition to America and Zionism, became the orientation of a new order of Iran’s foreign policy and laid the basis for the majority of Iran’s domestic policies.⁵⁶⁴

For the Khomeini-Khamenei leadership, a cultural revolution meant a complete transformation of Iranian society by turning Iran into an “absolute” Islamic nation (*mellat-i moṭlaq-i Islami*).⁵⁶⁵ This cultural revolution called for the complete Islamization of Iranian society – culturally, socially, economically, politically, ethically and educationally, and modifying both domestic and foreign policies. During Khatami’s inaugural address on August 3, 1997, the leader placed special emphasis on the Islamic nature of Iran’s political system and referred back to the revolutionary ideals of Ayatollah Khomeini. The leader asked the newly-elected President and his Cabinet to fully adhere to the Islamic principles and guide the nation accordingly.⁵⁶⁶

CHAPTER 14

THE TEHRAN SPRING AND CHAIN MURDERS

The first term of President Khatami is also known as the *Tehran Spring*, where hopes of political liberalization and democratization ran high in Iran. As the reformist-minded President Khatami promised a *dialogue* with the world in January 1998, the Iranian press began to enjoy an era of considerable freedom, attracting conservative and liberal intellectuals to publish and exchange ideas. Many liberal-minded intellectuals returned to Iran, participated in conferences and freely expressed their political views through the *reformed* press.⁵⁶⁷ For a time the call for *dialogue among civilizations* by President Khatami seemed to be working. However, the liberal-reformist camp faced vehement opposition from the conservative camp in the fall of 1998. They banned nearly 108 newspapers and periodicals in Iran.⁵⁶⁸

Dozens of liberal members of society, including intellectuals and politicians were arrested or killed during the worst time in recent Iranian history known as the “Chain Murders” (*qatlha-ye zanjīrehī*).⁵⁶⁹ Consequently, President Khatami called upon a three-member Investigative Committee to investigate these murders. Everyone was struck by surprise when on January 4, 1999 the Ministry of Intelligence issued a statement admitting that its own agents had committed these crimes. “This was the first time in Iran’s modern history that the security establishment took responsibility for crimes that it had committed.”⁵⁷⁰ Subsequently, President Khatami called for the resignation of the Minister of Intelligence and “insisted on the arrest of [other] officials for the chain murders of writers and liberal politicians.”⁵⁷¹ During his Friday Prayer message on January 8, 1999, Ayatollah Khamenei called these murders “suspicious” and commended the intelligence agency for determining the sources of the killings. He called these

killings “criminal, ugly and hateful,” and condemned these “detestable acts.” He further thanked the President and the Special Investigative Committee for investigating the source of these chain murders on behalf of the Intelligence Community and the Iranian nation.⁵⁷²

Despite all efforts, tensions between the conservative and reformist camps grew. Following the chain murders, Mohsen Kadivar became a vocal advocate of democracy and liberal reforms in Iran. He condemned the assassination of members of the liberal camp and in his writings he advocated “the right to life in religious society and the religious prohibition against terror.”⁵⁷³ He openly opposed the doctrine of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, stating:

Every member of society and every member of government is subject to the law. No one can be above it. Everyone has the same rights, yet the root of the *faqīh* is inequality. He assumes he is above it. [Hence,] it is time for the supreme leader to be subject to the constitution too. After all, the Supreme Leader doesn’t come from God!⁵⁷⁴

After his blunt criticism of the Islamic Republic’s “20-year report card,” accusing the clerical rule for taking Iran backward, instead of forward, in February 1999, the Special Court of Clergy (*Dadgah-i Vizheh-i Ruhaniyyat*) brought charges against him and sentenced him to 18 months in prison.⁵⁷⁵

As tensions grew, the government shut down the reformist newspaper, *Salam* in the summer of 1999, which resulted in student protests at the University of Tehran. Consequently, the protests spread to other Iranian universities and led to hundreds of arrests and casualties as the Revolutionary Guard intervened. By the fall of 1999, “Khatami began to lose credibility in his ability to handle the reform.”⁵⁷⁶ The suppression of the reformists intensified in the year 2000.

The Khamenei-Khatami War of the Press (1998-2000)

Even though the supreme leader and the president seemed to be working together in investigating the chain murders, the battle over the freedom of press continued to intensify. The following are statements made by Supreme Leader Khamenei and President Khatami expressing their views with respect to press rights. This section is a representation of the views of the two leaders, responding to each other's inquiries on the rights of the press. These statements were excerpted from the book called, "*Matbu'at dar 'Asr-i Khatami*" ("The Press during Khatami's Era").⁵⁷⁷

Supreme Leader Khamenei's Statement on 9/16/1998

Through this speech, the supreme leader begins a series of responses to the controversies over the press (*matbu'at*) that have elicited a national crisis. Khamenei admonishes the judiciary, security forces and the cultural factions of the government to take greater responsibility of their moral obligations and manage the predicaments over the press.⁵⁷⁸ He asserts:

We believe in the freedom of speech and civil society. These beliefs were brought to this country through the revolution by its pioneers. These notions did not exist in the country before. There were no discussions or references made about freedom of speech. There was no social freedom. The revolution brought this into the country. Imam Khomeini gifted these to the country. The blood of the martyrs granted these to the country. However, freedom is limited. What are the limits of this freedom? Its limits are what Islam determines. If it is based on driving people to lose religious faith, they are not free to do so. This freedom is treachery. If their intent is to conspire [against the system] and echo it [among the nation], this freedom is a conspiracy [against the government]. This freedom is repulsive.⁵⁷⁹

The leader harshly warns the president and his camp that he is simply waiting to see what actions his administration will take to manage the national crisis over "press rights" and assure complete submission to the rule of law. Otherwise, preventing further crisis and containing the current liberal movement is not a difficult task for the leader.⁵⁸⁰ The leader further outlines four

principles that could be threatened by the abuse of social freedom: 1) National security; 2) Islamic faith of the nation by targeting the Islamic faith of the people; 3) the faith of the youth in the Islamic Revolution and its ideals; and 4) Iran's independence; paving the way for foreign influence and domination.⁵⁸¹ Hence, he calls upon those whose "eyes are gazed at Western gates," to wake up and realize that these are the ones who opposed Ayatollah Khomeini, the nation and the Revolution for the past 20 years. The actions of the "gazers" insult the Imam, question his principles, and label him a liar. Khamenei refers to their rejection of the revolutionary principles of Imam Khomeini, who considered America's influence and domination the principle enemy of Iran. Hence, by calling for open dialogue with the U.S., Khamenei sees this as a path to American invasion of Iranian society and a grave national security threat for Iran.⁵⁸²

President Khatami's Response on 9/30/1998

In response, to the leader's address, President Khatami states:

As President, I consider the biggest service to Islam, the implementation of law at every stage. I have always done this. With the recent events, in respect to the newspapers (*rūznāmeḥha*) and periodicals (*majalāt*), I have warned them personally that they must act within the framework of the law, and as much as I am able to, I will ensure the law is obeyed.⁵⁸³

We will determine place of the press in our society and ambiguities will be removed when we determine our approach towards freedom (*vaqti keh taklīf-i ma neṣbat beh āzādī roshan shavad*). Our society, if it is based on our constitution, is not a society with one voice (*tak ṣedāyyi*), but a society where varying voices are heard, and thoughts are unrestrained (*andīsheha āzadand*). This is the spirit of the constitution of the Islamic Republic.⁵⁸⁴ Frankly, I do not understand the concerns of our country in respect to political publications. What percentage of our people read them? The majority of those who read these publications have access to foreign news. Especially with the expansion of the audio and visual communications (*erṭeba 'āt-i ṣoti va taṣvīrī*), accessing this information is less expensive than purchasing a newspaper. Historically, the problem with our press has been that the publications reflected either the government's views or the views of foreign agencies. We have yet to reach a society where the press is unbiased.⁵⁸⁵

If we accept that the revolution transformed our society, then we have to accept that this transformation effects both our government and the people. Our people have grown, they have had a revolution, and they are now free and independent. There is a possibility that a certain newspaper, whether knowingly or unknowingly, is connected to a foreign system, but this is an exception not the norm.⁵⁸⁶

We live in a society that has its own rules and regulations and all press organizations must respect these rules. There is no argument that press violations of law must be addressed in legal proceedings. If this procedure is not followed, then we must object to it, and press organizations must object too. We must be a tolerant society where we recognize our opponents and supporters (*mokhālefān va movāfeqān*). Obviously the press has its own problems and weaknesses that need to be addressed. However, other factions of the society have problems as well. As we analyze these problems, we notice that in reality, the problems with the press are relatively less than the problems of other factions. The press is not limited to political publications alone. Art and scientific publications are included in the list. Non-political publications also contribute to the increasing knowledge of the society. In the West, freedom has a liberal connotation and since we do not accept liberalism, we automatically perceive freedom as liberalism. Human beings have been created diversely. We may try to prevent diverse thinking for a season, but resistance cannot extinguish diverse thinking. Instead, it will resort itself to a covert operation. There are those who are pro-Revolution (or *khodīs; insiders*) and anti-Revolution (or *ghayr-i khodī; outsiders*). Both groups must be treated with respect.⁵⁸⁷

President Khatami challenges *khodīs* by asking:

Why did Iran have a revolution? Didn't Iranians desire to live in a society where human beings were respected and even the opposition had the right to freedom. *Khodīs* must tolerate opposition as well. Some may argue that diversity of thought may threaten national security, but this view is wrong and I reject it. As an individual whose ideas were supported by people who voted me into office, I cannot expect everyone to follow my views. If I act in this respect as president, it will lead to restricting freedom, which will threaten individual safety. When we limit freedom, then we threaten security, thus covert thoughts emerge. But, if we embrace diversity of thought and allow different voices to be heard in society, then without a doubt, covert theories will diminish. If ideas are expressed, the influence of foreign media will decrease and our national security will be strengthened.⁵⁸⁸

Dual-Response in December 1998: The Power of the Pen

On many occasions Ayatollah Khamenei has referenced to the power of the pen from two opposing perspectives. Either he has condemned the use of the pen by the enemies to spread propaganda against Islam, Iran, or Shi'ism, to create fear, conflict and isolation between Iran and

the rest of the world. Or, he has called upon the Iranians and Shi‘i theologians, ‘ulama’ and intellectuals to use the power of the pen to educate Iranians and the global community about the Islamic Republic, Shi‘ism, Islam and Iranian history. He has also called upon them to enlighten Iranians about their history and the values of their regime in contrast to where they were politically, under the Shah’s theory of succumbing to foreign domination, and freedom from foreign oppression they experience under the Islamic Republic. Khamenei believes that an understanding of the strength of the Islamic revolution and the Islamic regime will lead Iranians to be more supportive of their government.⁵⁸⁹ Thus, he asserts:

The enemy uses the mercenary and venomous pen to dissuade youth and the nation from the gifts of the divine. This is a democratic and religious government (*hokūmat-i mardomī va dīnī*). The biggest enemy is charged to protect the interests of America, and such a system (Islamic-democratic) is a threat to their interests. Intellectuals must be cautious in what they write and avoid becoming subjects of foreign propaganda – by claiming that a dictatorial environment (*fazā-ye estebdādī*) exists in this country. When dictatorship (*estebdād*) actually existed in this country [during the Shah], Americans and Europeans did not protest. Their radios never said anything against the dictatorship or lack of observance of human rights. They wanted a despotic monarchical system to remain in Iran. During that time, no internal or external mercenary used their pen to write anything against those acts. Their intent was to appease the enemy, discourage our youth, and trample over the blood of our martyrs.⁵⁹⁰

Newspapers must use their freedom in a way that draws hearts and political parties closer to one another. Political parties must strive to draw their rivals closer and resolve differences in the spirit of cooperation and unity. When people see leaders and officials of the country oppose each other, and pollute the political atmosphere of the country with their acts, people begin to lose confidence in the system. Certain newspapers play this role and sound the horns of foreign propaganda and cause commotion in our society.⁵⁹¹

President Khatami’s Responses on 4/17/1999 and 6/28/1999

In response, President Khatami asserted that the press was free unless it deranges Islamic principles or commits any crime. Only then must their case be handled in the Special Press Court. Any crimes committed by the press, even if it is an act against national security, must be handled through the courts with the presence of a jury (*hey’at-i monṣefeh*).⁵⁹² In other words,

Khatami seeks to construct civil legal order, wherein everything is handled through the appropriate judicial venue.

The Supreme Leader's Responses on 7/31/1999 and 9/2/1999

The supreme leader starkly responded to the president by stating:

No one is opposing freedom of press (*maṭbu'at*). The philosophy of this revolution is freedom of expression and thought. But this freedom should not grant certain individuals privileged word (*ḥarf*), claim (*khast*), analysis (*tahlīl*) and orientation (*jahatgīrī*), in line with the will of the enemy, and make those the principles by which they operate. When one becomes friends with the enemy, he [or she] can no longer be trusted.⁵⁹³

The leader forcefully focuses on political and national security, and condemns those who use the power of the pen to spread lies. In his view, they threaten the internal and external security of the nation. Khamenei speaks to the internal opposition (*ghayr-i khodī*; outsiders) that uses the power of the pen to express the wills and agenda of external enemies of Iran. He asserts that the spread of this political and intellectual insecurity (*nāamnī-ye siyāsī va fekrī*) is as dangerous as the spread and smuggling of drugs into the country, inflicting misfortune and disease on the people.⁵⁹⁴ Khamenei compares cultural and intellectual invasion by the enemy to the infestation and exploitation caused by drug trafficking by foreign powers. In both instances, the Iranian youth is targeted and compromised. The leader further defends himself as a supporter of freedom of expression:

I have spoken about the press and publications on many occasions. No one can claim that I am not a supporter of freedom of thought, freedom of pen, freedom of expression, and the publication of different educational items (*ma'aref*). However, I am saying that the expression of thought, opinions and preferences in the country must be expressed (*maṭrah*) in a correct manner. Saying the truth is one thing and lying is another. And, being the loud speaker of the enemy is another thing. We cannot accept the latter and advance the enemy's cause.

The issue is not the number of newspapers. Let there be 200 newspapers instead of twenty. That is not the issue. After all, if they have something to say, there will be readers interested to read their columns. I have no objections. However, what is unacceptable are

publications that operate through the support of the people, yet act against the interests of the people by spreading lies and slinging malicious accusations. They are not expressing a view, but merely becoming the propaganda tool and loud speakers of Israeli radio or American radio. Those who act against Islamic principles and the security of the nation [cannot exercise that freedom].⁵⁹⁵

Khamenei asserts that he has handed over the responsibilities of these matters to the appropriate authorities. Those who have acted against their religious duties will be considered an apostate and be subjected to Islamic and religious (*shar'ī*) punishments based on Islamic rules (*hokm-i Islami*).⁵⁹⁶ He further asserts that the enemy will never stop spreading misleading propaganda. “We must not submit our wills to the enemy. Those who try to divert people from Islam and promote the enemy, whether knowingly or unknowingly, are traitors.”⁵⁹⁷

President Khatami's Responses on 9/27/1999 and 11/8/1999

In response to the leader, President Khatami asserted:

Today, when we think of a civil society, we include considerations of faith, the people's beliefs, the revolution, and its constitution. In a civil society, people are not consumers alone, but they have rights and the government is accountable to them as stated in the constitution.⁵⁹⁸

The tools of the government have come from the law and were placed under the authority of the leaders. These include various ministries, economic institutions, the police, and etc. But civil institutions are those that have come into existence through the people's will and they play the role of a mediator between the government and the people. Newspaper unions are the fruit of this revolutionary movement. The journalists (*nevisandegan-i maṭbu'āt*) and intellectuals must be models. We cannot cure this societal disease of the press and their foreign dependency quickly. It will take time. Today, if we do not take steps to inform the people, they will pursue other sources in order to achieve their goals, and this could negatively influence religious and national fundamentals. As I mentioned previously, in an industry where thousands of words are exchanged on a daily basis, error can occur. We should not question the entire system on one error to support actions against the very ideals of the revolution. Newspapers must avoid inciting conflicts in the society. The newspaper union must operate as a civil institution and reform itself. Our journalists (*rūznamehnegaran*) are devoted to our Imam, the Revolution and the society. Our religion is based on awareness and we want believers who are knowledgeable. One of the tools for awareness is the press.⁵⁹⁹ Today, the nature of information gathering has changed. If internal newspapers, magazines, and journals, do not fill the minds of our people with information, others will. Therefore, we have to create a democratic system

for the press so that it becomes a model for other factions of the society. At the same time, I ask that the press unions to be aware of their own mistakes. And if there are any violations, I am emphasizing again that they must be dealt with according to the law.⁶⁰⁰ With the increase of books and publications, the society will form new thoughts and their awareness will expand. With the expansion of internal publications, the foreign media will lose their influence and appeal.⁶⁰¹

The Supreme Leader's Response on 4/22/2000

In this message, Supreme Leader Khamenei directed his comments to the internal opposition (*ghayr-i khodī*; outsiders) and reminded the nation that he had previously warned them about the efforts of global domineering systems with America as their leader and the propaganda that would topple the regime and create commotion within the country.

In the past, the propaganda machines intended to implement plots in Islamic Iran through their radio programs. Today, the enemy attempts to deviate the nation from its Islamic path through a different tool. Now, newspapers have become the enemy's base in lieu of radios and they want to do the same thing as the BBC, Israeli and American radio and television did.⁶⁰²

I am neither against the press nor diversity of the press, as long as they operate according to the law and protect the interests of the country. They must use their pen for the benefit of the people and religion. However, today there are press organizations whose only goal is to cause apprehension and discord among the general public and the government. They rob our youth of hope, break their spirits, and cause them to lose confidence in their leaders. They insult the principle institutions of the country. I do not know who they model after. Even the Western press is not like this! This is a type of charlatan press used by certain organizations.⁶⁰³

In the world, newspapers write when an official or a President has stolen or committed a crime, but they do not attack the constitution or the law-making Parliament (*Majlis-i qānūngozarī*). They may criticize the ratified laws or analyze them, but they do not play games with the law. Insulting the constitution or the politics of the country are not small matters. These newspapers, without knowing who to blame, insult the system, the Sepah, the Basij, and the clerics (*rūhaniyyat*). What are their intentions? Why are they opposing Basij to this extent? Imam Khomeini invented the Basij. There is no better organization than Basij to employ the spirit and energy of the youth in a healthy way. What is their animosity with the Basij? Why are they questioning Basij so much?⁶⁰⁴

I know that there are many good and faithful people who work in these press organizations, but among them are those who use the power of their pen to cause discords, disharmony, public unrest and hopelessness. Even our respectable President is

unhappy with these press organizations. I have heard that he has brought some of them together and talked to them. I do not believe we can handle this situation through advice. I doubt it! The enemy is too quick and too wise. We cannot provide them with ample time and opportunity. I have repeatedly asked the government officials to deal with this situation seriously and stop it. This does not mean we limit the press. This does not mean prevention of free exchange of ideas. This means prevention of the influence of the enemy, its despotic propaganda which questions the entire Islamic system, the revolution, its youth, the faith of its people, and all Islamic principles. I have already discussed this matter with the President and officials, and I am discussing them with you too – just like a father who sits down and talks to his child about a critical issue.⁶⁰⁵

In the leader's perspective, one of the main goals of the alleged enemy is to create internal insecurity and instability. Thus, he warns the internal opposition (*ghayr-i khodī*), who act against the law by proclaiming: "I will never allow it! I want to make sure that the public knows and is aware of what the enemy is doing in terms of cultural issues in the country and what their intentions are." Khamenei calls this "a war" (*jang*) – where the enemy tries to infiltrate the minds and hearts of the general public, especially the youth, and question everything about the system. This is how the enemy tries to destroy the Islamic society, he asserts. "The enemy will not give up, but when he is subdued, he will use another venue to penetrate through the Iranian society."⁶⁰⁶

President Khatami's Responses on 6/5/2000 and 6/28/2000

In response to the leader's admonishments and criticism, Khatami asserts: "Freedom of the press and critique of the government is an indisputable right of the people."⁶⁰⁷ The president, in his *subdued* manner, pleads the case for the arrests and killings of the Iranian intellectuals and challenges the absence of logic behind these acts.⁶⁰⁸ By this time, a subdued position towards the leader is noticed in President Khatami. His ineptness in defying the supreme leader becomes evident. He seems to surrender to the leader in this war over the press.

Supreme Leader Khamenei's Response on 7/9/2000

In his final response, the supreme leader reemphasized that his battle against the press is not a fight against freedom, freedom of expression, or growth of employment rate, but to protect the society. He defines his struggle as a fight against smuggling contraband into the country. He attacks the movie industry, which according to him, pollutes the minds of the people and causes their faith and revolutionary spirit to waiver. He perceives these as tactics of the enemy. He states that his opposition has nothing to do with the lack of freedom of speech or the way the country is governed. Instead, he believes the enemy uses the media and the press to attack not just one faction of the government but the entire political system.⁶⁰⁹

Controversy over the killings of intellectuals continued in the Islamic Republic by taking different turns and leading to different political discussions. The disputes over the rights of the press and their prosecution by the government became the catalyst to three discussions in Iran: 1) The increased focus of the supreme leader on defining freedom in his public speeches; 2) the disputes over religious versus liberal democracy and the compatibility of religious democracy and *vilāyat-i faqīh*; and 3) the growing intense dialogue among Iranian religious scholars and intellectuals about human rights. The following two chapters present the views of the supreme leader on freedom and religious democracy. Once again Mohsen Kadivar leads the debate on democracy in Iran.

CHAPTER 15
FREEDOM IN THE VIEWPOINT OF THE
SUPREME LEADER AYATOLLAH KHAMENEI

Two critical ideologies of the Islamic Revolution are at the center of the leader's political views: independence and freedom. Like his predecessor, Ayatollah Khamenei's theory of independence is in the realm of "Islamic political freedom," which he perceives will lead to ultimate divine justice and salvation. Thus, his worldview entails making the world a safe haven for Islam. It is within this context that economic, intellectual, technological and political progress serve the interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran.⁶¹⁰ To be noted is the fact that Khamenei's definition of freedom does not encompass individual rights in a liberal sense, but freedom from oppression and domination by the "enemy." Therefore, in his description of freedom, the rights of the Islamic government supersede individual rights.

The following section outlines the supreme leader's views on freedom. These speeches have been selected from the book, *"Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei"* ("Freedom in the View of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution His Excellency Grand Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamenei"), a collection of Khamenei's interpretations of Islamic or Iranian freedom versus liberal, secular, Western or American freedom.⁶¹¹

The Definition of Freedom

Ayatollah Khamenei defines freedom as one of the indisputable rights of human beings. Freedom belongs to the people and is a part of human nature, he asserts. It is a divine gift given

to the Iranian people through the Islamic Revolution of Iran. The essence of this freedom was referenced in the slogans of the Islamic revolution: *Independence, freedom, Islamic Revolution (esteqlāl, āzadī, jomhūri-i Islami)*.⁶¹²

Freedom in Islam is freedom from slavery, servitude and domination. It calls upon ascribing value to human will. Those who believe that the concept of freedom, in this sense, has existed in the world only for the past two-three centuries are wrong.⁶¹³ The concept of freedom of human beings was discussed in Islam centuries prior to Europe's considerations of freedom as a basic right of humanity, and centuries prior to debates among scholars, intellectuals, revolutionaries and European leaders. Islam had already debated and considered this innate right.⁶¹⁴

If we define freedom in its true and broad meaning based on the Divine Books, it is defined as freedom of the human spirit from corruption, lust and temptations, whims and material bondage. This definition has not been discussed in Western or European books. The freedom that was discussed in the grand French Revolution in the 18th century and later mentioned in the Western world is less valuable and more limited than freedom discussed through the Divine Prophets and Books.⁶¹⁵

The freedom the leader seems to describe is political and religious freedom: political within the context of freedom from foreign domination and religious in terms of freedom from lust, sin and desires of the flesh.

Freedom like prosperity and justice is found under the umbrella of religious principles, because it stems from religious precepts that fulfill all human needs.⁶¹⁶ The basic needs of today's human beings have not changed from those who lived thousands or even ten-thousand years ago. The basic needs of human beings are security, freedom, knowledge, and a life free from discrimination and oppression. The needs that have sprung up today can be satisfied within the framework and under the umbrella of these basic needs. These needs are fulfilled only through the blessings of God's religion.⁶¹⁷

About freedom and independence, Khamenei posits:

Freedom should be defined in terms of independence, which was one of the slogans of the revolution. That means independent thinking, no subordination or emulation.⁶¹⁸ Independence cannot block freedom and freedom cannot block independence. If certain individuals wish to re-establish the influence of the enemy, that is not freedom. That is something that the enemy desires. This is the trap that the enemy has set for us. Today is a very critical day. This day and age is a critical day and age.⁶¹⁹

Ayatollah Khamenei refers back to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution which is freedom from corruption, oppression, domination and opposition (CODO). Any other freedom separate from religious and political principles that may potentially threaten the sovereignty of the nation or national security or promote cultural invasion is unacceptable and is considered in opposition to the Islamic Republic's principles of freedom. Therefore, political freedom from CODO has a greater value than individual social or civil freedom. He further emphasizes:

Islam gives freedom and independence to nations – freedom from despotic dictatorial powers, superstition, ignorance, foolish prejudice, and freedom from economic power traps and political oppressions of domineering nations. Islam provides welfare, economic progress and social justice to nations.⁶²⁰ Therefore, the culture and meaning of freedom in Islam is decisive. If one views Islam as a religion that denies societal and individual freedoms and claims that there is no freedom in the Islamic culture, he [or she] believes in vain.⁶²¹

Khamenei posits that there is only one interpretation of freedom and that is within the confines of Islam. Other views about freedom, especially Western values, are invalid. In Khamenei's view, Iran is the arbiter of freedom for the world.

The foundation of the Islamic Republic is justice. If the leadership is unjust, then the system will collapse. Our freedom is defined within the confines of Islamic principles in the Qur'an, *hadith* and religion as a whole. The Iranian leaders are called to operate within these confines and put freedom to use.⁶²²

As proponents of freedom, the Islamic Republic questions why humanity is deprived of freedom. Why are crimes committed against humankind in the name of freedom?⁶²³ This is where Islamic freedom differs from Western liberal freedom. Islamic freedom has spiritual values, which means freedom comes hand-in-hand with duty. Islam acknowledges freedom and duty together so that human beings can perform their duties, do great things, make grand decisions and reach perfection through the use of both values. That means human beings are free because they are charged with duty; a concept absent in Western liberal thought.⁶²⁴

In most Western societies human beings are enslaved to their futile material urges, or enslaved to oppression, discrimination and foolish desires.⁶²⁵ Therefore, freedom in the Western world has materialistic borders and limitations. For instance, in America, moral values do not determine limits on freedom, but in Islam, moral borders exist. Additionally, if one operates against the interests of the country, his [or her] freedom will be limited. This is both logical and spiritual.⁶²⁶

The supreme leader alludes to the fact that should citizens be granted social, civil or political freedom apart from Islam the society will turn into a chaotic state. It may be possible that his perceptions of “a rise to political dissidence” may be out of his own experiences of political activism during the Shah’s regime. Although in his view the Shah’s regime was a totalitarian regime, Khamenei enjoyed political freedom, to an extent, to express his political views and objections to the Shah. One may ask, is the leader afraid of the same behavior in his current Iranian youth?

Freedom and Human Rights

Khamenei challenges Western or American human rights policies whenever Iran is faced with foreign opposition or is accused of human rights violations or support of terrorism, or is confronted about its nuclear program. In his defense of the Islamic Republic, Khamenei turns to Islam and Islamic values and expresses his views on human rights by equating his interpretation with an Islamic interpretation of human rights.

The principles of freedom expressed in Western social philosophy appear in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights document, which is one of the international treaties today. Westerners express their views with respect to the limits of freedom stating: “Freedom must be within the confines of law” or, “The limits of freedom extend to the point that it does not harm others.”⁶²⁷ These are famous opinions that Western cultural philosophers have expressed, and many Muslim writers have mimicked them without considerations and investigations of Islamic views and Qur’anic verses. Of course, some of their opinions are accurate but some are illogical and incapable of defense. Overall, freedom in the West is based on material gains. As soon as material gains are at risk, freedom is limited.⁶²⁸

According to Khamenei, under a sound Islamic system, women in Iran are liberated and therefore they enjoy the full spectrum of human rights.

Islam is a proponent of human rights. In no other religion is humankind considered to enjoy such dignity. Respect for humankind is an Islamic principle and a defining characteristic of Islam. Human rights can be defended under Islam. Islam has defended

human rights through its judicial, punitive, and civil rules, as well as the rules concerning public rights and political issues. Islam defends genuine human rights, not the kind of rights that the West has deceptively promoted as human rights.⁶²⁹

Islam is a religion that promotes mercy and compassion, supports humanity and human values, and promotes brotherhood. Human rights principles that have been introduced by Islam are far more sophisticated than what is being promoted by the so-called “democratic world.” Islam safeguards human rights and human dignity, guarantees morality and virtue, and promotes peace and security. These rights are extended to both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Islam has liberated women and given them the right to choose and not be subject to the decisions made by men. In this regard, Westerners are 1300 years behind Islam. National progress and prosperity increases when women enter the life of the society. Thus, preventing women from acquiring education and improving their knowledge is injustice not only to them but to the society as a whole, because when women enter an arena, their families do the same. This is not true of men. Furthermore, it is injustice if women are not given the opportunity to exercise their scientific, creative, political or social talents. Therefore, it is unjust and against the Islamic principles if women are not allowed to exercise their rights by choosing their own profession, their own spouse, or choose to divorce and have the right to continue having a healthy relationship with their children. Thus, it is important to create a balance between human rights of men and women. From the Islamic point of view, in terms of their human and divine qualities, men and women are not different from one another. The goal of defending women’s rights in Islam is to prevent men from dominating and oppressing women. God has entrusted men and women responsibilities in the society according to their nature and abilities. However men and women may have different Islamic rights in some cases, and this is in line with the fact that the natural tendencies of men are different from those of women in some cases.⁶³⁰

When the West has paid attention to the issues of human rights in the recent centuries, Islam has dealt with it in various forms from its inception. The idea of human rights as a fundamental principle can be seen to underlie throughout Islamic teachings. The verses in the Qur’an and the teachings and the traditions of the Prophet have become foundations for the establishment of human rights in many societies. However, the oppression of the West and its continuous dominance and colonial power has led to inequality and injustice. Thus, the remedy for achieving ultimate human rights is return to Islam and recourse to the divine revelation – the Qur’an and the Islamic precepts. These are the things that will enable humanity to understand the true meaning of human rights and help to identify those rights in their struggle to secure them.⁶³¹

While Ayatollah Khamenei’s proposal with respect to Iranian women’s rights may sound appealing, he seems to neglect the severe oppression Iranian women have experienced under the Islamic regime. Although Iran’s female literacy rate is 70.4 percent in comparison to the male

literacy rate of 83.5 percent since the revolution, women's rights have moved backwards instead of forward. To date, women in Iran cannot hold high level political offices and judicial positions – they can neither serve as judges nor become president.

Today, the women's rights movement in Iran is one of the most active social movements in Iran. More and more women from different social classes, religious backgrounds and ethnicities join the movement to mobilize their efforts to challenge the discriminatory laws against women in Iran's legal code. The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran "has been working intensely to increase international support for Iranian women and challenges the human rights violations they face."⁶³² Scores of women's rights advocates have been arrested since 2006 either during peaceful women's rights demonstrations in Tehran. Many have been detained and prosecuted, including Alieh Eghdamddost, who has been sentenced to three years in prison, "making her the first woman imprisoned for activism on women's rights in Iran."⁶³³ The Campaign and the international community called upon President Ahmadinejad to stop violations of the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights, which upholds human rights of all individuals and their fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, Iran is found in violation of Article 20 of its Constitution which states, "All citizens of the country, both men and women, equally enjoy the protection of the law and enjoy all human, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, in conformity with Islamic criteria."⁶³⁴

Ayatollah Saanei and deceased Ayatollah Bojnordi have been among the clerics who strongly supported women's movement in Iran. Because of the opposition received by many conservatives, initially, the government proposed that it would ratify only those provisions that were not in conflict with the standards and values of Islamic law. The conservatists opposed the government's decision and claimed that by ratifying the Convention to Eliminate all Forms of

Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) into Iran's legal system, Iran would be diverting from its Islamic roots. So the government called upon the issuance of a *fatwā* which banned the ratification of CEDAW in Iran.⁶³⁵

Despite the restrictions on the law, activists have tried to find ways to achieve gender equality. Ziba Mir Hosseini, Iranian scholar and activists argues:

Iranian women are second class citizens. The question of equality has become very important for Iranian women, and as a result, there are women activists who want to know their true identity within the Islamic Republic. Women in Iran are educated, they can vote, yet they are second class citizens. The attitude of Islamic Republic towards women is paradoxical. On one hand women are to be protected, on the other hand their attitude toward women is not modern.⁶³⁶

Conservatives such as Zohreh Tabibzadeh, Presidential Deputy on Women's affairs have a different opinion of Iranian law. She asserts:

The Islamic Republic has a different view about women's general rights and responsibilities as compared with the Western world. Shah's regime was a mix of western perspective and Islamic jurisprudence. Some legal definitions were based on Islam and others were taken from Western countries. However, since the Islamic revolution there have been reforms and more than one thousand changes have been made to Iran's civil laws. Currently, the Parliament is working with the Justice Ministry on civil laws which will be ratified according to Islamic law.⁶³⁷

To achieve their goals and fight for equal rights, in 2006, advocates of women's rights with the support of prominent human rights activists, such as the International Peace Prize Winner, Shirin Ebadi, initiated a campaign called, "One Million Signatures Demanding changes to Discriminatory Laws." The campaign also called, "Change for Equality" aims to collect one million signatures from Iranian men and women at home and abroad in support of abolishment of discriminatory laws against women in Iran."⁶³⁸ Through mutual efforts, face-to-face dialogues with Iranians, peaceful protests and lobbying, members of the campaign hope to achieve the following:

- Promote collaboration and cooperation for social change;
- Change existing discriminatory laws and the radical interpretations of the Shari'ah law;
- Equal rights in marriage;
- Equal rights in inheritance;
- End to polygamy;
- Stricter punishments for those who commit honor killings and other forms of violence;
- Connect with other global women's activists groups;
- Amplify the voices of women whose voices are not heard and whose needs are not met at a national policy level; and
- Improve Iranian's knowledge about current discriminatory laws against women through personal dialogue and promote democratic action by showing alternative ways.

Currently, the campaign is active in 20 different cities in Iran. Members come from different social classes. However, women from lower socio-economic classes join the campaign much easier than women from middle or higher classes. The membership of devout Muslim women ranks lower than moderate or secular Muslims. The majority of women who join the campaign are illiterate; therefore members have to read the forms to them before they can provide their signatures for support. The campaign tries to achieve their goals by:

- Bringing cultural awareness about the existing discriminatory laws against women;
- Maintaining presence on the streets either by peaceful protests or face-to-face dialogue;
- Using the Internet to inform the public, organize efforts, seek members, and collect signatures;
- Gathering women supporters from different backgrounds: secular or religious;

- Creating a bridge between Iranians living in Iran and in Diaspora through the internet (such as face book) and international meetings;
- Lobbying with religious leaders and officials; and
- Use theatre/arts to communicate the message.

The Diaspora and the international community have had a positive impact on the campaign. The support of the international community has shown the Iranian government that discriminatory laws against women and human rights violations have serious consequences for the regime. On April 29, 2009, the One Million Signatures Campaign received the Eleanor Roosevelt 2009 Global Women's Rights Award, along with Christiane Amanpour, Leymah Gbowee, Billie Heller, Mariska Hargitay, and Dr. Neal Baer, and Mariska Hargitay.⁶³⁹

The Rights and Duties of Freedom

Ayatollah Khamenei appears to define freedom in terms of rights and duties. With every right there is a duty, and the failure to fulfill that duty results in the loss of that right. For example, citizens have the right to participate in elections, but if they violate their duties of civil order they will lose their right to personal freedom. He further explains:

Some say freedom is not to be given but to be received. Freedom can be given, received and taught. What do we mean when we say *freedom can be given*? That means, government officials are not allowed to negate or deprive anyone from their natural right of freedom. Of course, this is not a favor the government does for its people. They must give freedom and this is an obligation and responsibility. By *freedom can be received*, we mean every mature human being in the society must be familiar with his or her freedom and must demand it. Now, by *freedom can be taught* we mean freedom has certain customs and cultures that must be taught. Without these customs and cultures, this great blessing will not be afforded to any society worthy of it. If in a society, customs for freedom do not exist and individuals do not know how to utilize them, they can guarantee that they will lose that freedom despite its necessity for an active and progressive society. In the view of Islam, this is a societal catastrophe. When freedom is lost, that is a catastrophe. Any type of despotism or dictatorship—whether individual or collective, is disastrous. If we do not know how to deal with freedom and do not understand the norms of freedom, then this will be the outcome.⁶⁴⁰

There are those who desire such an outcome. As a result of our unfamiliarity with the culture of freedom, they want to create chaos so that people thirst for a dictatorship. In some societies, chaos and disorder work to an extent, until people hope for a dictator to bring order. Some want the same for this society. They want to manipulate freedom in so many ways that they play with the minds, emotions and beliefs of the people until they cause the society to roar. These are the enemies of freedom. We should not mislabel freedom. We should not play with freedom and use it as a weapon against freedom-seekers. Those who uphold the name of freedom, but are not bound by the culture of freedom, harm freedom. They are not protectors of freedom but destroyers of freedom. Freedom should not be a tool for breaking the law and undermining the Islamic Republic. In the Eastern and the Western world, no government will tolerate those who undermine them, but the Islamic Republic has shown this generosity. For a long time, some in the name of freedom did whatever their hearts desired with the faith and beliefs of the people. The Islamic Republic also—for whatever reason—remained silent. The regime remained patient and with generosity explained their actions.⁶⁴¹

Khamenei is often ambiguous about his definition of “freedom.” One may ask, what is the nature of this freedom? Is it freedom from CODO, or freedom to exercise Islamic rights, or freedom to gain economic and political progress, or freedom to gain scientific progress, or freedom to gain knowledge, or democracy? Each of these freedoms can be disputed by the members of internal opposition (*ghayr-i khodīs*; outsiders), who may argue that these freedoms are limited in the Islamic Republic of Iran since their principles are solely interpreted by the leader and his camp. They may conclude that within the framework of the Iranian government, their freedoms are limited. Others may argue that the policies of the government do not allow them to freely express their views about their government. In both cases, the supreme leader would respond that Iranians do have freedom of expression, but not on the streets through uprisings, demonstrations and riots, but within structured and controlled environments such as classrooms, universities, mosques, etc.

The Limits of Freedom

To secure individual and national freedom, the leader believes in the necessity of freedom within governmental limits.

Freedom must have some limits. If human beings want a comfortable life, they must accept that some of their freedoms will be limited. Therefore, we ask, what are the borders of freedom? The Islamic Republic introduced freedom to the society in its true meaning. However, the utilization of that freedom has some norms. We must both learn and teach the norms of freedom. This is also the obligation of the Islamic Republic. Some in the name of free-thinking (*āzādandīshī*) destroy the borders of virtue and truth and in the name of free-thinking and enlightenment (*āzādandīshī va nurāvarī*), ignore every holy principle and belittle them.⁶⁴² No culture, book, or philosophy intended freedom to lack limits. A freedom absent of borders, limits the freedom and security of others. Therefore, absolute freedom is not possible in a human society. Even the anarchists of the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe, despite their slogans of freedom, to some extent believed in limitations. Therefore, freedom in its absolute sense is neither permissible nor logical, and no one in this world is supportive of it.⁶⁴³

The difference between Islamic and Western freedom is that in the West, the law mandates that no one should threaten the freedom of another. In Islam the law mandates that in addition to the obligations of no one threatening the freedom of another, an individual is obligated not to endanger his [or her] own rights and interests as well. He himself [or she herself] should not be harmed because of his [her] own freedoms.⁶⁴⁴

It appears that what Khamenei refers to here is that the government plays a critical paternalistic role in protecting individuals from harming themselves as they exercise their personal freedoms.

It is the duty of the government to assure that no one abuses freedom, whether personal or collective. If this is true, then it appears that in the Islamic Republic, every aspect of human life is controlled by the government.

The West and its Approach to Freedom

For Khomeini-Khamenei, Western cultural infiltration (*taḥmīl-i farhang-i gharbī*) is the biggest political threat because they are motivated by materialistic gains. This threat is not limited to the import of Western clothing, hair styles, music, food or any changes to the social behavior, but extends to the imposition of Western political and economic influence in Iran.

In their claims of freedom, the West continuously insists that it should impose its culture upon other nations. There are many values in the Western or European cultures, but they insist that they have to impose them all on other nations, including Muslim countries. The proof is in the acceptance and rejection of individuals, groups and governments who stand against Western culture and personalities. They fuel the propaganda machines and naturally, those who are not willing to partake in that culture will be subject to their aggression.⁶⁴⁵ Today, Westerners have introduced themselves as democrats and supporters of freedom of opinion and vote, even though this is one of the biggest lies told to the world. The democracy that is discussed in today's Western world's expressions does not exist in America, France or England.⁶⁴⁶

Cultural Revolution was among the chief domestic policies of Ayatollah Khomeini. This cultural revolution meant cleansing of the Iranian society from any pro-Western policies or behavior.

Nearly three decades after the establishment of the Islamic government, Khamenei seems to consider cultural intrusion as an existential threat to the Islamic Republic. One may argue that the efforts of the supreme leader in protecting the Iranian "Islamic" culture may be an effort to create a distinct culture from the West or any other culture. One might also argue that in his efforts to spread Iran's "Islamic culture", first to the Muslim world and then the global community, Khamenei may be creating a distinct unified political power. In his speeches, the leader has alluded to the possibilities of Iran becoming a superpower. Would creating this unique Islamic-Iranian culture and exporting it outside of the Iranian borders be part of his political scheme? Today's Iran and the Iranian people seem to be too strong to be colonized. Thus, colonization could neither be a threat nor a concern. Based on his speeches, it may be concluded that his greater concern is the formation or creation of a grand "Islamic-Iranian" culture, which will lead to political power. While the U.S. is reputed as "The Leader of the Free World," Ayatollah Khamenei seems intent on making the Islamic Republic of Iran "The Leader of the Muslim World."

Khamenei alludes to the fact that should Iranians be given social freedom, the society will turn into a chaotic, sexually permissive, violent, corrupt state. On numerous occasions in his

speeches, he defends the Iranian culture as a peaceful and pure culture. Yet, he seems to have little faith in the social and political “behavior” of the people.

The Western slogans of the French Revolution were “freedom,” but the Eastern slogans of the Communist Soviet Union were “equality.” That freedom in the West deviated from its true meaning. The freedom that means the ability to choose the pathway of their lives, turned into individual, sexual freedoms and freedom to engage in corruption. Therefore, in the name of democracy and through propaganda machines, they have tried to impose this freedom on other societies. This type of democracy and freedom is abhorrent and fake.⁶⁴⁷

Khamenei believes that Western freedom is based on materialistic gains of the government in question. Citizens are given freedom as long as the rights and profits of their government are protected. These views appear in his speeches repeatedly, especially when faced with internal opposition.

Freedom exists in the West, but along with freedom comes oppression and unruliness. Western publications enjoy freedom of the press and write anything they desire, however to whom do these papers belong? Who governs them? Who governs the press in America? To whom does Time, Newsweek or CNN belong? They belong to the capitalists. This is an obvious issue. All the papers in Europe and America belong to the capitalists. The newspapers enjoy freedom, but the freedom of the capitalists, to push forth their agenda. Their agenda is simple: to criticize those they reject and to magnify those they accept, to take sides, and to pollute the public’s opinion. This is not freedom. If someone does not belong to this circle of capitalists, their views and opinions will not be published or made known. No one will hear them. This is not freedom of speech. Yes, the capitalists are free to say whatever they want through the media – newspapers, radios and television. This type of freedom has no value. They create confusion, disorder, cause wars, impose upon peace, or sell weapons anywhere they want. Is this freedom? They claim newspapers are free in America and Britain. I ask, which newspaper belongs to the middle or lower classes of the society so that they could freely express their views, and we could witness such freedoms? To whom do these newspapers belong – to the cartels, large trusts and the capitalists? Yes, newspapers are free, but these systems do not criticize their own interests.⁶⁴⁸

Khamenei often comingles social freedom with political freedom. For example, when addressing domestic social issues he attacks Western political freedom policies such as spreading democracy because he claims they spread liberal Western ideals of freedom, which is CODO

within the global community. Sexual corruption and rights for homosexuals are a prime example.

Khamenei also cites Palestine as an additional example of the Western imposition of freedom.

Western democracy is based on liberalism. Its philosophy and root is liberalism. They claim since human beings are free, this freedom demands the absence of dictatorship and republicanism. Thus, liberalism is absolute freedom which means people have the freedom to reject that which is against their own interests, i.e., the rights given to homosexuals in the Western countries which defy marriage. This is not freedom. This is a clash between freedom and morality. Then we ask which moral values? It is this very absence of moral values that defines the logic of liberalism. Freedom exists but has no limits, even if it is against the rights and freedoms of the rest of the society. Western democracy, with their reliance on liberal philosophy, attempted to spread its principles throughout the world under the guise of democracy. But they were defeated. They proved that no democracy is possible through liberal democracy. In the name of spreading freedom or combating terrorism, they have subjected the world to conflicts and crisis. The ugliest acts of terrorism today are committed on Palestinian lands. These criminal acts are committed under the pretense of freedom, liberalism, human rights and democracy. Are these governments or systems that we have to imitate or follow? Then what are we going to do? Are we going to impose oppression and cruelty as they do and call that justice? This is nothing but dissension. The West desires one thing from liberalism, and that is its own absolute freedom to do whatever it desires within the global community and to occupy any part of the world.⁶⁴⁹

In his speeches, Khamenei calls the American flag the “flag of torture.” He ridicules America for promoting human rights. He declares that instead of yearning for such a flag, most of the Muslim world cries out “death to America and burns their flag.”⁶⁵⁰

The freedom referred to within the global community, recognizes America as the flag-bearer, but this definition is completely different from the one we believe in. The freedom that was expressed 200 years ago in the “Universal Declaration of America” is not the freedom that our hearts seek and pound for. The meaning of that freedom is that an individual is bound to no other parameters; ethical, economic, social or political other than the law. And the law is written by those who exercise control over all these systems – that means the capitalists and not the American people. No one within the global community believes the human rights claims, spread of democracy and freedom in the world that American leaders make in their official addresses. These are slogans that have very little value.⁶⁵¹

America, according to Khamenei, does not acknowledge her God because she divorces freedom from any adherence to religion. For him, the difference between Western and Islamic freedom is the close relationship between political and religious freedom. In Islam the two are one and

intertwined, whereas in his views, in the West they are separate. Thus that separateness or the absence of religious freedom within political freedom leads to two types of corruption: 1) domestic, which leads to lusts, sexual corruption, etc. and 2) international, which leads to imposing their CODO on other governments to subject them to slavery. He claims that this “Western slavery” leads to both spiritual and physical bondage. In his view, that was the state of Iran during the Shah’s regime.

There are three differences between the Islamic logic of freedom and the Western logic. First, in Western democracy, human freedom is distinct from religion and God. Therefore, the source of freedom is not God. They never say that God has given freedom to human beings. Instead, they pursue a philosophical basis for it. In Islam, the source of freedom is God. This is a fundamental difference between the two. Therefore, based on Islamic logic, a move against freedom is a move against the divine phenomenon. Secondly, in Islam, the counterpart to freedom is religious duty. This theory is absent in the West. In Western philosophy, it is illogical to fight and die for freedom. Whereas in Islamic thought, struggle for freedom is a duty because such a struggle is a divine command. Lastly, there are no limits to Western freedom since moral values are subjective. That means there are no moral and religious limits to freedom. On the other hand, in Islam, there are indisputable and fixed values, and freedom is confined within these parameters.⁶⁵²

Two internal and external principles contribute to the adverse limits of freedom. Externally, human freedoms are limited due to the oppression of superpowers, colonizers and bullying powers. Internally, freedom is limited due to the lusts, desires, fears and moral corruption of human beings. Today, many nations are fully dependent upon superpowers. Yet, they endure this atrocity. One of the reasons for such slavery is their inner captivity. Internally, they become victims of their fears and greed. When they become victims of their weaknesses of financial gain, greed, fear of death due to unemployment, hunger, hardships, and other internal weakness, they submit their wills to these powers and become slaves to their external chains. Our nation was in this same state during the Shah’s regime. But the day people took courage and resisted their fears, temptations, and internal chains that enslaved their souls, they were able to break their external chains of slavery. Nations who are victims of these internal chains will never be free of their slavery. This is what Westerners prevent their enslaved nations to see and understand. These nations do not know this freedom – a freedom that Islam has shown to humankind.⁶⁵³

Political Freedom in the Islamic System

One of the ways Khamenei views freedom is in progress. He sees a direct correlation between freedom and scientific progress. It was political freedom from the Shah's regime that led to Iranian progress. The supreme leader takes pride in Iran's scientific progress. He views Iran's nuclear program as the "new image of Iran" – the image of "free Iran."

Freedom that exists in the Islamic Republic today does not exist anywhere else. People are free to express their views and opinions. From the very beginning, a group of people in the Islamic Republic claimed that we do not have freedom. They even bluntly broadcast it in the media; whether it is radio, television or a newspaper. In the Islamic Republic everything is based on the will of the people. Due to the divine blessings, freedom exists in this country. In the past we were subjected to dictatorial monarchies. As we look into our history all we see is darkness. Thank God today the Iranian nation is free, thinks freely and chooses freely. A system that is built based on the loyalty of its people is a strong system and the enemy cannot hurt it. It is because of this freedom that science, industry, education and knowledge grows in this nation. This is freedom in its true sense – progress in every possible way within the global community.⁶⁵⁴

Khamenei's focus on political freedom is closely related to political independence. One may infer that for the leader, political freedom has greater value than individual, social freedom and when it comes to making a choice, he will choose the former.

The principle slogan of the Islamic Republic was three notions: *independence, freedom and Islamic Republic*. Islamic Republic is the system that governs the preceding two. The freedom slogan is meaningless without independence. It is independence that gave rise to freedom in this nation. There were those who wanted to bring back American bondage to this country through the "window." They claimed freedom and reform and still make these claims. The very nature of the slogan of independence was complete freedom from foreign powers. That means no foreign infiltration and influence in Iran, which meant America and England no longer had any rights in Iran's political and cultural affairs. The Islamic revolution meant a government that would be based on religion. Hence, a government that is based on religion respects the values of justice, independence, freedom, piety, devoutness, brotherhood, cooperation and morality.⁶⁵⁵

The supreme leader often uses Iran's "freedom card" or "independence card" from foreign domination to press forth his domestic policies. When faced with opposition, he reminds Iranians of the oppressive power they lived under during the Shah's regime. He reminds them that going

back to the “state during the Shah” means no independence, which will lead to no freedom to progress politically and technologically, which means slavery to Western powers. He places Persian pride in the hearts and minds of the Iranian nation that they are the only Muslim nation with a “mark of independence.” The leader increases these sentiments when faced with either internal or external opposition. Anyone who threatens this fundamental freedom is a rebel and enemy of the Islamic Republic.

In a world where bullying and oppressive powers have exerted their power over nations, Iran took a stance and declared its political freedom. No power in the world is able to have political influence on the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is the gift of the Islamic Revolution’s political freedom. This nation must strive in unity to move towards the direction of freedom and independence, which is total economic and political independence. Countries that are dependent upon other powers cannot and do not enjoy such freedoms. Thank God our country enjoys political independence which creates economic independence and above all, cultural independence, which is absent from Western society. Some claim that Iranians seek freedom. Which nation in the world enjoys as much political freedom as in Iran? Where in the world do people play as much of a role in the government directly or indirectly? If the issue is whether several newspapers were published or not, that is not important! The number of newspapers is not the issue. If newspapers work for the interests of the people it would be better.⁶⁵⁶

As has been previously stated, freedom in Islam means both spiritual freedom and individual freedom within Islamic parameters and principles. According to Khamenei:

Today, the kind of freedom of thought expressed in Iran is rare in the world. Of course, we do not claim that this freedom has no limits or conditions. There are certain limitations expressed through the law. The kind of freedom of expression and freedom to vote rarely occurs in most countries within the region. This is a country where in less than two months after the victory of its revolution, people went to the polling stations to vote for the Islamic Republic. Within the year, people voted for the members of the Majlis and the President. Throughout the life of the Republic, people have continuously voted to elect the members of the Majlis or the President, and have chosen their own destiny. Where else can one find such a democracy? This is human rights and individual freedom. Those who accuse Iran of human rights violations, why don’t they attack nations whose systems are based on a dictatorship with no signs of democracy. Our human rights and individual freedoms are more advanced than most so-called democratic systems in the world. Do not listen to their propaganda machines – the press – that operate under their authority. If indeed they believed in democracy and human rights, they would have objected, at least once, to despotic, cruel and dictatorial regimes that

lacked democracy and their people had no voice in election of their leaders. Why do they only attack the Islamic Republic and the manifestation of democracy in Iran?⁶⁵⁷

While most Iranians may perceive social justice in freedom of expression, the supreme leader perceives it in terms of the Islamic Revolution's principle ideal of "Neither East, Nor West."

This shows the supreme leader's static position in revolutionary ideals that may seem archaic to the Iranian people. The new Iranian generation seems to have moved beyond these isolationist policies and they are ready to engage with the world.

The Islamic Republic still has a long way to go to achieve the social justice mandated by Islam. We still have not reached to that stage and have a long way to get there. One of the innovations of the recent century was our magnificent Imam's Revolution within the global community which promoted the principle of freedom from the oppression, occupation and influence of superpowers. This is the same revolutionary principle of "Neither East, Nor West." Our revolution has special characteristics, which entail reliance on Islam, the goal of creating an Islamic government, reconsiderations of our foreign policies such as freedom, independence and social justice, and a move towards a world that is based on Islamic values.⁶⁵⁸

Safeguarding the Freedom of the People: The Principle Duty of Government

Khamenei continuously reminds the Iranian nation of the importance of religious authority in Iran. It is the duty of the religious leader to spread Islamic justice and to protect the Muslim community from injustice. While he may interpret this "Islamic justice" as protection from foreign CODO, many Iranians perceive it in terms of social freedoms.

Based on Islamic principles, the Muslim ruler is responsible for the morality and spirituality of the people, while carrying the obligation of defending the freedom of the country [from foreign invasion] and protecting its citizens. Because Islam has imposed these duties upon the leaders and taught these principles to believers, and since our nation believes in Islam, the people demand these duties of their leaders. Anyone who holds a leadership position in the Islamic Republic is responsible to promote justice, spirituality and freedom in Iran first and then extend it to the global community.⁶⁵⁹

CHAPTER 16
RELIGIOUS DEMOCRACY
AND DEBATES AMONG IRANIAN CLERICS

The term “religious democracy” was introduced by the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei in the year 2000, in response to the debates over freedom and democracy. Khamenei attributes two components to religious democracy: Islam and the people. Such democracy is dependent upon Islamic precepts and is devoid of secular values. Since religion plays a critical role in this democratic system, rights and duties become critical components of this *religious contract*. Religious democracy places duty on the citizens to engage in the political system by their participation in elections, while affording them that right. At the same time, religion imposes obligations on the leaders to afford the citizens their rights within the *confines of religion*, while assuring national security and sovereignty.⁶⁶⁰

Ayatollah Khomeini’s revolutionary principles were the implementation of social justice, combating corruption (economic, social or political), and protecting the independence of the country from the influences of the enemy. In Khamenei’s view, these basic principles of the revolution, which are included in the constitution, *cannot and must not* be compromised under *any* circumstances.⁶⁶¹

The Islamic Revolution itself is an indication of democracy in Iran, asserts Khamenei, because the people were directly involved in the regime change and the establishment of the Islamic Republic.

The name “Islamic Republic” itself is a testimony to the sovereignty of the people. Moreover, the Qur’an considers *all* human beings as vicegerents of the divine with a primary responsibility of bringing justice to this world. Since human beings do not share God’s perfection, they are limited in judgment and will. Therefore, a government run

solely based on the judgment and the will of the people becomes incompatible with the principles of Islamic law. Thus, a full and just democracy is impossible without the divine rule, because human beings are imperfect and their judgments are subject to errors and temptations. A government fully established and governed by the people, without the interference of the divine through the rule and guardianship of the jurist, is incapable of guiding the Muslim community to perfection and eternal salvation. Leaders who submit themselves to the divine are able to implement the values set in the Qur'an through their God-given human judgments and opinions.⁶⁶²

As God's vicegerents on this earth, people have full access to God's will and are able to perfectly execute the divine will, while inserting their own human judgments and inclinations. This is the essence of a religious democracy: A "government that is run according to the divine guidelines and the will of the public."⁶⁶³ Moreover, the leader considers religious democracy to be the *most advanced democracy* the world has ever known, simply because its framework is within the divine principles. He further explains:

Religious democracy, governance of rules, and participation and presence of the people on the scene of the elections together are a reflection of this true system of the Islamic Republic. Although people choose their leaders through casting their votes, despite their shortcomings, they are able to find the correct pathway because of the collaboration of their wills with the divine laws. In contrast, liberal or secular democracy in the West is within the framework and the interests and wishes of the wealthy and the ruling capitalists. It is only within that context that the popular vote is validated and enforced. If the public demands anything contrary to the interests of the capitalists and the owners of financial and economic powers, there is no guarantee that these regimes or per se democratic regimes would submit themselves to the will of the people. The same framework existed in the former socialist countries that called themselves democratic states. Outside the ruling parties, people's votes meant nothing.⁶⁶⁴

The benefits of an Islamic system is that within this framework the divine principles, Qur'anic commandments, and the divine guiding light guide the hearts and the minds of the people. The guidance of the people is something that has been ignored in certain political systems, especially in the Western systems. What we mean by guiding people means teaching and training them in morality and away from corrupt ways. In an Islamic system, meaning a religious democracy, the people choose and decide the future of the governance of the country and select their leaders. But this choice and decision is under the shadow of the divine guidance and never leaves those parameters. This is the main point in religious democracy. This is the Islamic Revolution's gift to the people of Iran. This is a *new young experience*, but an experience worthy to pursue and follow (*taqlīd*) in nations who desire a morally pure society. If we want to have democracy and government

to be in the hands of the people, it would be impossible unless it is under the umbrella of Islam and an Islamic Republic.⁶⁶⁵

As one can see, Ayatollah Khamenei has made a correlation between democracy and governance and democracy and morality. Several Iranian intellectuals and Ayatollah's have opposed Ayatollah Khamenei's views in respect to democracy. Mohsen Kadivar has been among his strongest critiques and has argued for a clash between democracy and *vilāyat-i faqīh*, as demonstrated in his article, "*Vilāyat-i Faqīh va Mardomsalai*" ("The Governance of the Jurisconsult and Democracy").

The Views of Iranian Religious Authorities on Democracy

The question many Iranian religious scholars have tried to answer for the past three decades is the compatibility of *vilāyat-i faqīh* and democracy. Ayatollah Montazeri who represented the views of the modernists in Iran became one of the principle critics of appointive *vilāyat-i faqīh* and began to raise questions. In his book, "*Hokumat-i Islami*" ("The Islamic Government") he raises the following question: If people want to be involved in the selection of their religious government, how is the relationship between democracy and religious government defined based on the following four conditions?

1. The majority of people desire religious government but desire a change in leadership.
2. The majority of people desire the government to remain religious, but the people are against the execution of certain laws such as mandatory *hijāb* or stoning (*sangsarī*).
3. The majority of people does not desire a religious government even though they are Muslims and believe in Islam.
4. The majority of people simply reject Islam.⁶⁶⁶

In his attempts to reconcile religions and secular government, Ayatollah Montazeri proposed "conditional democracy." He believed that the most important characteristic of a democratic government was its election and implementation through the vote and desire of the people. If people desire a secular or religious government, then democracy will be fulfilled when

their wishes are implemented. Therefore, if people or the majority wish for a religious government, its formation is the same as the implementation of democracy. Whether a government is secular or religious has nothing to do with democracy. “We also should not ignore the fact that democratic systems in a way are ideologies,” affirmed Montazeri.⁶⁶⁷

On the other hand, Mohsen Kadivar, who represents the views of the secularists in Iran, defines a democratic regime as a political system that holds free and all-inclusive elections, respects the civil and political rights of all citizens, and establishes a transparent and accountable government, which gives rise to a civil and a democratic society. In such a society, the public as a whole determines public interests, and makes decisions on behalf of the civic society through a fair and a balanced voting process, states Kadivar. Hence, those in charge of executing authority in the public domain are elected by the people as their representatives for a limited time, and the process of change in leadership occurs through peaceful elections of leaders and transfers of power. In democracy, according to Kadivar, the government is accountable to the public and the responsibility of the leaders is to act upon the best interests of the society. The laws of a democratic society are established through consent of the public and are changed according to the public will. Thus, the main goal of a democratic government is to maximize public participation in making political decisions and shaping public policy. Hence, a democratic society is established based on the full participation and oversight of the public in the decision-making process, and their ability to influence the public domain and the distribution of equal rights among all citizens.⁶⁶⁸

Former President Khatami represents the views of reformists in Iran and defines a democratic government as a government that accepts opposition. He believes that a society without opposition is not feasible. Differences of opinion are expected and found in every

society. Therefore, the Iranian society should learn not to allow such differences to turn into confrontation, but to direct them into appropriate legal channels. Those who attempt to impose their will against the law, he says, will be dealt with according to the law. The Islamic regime is a type of a government that accepts internal differences and any opposition that may arise, even oppositions against the government itself.⁶⁶⁹

He argues that the legitimacy of power in Iran relies entirely on the vote and the will of its citizens, and people reserve the right to replace their leaders anytime without recourse to violence. Democracy is then deemed compatible with a progressive Islam that recognizes the rights of human beings to determine their own fates.⁶⁷⁰ Freedom of conscience, freedom of beliefs and their practice is one of the tenets of a democratic system and of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic.⁶⁷¹ However, in the Islamic system, rule of law takes precedent over freedom. “Rule of law should be paramount, and no one should consider himself above the law and try to impose his view on others.”⁶⁷² The objective is to bring everything within the framework of the law. Although the attempt of the Iranian government is to create understanding and toleration in the society, the leaders are committed to the rule of law and demand that all citizens to do the same.⁶⁷³

The Clash between *Vilāyat-i Faqīh* and Democracy

The clash between *vilāyat-i faqīh* and democracy as witnessed in the Islamic Republic of Iran is not necessarily a reflection of dissension between democracy and Islamic republicanism, says Kadivar. In his view, *vilāyat-i faqīh* is entirely distinct from Islamic republicanism. He explains that the supporters of *vilāyat-i faqīh* believe that Islamic republicanism is a method of governance that would automatically give rise to *vilāyat-i faqīh*. However, the critics of *vilāyat-i faqīh* do not believe that a relationship between the two exists. In their view, an Islamic republic

is capable of existing irrespective of *vilāyat-i faqīh*. They also believe that an Islamic republicanism without the principles of *vilāyat-i faqīh* is the Islamic Republic that was instituted via the Preamble to the Constitution in 1979 and later modified in 1989. The combination of *vilāyat-i faqīh* and Islamic republicanism that has been implemented by the Supreme Leaders of Iran, asserts Kadivar, is a *vilāyat* based on republicanism through which all government organs perform their duties under the supervision and authority of the supreme leader.⁶⁷⁴

Kadivar further states that the theory of appointive, absolute *vilāyat-i faqīh* provides for a religious autocracy, which in all its four principles is incongruous with democracy. He provides four arguments: First, a vital characteristic of the supreme leader is that he is purported to be appointed by God hence superior to all human beings. While in a democratic society, everyone exercises equal rights and has the right to influence the society. Furthermore, in *vilāyat-i faqīh*, everyone seeks the approval of the supreme leader, whereas in a democratic society the leaders seek the support of the public. Second, the appointment of the *vilāyat-i faqīh* is top-down, while democracy is a bottom up approach to government. Moreover, in a democratic government people are able to remove their leaders, but in *vilāyat-i faqīh*, since the ruler has been purportedly appointed by God, people do not exercise any rights in either appointing or dismissing the *valī* from his position. Third, *valī-i amr* exercises absolute and unconditional power, whereas in a democratic government leaders exercise limited power. Additionally, in a democratic regime, no one is above the law, whereas the supreme leader not only rises above the law, he can revise and approve the law of the state. Finally, in a democratic society no position is specified to or set aside for a particular group. However, the position of *vilāyat-i faqīh* is the exclusive right of the Islamic jurists.⁶⁷⁵

In Kadivar's opinion, the theory of elective, conditional *vilāyat-i faqīh* or the concept of the elected supreme leader's oversight provides more consensus with democracy based on three facts: 1) All public officials are elected through general elections with full public participation. 2) The public exercises the right to participate in the law making process. 3) As a party to the established agreement with the ruler, the public exercises the right to autonomy in the public sphere. Therefore, Kadivar concludes that this theory provides a form of a limited democracy.⁶⁷⁶

While Kadivar believes in the full participation of the public in any political decision-making that would affect the public life, Ayatollah Montazeri believed otherwise. He believed in a more "limited" participation of public opinion in governmental affairs. He contended that some decisions should be left with the experts and that public opinion is not necessary.⁶⁷⁷ As a supporter of "limited" *vilāyat-i faqīh*, Montazeri held two points of contention with the Khomeini-Khamenei theory. He refuted the notion of absolute authority of the *faqīh* as an appointment by God. Khomeini considered the authority of the *faqīh* as absolute and unrestrained as the authority of the Prophet. Instead, Montazeri believed in the restrained and elected authority of the *faqīh*, who was popularly elected by representatives of the public or by the Assembly of Experts (*Majlis-i khobregan*), thus making it the choice of the people and not God. Furthermore, he argued that such authority was bound by laws, which become the underlying contract between the *vilāyat-i faqīh* and the people. Both parties are governed by this law and subject to its terms and conditions. Neither is above the law.⁶⁷⁸

On the other hand, Kadivar finds no correlation between the role of a *faqīh* and guardianship. Instead he believes that the relationship between the ruler and the people is more of a *vokalā* (appointed representatives).⁶⁷⁹ Ayatollah Javadi-Amoli provides explanations for this

type of political relationship. Contrary to the power of a *valī*, the source of the authority of a *vakīl* (representative) is the people. The *vakīl* is elected by the people as their representative and the people give him the level of authority they deem to be appropriate. His authority is limited as defined by the law. The authority of the *vakīl* is conditional and at some point his representation ends. A *vakīl* elected by the people exercises power only within the frameworks of his responsibilities and unlike *vilāyat* he exercises no rights over the people. This is more of a bottom-up approach rather than top-down approach like *vilāyat-i faqīh*.⁶⁸⁰

As stated previously, Kadivar refutes any notion of the “political” guardianship of a jurist. He believes that the guardianship of a jurist is in the sphere of religion only. He further refutes Khomeini’s notion of comparing *vilāyat-i faqīh* to that of the guardianship of a father over his children. Kadivar finds such comparisons immature because comparisons like this diminish the state of the Iranian society and portray them as a group of incompetent and powerless people who are absolutely dependent upon the judgment of their leader. Unlike Montazeri, Kadivar is more comfortable with the definition of “management,” “organization,” or “administration” for *vilāyat*, which he believes to be more of a Qur’anic concept. Furthermore, unlike Montazeri who believed that the most important characteristic for leadership was *fiqh* (knowledge), Kadivar believes in the leader’s political expertise and knowledge about managing the society.⁶⁸¹

Based on discussions above, as proponents of absolute, appointive *vilāyat-i faqīh*, both Supreme Leaders, Khomeini and Khamenei insist on a pure religious government with no elements of secularism or liberalism. As an advocate of elective, conditional *vilāyat-i faqīh*, Ayatollah Montazeri believed in a democratic system that merged together religious and secular societies. By rejecting the notion of compatibility between a religious society run by clerics and a

democratic state, Kadivar endorses neither. Hence, Khamenei endorses Islamic religious democracy, Montazeri supports “Conditional” democracy, and Kadivar believes in an “Unconditional” democratic system.⁶⁸² As the Iranian president and scholars debated democracy and soft power, to prevent Western cultural infiltration, Supreme Leader Khamenei turned his focus to militarizing Iran through advancements in science, technology, military power and Iran’s nuclear program.

CHAPTER 17
IRAN'S NUCLEAR AGE:
PRESIDENT AHMADINEJAD
(2005-2013)

Through the elections of two moderate Iranian Presidents, 'Ali Akbar Hashemi - Rafsanjani (1989-1997) and Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005), Iran was able to evolve as a leading power in the Middle East. Its oil export revenues quadrupled and it became the largest exporter of heavy oil. During its combined 16-year leadership, Iran was able to energize its economy and the regime was strengthened by this success.⁶⁸³

Still, in the eyes of Ayatollah Khamenei and other conservative clerics Iran had strayed from the guidelines and theocratic rule of the Father of the Revolution through their U.S. rapprochement policies.⁶⁸⁴ Exasperated by the reform era and Khatami's open door policy which led to negotiations with the West and suspension of Iran's nuclear weapons program,⁶⁸⁵ the leader was ready to move Iran into a new era by returning to the old isolation policy—enmity with the West in general, and with the United States and Israel in particular.

The election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in June 2005 countered any Western cultural invasion and Khamenei initiated his "Second Cultural Revolution" with stricter domestic policies that limited the influence of the moderates and reformists. On June 18, 2005, the supreme leader congratulated the nation for participating in the elections stating that both the "Iranian nation" and "Islamic Iran" were winners in this election.⁶⁸⁶ Earlier in the year, in his New Year message on March 21, 2005, Khamenei had declared 2005 as "The Year of National Solidarity and Public Participation,"⁶⁸⁷ so he commissioned the newly-elected President to commit himself to three

major policies: to defend the rights of the Iranian nation and the oppressed, including the Palestinian people; to defend Iran against any political and economic aggression, especially American aggression (“Let the Great Satan America know that Iran under no circumstances will submit itself to America’s will;”⁶⁸⁸ and to remain strong, steadfast and firm against domineering powers and oppressors.⁶⁸⁹ He gave his conservative president more freedom to express his own views domestically and internationally.

Khatami’s Policies that Led to Ahmadinejad’s Elections

Khamenei had become weary of Khatami’s era because of Khatami’s domestic and foreign policies. Domestically, there were four major right-wing setbacks in Iran’s elections, including the 1997 and 2003 presidential elections, “the 1999 local elections and elections of the Sixth Majlis.”⁶⁹⁰ This gave rise to a growing imbalance of power between the “traditional conservatives, the neoconservatives and the reformists.”⁶⁹¹ While the conservatives maintained their tight control on “several key instruments of power, namely the armed forces, the media, the judiciary and the major economic organizations such as the Bonyads (foundations),” Khatami’s reform proposal escalated factionalism politics, especially within Iran’s security forces.⁶⁹²

According to Anoushiravan Ehteshami, author of *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives: The Politics of Tehran’s Silent Revolution*, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) or Pasdaran seemed to be divided between those who supported the reformists and those who insisted on national security by halting reform demonstrations. This “complicated the command structures and relations between the military and the civilian leadership,” and “the clarity of the missions of various military commands” was tested.⁶⁹³ Thus, there seemed to be a continuous rift within the Pasdaran. For Khamenei this rift was a major threat to national security and he needed a candidate who would be able to close this gap and remove the support of the

Pasdaran from the reformist camp. Additionally, Khatami maintained an “open door policy” which promoted engagement with the West and negotiations with the U.S., especially over Iran’s controversial nuclear program. As a result, Khatami’s regime agreed to suspend Iran’s nuclear weapons program in the fall of 2003.⁶⁹⁴

According to Ray Takeyh, author of *Iran: The Nuclear Challenge*, Iran’s decision to suspend its nuclear program may have been influenced by the U.S. presence on Iran’s eastern border in Afghanistan and on its western border in Iraq. According to the U.S. intelligence community, Tehran only “halted its clandestine research and development program for nuclear weapons—but not the nuclear fuel cycle systems, such as centrifuges, needed to produce the fissile material for a possible weapon.”⁶⁹⁵ This compromise may have been due to Khamenei’s public defense of Iran’s right to a nuclear program and his claims that negotiations with the U.S. were a sign of weakness and a grave threat to Iran’s national security.⁶⁹⁶

As of 2003, Khamenei’s speeches displayed an emphasis on Islamicism and “Islamic-Iranian” nationalism. His call to Islamicism focused on Islam, Islamic principles, the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, especially Iran’s isolation policy and the struggle for the “rights” of the deprived Muslim nations especially Palestine. His call to “Islamic-Iranian” nationalism included love of the country, national pride in Iran’s strengths such as its natural and manpower resources, and Iran’s achievements since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, chiefly, Iran’s nuclear program. Through Ahmadinejad, Khamenei was able to achieve several goals:

- Reemphasize Islamicism and the ideals of the Islamic Revolution;
- Re-implement Iran’s isolation policy of “Neither East, Nor West”;
- Continue resistance towards the U.S. and Israel;
- Resume Iran’s nuclear program;

- Re-unite the Pasdaran and position them in support of the conservative camp;
- Improve Iran’s military as well as advance in science and technology; and
- Advance Iran’s Cultural Revolution into the Muslim world.

By placing progress at the center of his ideology, Khamenei emphasized a renewal of the spirit of jihad (struggle) which encouraged the production of knowledge and research.⁶⁹⁷ He also called upon the Iranian leaders, especially the President, to tap onto the intellectual treasures within the global community and utilize the knowledge, intelligence, and resources available to advance Iran. He urged a “New Face of Islam” –unity among the Muslim community, domestically as well as globally. With the U.S. presence in the Middle East, Khamenei offered a cure for the Muslim world: “If today Muslims want to end the arrogant claims of America in the Middle East they need to redefine the Muslim world and give the Muslim world a new face and that is the face of unity.”⁶⁹⁸ With “perceived” imminent U.S. threats, Khamenei called upon the formation of a “Grand Islamic Army.”

For various futile reasons we are separated. The enemy has created the Muslim world into a war zone, divided into different armed forces, fighting against one another through false threats, fears, and claims. Unity is more important today than ever before because of the imminent threats of America in the region, which is not limited to one or two countries but everyone. Today the threat of Zionism which is fully supported by America is not limited to one country but the entire region. They want to overtake the entire region. They themselves say “the Grand Middle Eastern Plan.”⁶⁹⁹

Khamenei forcefully defended Iran’s nuclear program and retaliated against the demands of the U.S. and European countries that Iran stop its nuclear program calling their demands “futile, cruel and unjust,” and urging his leaders to resist. He considered negotiations on the part of Iran a major, strategic mistake.⁷⁰⁰

The global bullying powers are very well aware that we do not have a nuclear weapons program, but what has worried them is the ability of the Iranian nation to obtain nuclear knowledge (*dānesh-i hastehī*) because the global domination cannot accept that the

Islamic Iran obtains growth, expansion and scientific progress through its justice-seeking (*'adalatkhahaneh*) and freedom-seeking (*āzādītalabaneh*) slogans.⁷⁰¹

Khamenei labeled U.S. opposition to Iran's nuclear program as another strategy to dominate Iran and spread its CODO (colonization, oppression, domination, opposition). From this point on, Khamenei continues his "CODO narrative" and advocates for a complete shift in the course of Iranian politics.

Through Ahmadinejad's anti-Westernization and anti-Semitic policies, Khamenei remained behind the scenes and exercised his domestic and foreign policies, indoctrinating Iran's youth through his domestic soft power policies – Iran's educational system and universities. Based on the leader's speeches, it is safe to conclude that Ahmadinejad's domestic and foreign policies, at least during his first term of presidency, were indeed the leader's policies expressed through his favored president.

In addition to the nuclear program, Ahmadinejad's election gained the support of the Pasdaran. According to Ata Hoodashtian, when the Pasdaran noticed that the two top leaders were in agreement, the Pasdaran as a unified group shifted their support to the conservative camp.

President Ahmadinejad's Background

Ahmadinejad's allegiance to the Islamic Republic and Khomeini-Khamenei ideals was evident long before he assumed the office of presidency. As a student at the University of Tehran, he participated in religious and political meetings and anti-Shah demonstrations during the Islamic Revolution. After the victory, he was one of the members of the Islamic Association of Students at the University of Science and Technology (*Anjoman-i Islami-i Daneshjuyan-i Daneshgah-i 'Elm-o-San'at*).⁷⁰² With the start of Iraq-Iran war in September 1980, Ahmadinejad

joined the military forces in the Western region and served until 1986. The following year and until the end of the war, he volunteered with the special forces of the IRGC and then served four years as lieutenant governor of Maku and Khoy.⁷⁰³ Ahmadinejad also served two years as advisor to the Governor of Kurdistan Province. In 1993, during Hasehmi-Rafsanjain's Presidency he became "Advisor for cultural affairs to the Minister of Culture and Higher Education," and later was appointed as the first Governor General of Ardabil Province (1993-1997).⁷⁰⁴ In 2003, during Khatami's second term as President, Ahmadinejad was elected as the Mayor of Tehran. With a doctorate in Civil Engineering and Traffic and Transportation Planning (1997), Ahmadinejad still maintains his membership on the "Board of the Civil Engineering Faculty of Science and Technology."⁷⁰⁵

When commissioned by the supreme leader, Ahmadinejad called upon the Iranian nation to return to "the ideological and political spirit of Khomeinism" and removal of *all* liberalism.⁷⁰⁶ He also called upon Iranians to uphold the unity and support of Islam and the ideals of the Islamic Revolution and Imam Khomeini. He tightened social laws by banning anything that he believed gave birth to Western ideology, including all Western music and movies. He gained the support of fundamentalist Muslims by modifying Iran's foreign policy to be more aggressive against those he claimed to be "oppressors" of Islam.⁷⁰⁷

According to Vladimir Sazhin, Professor of Oriental Studies, domestically, Ahmadinejad enjoyed the support of numerous influential individuals and groups such as the IRGC, the Basij Resistance Force, and the brethren of Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi.⁷⁰⁸ Sazhin explains that internationally, Ahmadinejad enjoyed the strong support of the "quadruple-ring of Islamicist allies" such as Hizbullah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades. The relationship between Iran and these organizations was reciprocal: Iran provided financial support

and, in turn, these allies provoked instability in the Middle East, especially with Israel, preventing Palestinians from negotiating with Israel. Through this relationship, Sazhin argues that Ahmadinejad and his supporters not only kept Israel distracted but also the entire international community, especially the United States. Iran maximized this opportunity to advance its nuclear program to become the dominant force in the Middle East.⁷⁰⁹

Ahmadinejad and Iran's Nuclear Program

Iran's nuclear program had been at the center of intense debates for the past two decades. While Tehran claimed its nuclear program was for peaceful purposes, members of the international community, especially the U.S. and Israel, expressed great apprehension about Iran's goals.

Ahmadinejad made evident his commitment to Iran's nuclear program in his first address before the Sixtieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 17, 2005. He claimed that the reactionary tendencies within the global community toward his country had deprived many nations of access to important scientific findings and knowledge that could be of great benefit to them. Ahmadinejad believed that human rights and the scientific progress of a nation were irrevocably linked. Once the rights of a nation were violated, even as they advance in science and technology, their human rights had also been violated.⁷¹⁰ He further claimed that the Islamic Republic was a democratic, just, God-fearing and peace-seeking nation and described nuclear weapons and all forms of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) as "inhuman weapons." He accused others in the international community of stockpiling nuclear warheads in various locations, including "the Zionist occupation regime," and argued that Israel had violated the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) safeguards by possessing such weapons. He

attacked the Israeli regime for preventing “other countries from acquiring the [same] technology to produce peaceful nuclear energy.”⁷¹¹

Can nations be deprived of scientific and technological progress through the threat of the use of force and based on mere allegations of the possibility of military diversion? We believe that all countries and nations are entitled to technological and scientific advancement in all fields, particularly the peaceful technology to produce nuclear fuel. Such access cannot be restricted to a few, depriving most nations, and by establishing economic monopolies, use them as an instrument to expand their domination. Some powerful states practice a discriminatory approach against the access of NPT members to material, equipment, and peaceful nuclear technology, and by doing so, intend to impose a nuclear apartheid. We are concerned that once certain powerful states completely control nuclear energy resources and technology, they will deny access to other states and thus deepen the divide between powerful countries and the rest of the international community. When that happens, we will be divided into light and dark countries.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is presenting in good faith its proposal for constructive interaction and a just dialogue. However, if some try to impose their will on the Iranian people by resorting to a language of force and threat with Iran, we will reconsider our entire approach to the nuclear issue.⁷¹²

Ahmadinejad outlined the Islamic Republic’s initiative with respect to the nuclear issue:⁷¹³

1. In accordance with Islamic religious principles, Iran is prohibited from pursuing nuclear weapons.
2. The Islamic Republic proposes revitalization of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT) by creating an “ad-hoc committee so that it can combat nuclear weapons and abolish the apartheid in peaceful nuclear technology.”⁷¹⁴
3. In order to show the international community that “the fuel cycle of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not different from that of other countries,” the Islamic Republic is prepared to exhibit “the greatest degree of transparency as a further confidence building measure.” Furthermore, the Islamic Republic is “prepared to engage in serious partnership with private and public sectors of other countries in the implementation of the uranium enrichment program in Iran. This represents the most far reaching step, outside all requirements of the NPT, being proposed by Iran as a further confidence building measure.”⁷¹⁵
4. Finally, since Iran insists on the peaceful nature of its nuclear technology, “as a further confidence building measure, the Islamic Republic commits itself to full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).”⁷¹⁶

Ahmadinejad added:

As the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I assure you that my country will use everything in its power to contribute to global tranquility and peace based on the two maxims of spirituality and justice as well as the equal rights of all peoples and nations. My country will interact and cooperate constructively with the international community to face the challenges before us.⁷¹⁷

The Question of Authority: Growing Tensions Between Two Leaders

A relationship that began with a kiss of loyalty and submission nearly ended with possible impeachment. Like his predecessors, the perfect son who had received the leader's seal of approval soon became the prodigal son. Emboldened by the support and blessings of the leader, Ahmadinejad achieved a more heightened posture domestically and internationally than any previous president in the history of the Islamic Republic. During his presidency, the world was nearly convinced that Iran was governed by Ahmadinejad, which created confusion among the international community about who really ruled over Iran. Ahmadinejad's anti-American, anti-Zionist, and nuclear supporting policies became his signature, and when the international community talked about the "Iranian leader," they referred to Ahmadinejad.

It seemed for a while that the supreme leader and his protégé shared the same vision. Domestically, Ahmadinejad's goal to increase Iran's national, regional and international power and standing was appealing to Khamenei. They both shared the same vision for Iran – an advanced nuclear program that would improve Iran's national and global image. Regionally, both opposed Israel and attempted to unify the Muslim world by exporting Iran's Cultural Revolution and Iran's Islamic "political philosophy." Internationally, they upheld Khomeini's isolation policy and resisted any Western cultural infiltration.

But tensions between the two leaders began to emerge in 2008. Conflicts centered on Ahmadinejad's top advisor Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei, who resisted the clerical establishment and promoted nationalism versus Islamicism. Mashaei stated:

There are different interpretations of Islam but our understanding of the real nature of Iran and of Islam is the Iranian school. From now on, we must present to the world the school of Iran. Without Iran, Islam would be lost. If we want to present the truth of Islam to the world, we should raise the Iranian flag.⁷¹⁸

Mashaei's secular-oriented views were considered by the supreme leader and his camp as apostasy. Because of his close association with Ahmadinejad, Mashaei's words negatively reflected on Ahmadinejad. The conservative camp called them "the third pillar of sedition," second to Mir Hossein Musavi and Mehdi Karubi, the leaders of the Green Movement (*Jonbesh-i Sabz-i Iran*).⁷¹⁹ Ahmadinejad's spiritual mentor, Ayatollah Mohammad Taghi Mesbah-Yazdi rebuked Mashaei.

Certain people who are shamelessly promoting the Iranian school in the place of the Islamic school are outsiders, not insiders. We did not sign a brotherhood pact with just anyone. If somebody deviates from the right path, first we advise him and then we beat him with a stick.⁷²⁰

Despite the growing rift between the leader and the president, Khamenei expressed his affirmations of Ahmadinejad after the 2009 controversial elections. While he supported Ahmadinejad, he forced Mashaei to resign from his Vice Presidential post after only one week in office. Ahmadinejad rebelled by appointing Mashaei as his chief of staff.

The next bitter battle of wills between the two leaders emerged as Heider Moslehi, Intelligence Minister, resigned in April 2011 due to pressures from Ahmadinejad. This enraged the leader and within hours he reinstated Moslehi. In response, Ahmadinejad boycotted the cabinet meetings for two weeks and threatened to resign unless Moslehi was ousted from office. As a result, 219 members of the Majlis wrote a letter to Ahmadinejad reminding him that he was

“expected to follow the supreme leader.”⁷²¹ Consequently, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi admonished Ahmadinejad by saying that “disobedience to the supreme leader was the equivalent to ‘apostasy from God.’”⁷²²

The Iranian constitution gives power to the president to appoint ministers as stated in Articles 133 and 134:

Article 133

Ministers will be appointed by the President and will be presented to the Assembly for a vote of confidence. With the change of Assembly, a new vote of confidence will not be necessary. The number of ministers and the jurisdiction of each will be determined by law.⁷²³

Article 134

The President is the head of the Council of Ministers. He supervises the work of the ministers and takes all necessary measures to coordinate the decisions of the government. With the cooperation of the ministers, he determines the program and policies of the government and implements the laws. In the case of discrepancies, or interference in the constitutional duties of the government agencies, the decision of the Council of Ministers at the request of the President shall be binding provided it does not call for an interpretation of or modification in the laws. The President is responsible to the Assembly for the actions of the Council of Ministers.⁷²⁴

While the constitution assigns the president authority to appoint and dismiss ministers, his authority remains subordinate to the authority of the supreme leader. The leader has the final word.

The ultimate confrontation between the two leaders occurred in May 2011. As Ahmadinejad returned to cabinet meetings, he refused to permit Moslehi to attend. Khamenei gave Ahmadinejad warnings about accepting his decision and the Majlis threatened to impeach him.⁷²⁵ The same month, 29 confidants of Ahmadinejad were arrested, including his chief of staff, Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei, and charged with sorcery and with disobeying the leader, which

is the same as apostasy.⁷²⁶ Like his predecessors, Ahmadinejad was left no other choice but to succumb to the will of Khamenei.

History has shown the supreme leader's love and hate relationships with his presidents. Although considered as the favored protégé of the leader, Ahmadinejad, too, fell short of his "father's" grace. Ironically, after the conclusion of his second term as president, the leader appointed Ahmadinejad to the Expediency Council. This is yet another of Khamenei's strategies—to display his political power over every aspect of life in Iran—the authority to promote and the authority to demote...much like the authority over life and death itself.

Conclusion

The great mutual respect shared between Khamenei and Ahmadinejad quickly evaporated during Ahmadinejad's second term in office. Ahmadinejad increasingly independent vision soon countered that of the leader's. His stature in the global community caused confusion about the "real" leader of Iran.

Ahmadinejad successfully distinguished himself from the previous presidents by becoming the most radical leader in Iran's history. And Iran increasingly became known because of Ahmadinejad's speeches and declarations, including his comments that denied the holocaust and advocated wiping Israel from the map. He also clearly articulated his enmity for the United States.

Ahmadinejad was a militant-minded leader. Iran's nuclear program had been halted in 2003 but restarted under his presidency, and it is only after his tenure in office that Iran became more and more aggressive about its nuclear program. But Ahmadinejad's secular, non-clerical and very nationalistic ideologies were at odds with Khamenei's more sectarian perspective and the clerical rule was uneasy. In his speeches, Khamenei began defending the clerical rule and his

position as supreme leader and starkly rebuked those in opposition of *vilāyat-i faqīh* (the Governance of the Jurisconsult). These statements were an obvious attack on Ahmadinejad, his camp and those who questioned the legitimacy of the role of a *valī-i faqih* in Iran's political system.

There are many in Iran who share the more secular perspective embraced by Ahmadinejad. How much influence these Iranians have as well as their potential impact on the future of Iran may be a question of war and peace in a country in conflict.

But one thing is clear. Ahmadinejad's presidency motivated the supreme leader to shift his position on Iran's nuclear program not only to resume Iran's nuclear activities, but also to vigorously pursue its progress despite Western, U.S. and Israeli oppositions. Furthermore, Ahmadinejad's strong political posture domestically and internationally along with his rebellion towards the supreme leader may have engendered an apprehension in Khamenei about Ahmadinejad's potential influence in Iran. Perhaps this led to Khamenei's decision to appoint Ahmadinejad to the Expediency Council in August 2013 after the conclusion of his second-term to keep this former president silent and under control. Once again, this strategy underscores Khamenei's personal internal struggles about his own leadership capabilities and his role as Iran's *valī-i amr*, even though he's been in power 24 years. Perhaps it was this very sense of personal uncertainty amid rising conflict with Ahmadinejad that inspired Khamenei to take full responsibility for Iran's nuclear program preferring to give it a "Khamenei signature" rather than allowing it to be "Ahmadinejad's legacy."

CHAPTER 18
IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM
FROM THE SHAH TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC

President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961) launched the *Atoms for Peace* program in 1953 to transform the psychology of the global community about the use of atomic power “from a scourge into a benefit for mankind.”⁷²⁷ In his December 8, 1953 Atoms for Peace address before the U.N. General Assembly, President Eisenhower defined the U.S.’s position.

The United States knows that peaceful power from atomic energy is no dream of the future. That capability is already proved here – now – today. Who can doubt, if the entire body of the world’s scientists and engineers had adequate amounts of fissionable material with which to test and develop their ideas, that this capability would rapidly be transformed into universal, efficient, and economic usage.⁷²⁸

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was formed in 1957 in response to nuclear weapons.⁷²⁹ In 1958, one year after the U.S. and Israel, Iran became a member. In 1959, Iraq joined the IAEA.⁷³⁰

By 1968, the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT) became operative and Iran signed on as a non-nuclear-weapon state. The treaty was entered into force in March 1970.⁷³¹ Paragraph 1 of Article III of NPT describes the provisions for such membership:

Each non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to receive the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly; not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Procedures for the safeguards required by this Article shall be followed with respect to source or special fissionable material whether it is being produced, processed or used in any principal nuclear facility or is outside any such facility. The safeguards required by this Article shall be applied on all source or special fissionable material in all peaceful nuclear activities within the territory of such State, under its jurisdiction, or carried out under its control anywhere.⁷³²

Under the NPT, “the IAEA has specific roles as the international safeguards inspectorate and as a multilateral channel for transferring peaceful applications of nuclear technology” as outlined in Articles III and IV of the treaty.⁷³³

The Shah’s Nuclear Program

With his vision of making Iran a significant power in the Middle East, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi laid the foundations for the first Iranian civilian nuclear program on March 5, 1957. He signed an agreement with the U.S. as part of the Atoms for Peace program which provided for U.S. technical assistance and the lease of enriched uranium to Iran. Later, in 1960, Tehran officially began its nuclear program by brokering a deal with the U.S. to obtain a nuclear research reactor.⁷³⁴

Prior to U.S.-Iran nuclear cooperation, the Shah and Washington had negotiated for U.S. supplying military equipment to Tehran. In 1962, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara (1961-1968) agreed to supply the Shah with “sidewinder air-to-air missiles” for “F-86 fighter planes.”⁷³⁵ In 1964, the Shah signed the Status-of-Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the U.S., which gave the U.S. rights and privileges of employing personnel in Iran.⁷³⁶ By 1971, Iran had purchased \$681 million dollars of military equipment from the U.S., including 1811 Hawk missiles and “37 Improved Hawk surface-to-air missile (SAM) battalions.”⁷³⁷ This was the beginning of the sale agreements between the Shah and Washington that would increase over the years. From 1972 to 1977, the U.S. increased its military sales to Iran by 600 percent.⁷³⁸ In addition SAMs, as part of the 1972 Operation Enhance Plus, Washington agreed to “allow Iran to own fighter planes they had previously leased.”⁷³⁹ And, President Richard Nixon (1969-1974) agreed to allow the Shah to purchase “any conventional weaponry in the U.S. arsenal.”⁷⁴⁰

As the Shah's confidence grew in his relations with the West, especially with America, so, too, did his ambition for military power. In 1973, he commissioned Akbar Etemad, a nuclear physicist, to launch a domestic nuclear program. The following year, the Shah established the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) and appointed Etemad as President (1974-1978). During a recent interview with the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), Etemad, now 88 years-old and regarded as *the Father of Iran's Nuclear Program*, commented on the Shah's increasing interest in nuclear advancement.

The Shah had the idea at the time that he's strong enough in the region and he can defend our interests in the region [and] he didn't want nuclear weapons. But he told me that if this changes 'we have to go for nuclear'. He had that in mind.⁷⁴¹

The immediate goal of the Shah was "the annual plutonium production of 23,000 MW of electrical power," which was "equivalent to 600-700 warheads."⁷⁴² By 1977, AEOI had more than 1,500 employees and trained its nuclear experts within the international community, including the U.S., through the Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TNRC) making it "the most heavily funded program in the country."⁷⁴³

The Shah's eagerness about Iran's nuclear program convinced Washington that Iran was "harboring nuclear weapons ambitions."⁷⁴⁴ As the U.S. expressed concerns, the Shah defended Iran's right to a full nuclear fuel cycle under the NPT. Consequently, the U.S. barred American companies from signing contracts with AEOI until America's concerns were addressed. This decision was quickly reversed when the U.S. expressed willingness to sell Iran nuclear reactors upon the condition that Iran fully complied with NPT's Safeguards.⁷⁴⁵ According to Abbas Milani, Director of Iranian Studies at Stanford University, the Pentagon's cautionary approach was the possibility that Iran's nuclear material might be "hijacked by foreign terrorists or domestic dissidents to create a bomb."⁷⁴⁶ In an interview with the Washington Post, Secretary of

State Henry Kissinger (1973-1977), who presided over the nuclear negotiations at that time, denied that the U.S. had these concerns because Iran was an ally. President Gerald Ford (1974-1977) never again addressed the question of Iran one day developing nuclear weapons.⁷⁴⁷

However, President Ford was reluctant to sell reactors to Tehran “without conditions limiting [the Shah’s] freedom of action,”⁷⁴⁸ so the Shah began seeking nuclear reactors for enhancing Iran’s capabilities of generating electrical power from other countries within the international community. West Germany and France expressed immediate interest. Tehran negotiated nuclear reactor agreements with both countries and still intended to purchase an additional eight reactors from the U.S.⁷⁴⁹ Iran contracted the German Company, Kraftwerk, to build its first reactor plant (currently known as the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant), with a completion date of 1981.⁷⁵⁰ At the same time, a Franco-Iranian deal allowed Paris to operate a domestically-run enrichment plant for Iran in France while earning ten percent of the proceeds.⁷⁵¹

During President Jimmy Carter’s administration (1977-1981), in an interview with the French Newspaper, *Le Monde*, the Shah announced that “one day, sooner than is believed, Iran would be in possession of a nuclear bomb.” This surprising announcement was quickly refuted after accusations that the Shah’s intended to build a bomb.⁷⁵² President Carter refused to sell reactors to Tehran without assuring that the Shah agreed to the proliferation Safeguards.⁷⁵³ After the Shah convinced Washington of his peaceful intentions, President Carter “permitted U.S. companies to sell reactors to Iran in 1978.”⁷⁵⁴

The Islamic Republic of Iran's Nuclear Program

With the onset of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and the departure of the Shah, the temporary government of Prime Minister Shahpur Bakhtiar canceled the \$6.2 billion German contract “for the construction of two nuclear power plants at the Bushehr complex.”⁷⁵⁵ As Ayatollah Khomeini established the Islamic government, he suspended Iran’s nuclear program in its entirety condemning the Shah for “un-Islamic” efforts.⁷⁵⁶ After the 1979 U.S. Embassy hostage crisis, U.S.-Iran nuclear cooperation ended.

After the devastating events during the Iraq-Iran war, with growing security concerns and a possible covert Baghdad nuclear weapons program, Khomeini reversed his position and the Iranian leaders reconsidered their decision.⁷⁵⁷ According to an IAEA report, in 1984, then-President Khamenei “announced to top Iranian officials that Khomeini had decided to reactivate the nuclear program as the only way to secure the Islamic Revolution from the schemes of its enemies, especially the United States and Israel.”⁷⁵⁸ However, a 2004 IAEA report revealed that Iran had actually resumed its nuclear activities several years earlier. Tehran admitted to acquiring centrifuge components from Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan in the late 1980s.⁷⁵⁹

The Islamic Republic built the Esfahan Nuclear Technology Center (ENTC) with Chinese assistance and opened the facility in 1984. Iran conducted “bench scale research into uranium dioxide (UO₂)” at ENTC, and preparation “of several uranium compounds, including UF₆ (uranium hexafluoride)” at TNRC. This operation began during Khamenei’s presidency and continued to 1993 during Hashemi-Rafsanjani’s first term as president.⁷⁶⁰

In 1985, Iran began developing “an indigenous gas-centrifuge uranium-enrichment program.”⁷⁶¹ Two years later, Iran entered into a \$5.5 million dollar agreement with Argentina to

supply fuel elements (20 percent enriched uranium) to the TNRC. Fifty pounds were delivered to the nuclear reactor in 1993.⁷⁶²

From 1988 to 2002, Iran entered into a nuclear enrichment and procurement phase. China and Russia played critical roles. In 1990, China and Iran entered into a covert nuclear cooperation agreement. The following year, China exported “one metric ton of uranium hexafluoride (UF₆)” to Iran. Under the IAEA guidelines, Beijing was obligated to report this sale to the Agency but failed to do so.⁷⁶³ In addition to supporting Iran’s nuclear program, China provided “an array of missiles and related technology to Iran...between mid-1994 and mid-1995.”⁷⁶⁴ Although to date, Beijing publically opposes an Iranian nuclear weapons program, Chinese leaders have continuously echoed Iran’s right to peaceful nuclear energy activities as a signatory to NPT.⁷⁶⁵

In June 1989, during President George H. W. Bush (1989-1993) presidency, Iran and the Soviet Union signed “a long-term commercial program for a commercial-economic, scientific-technical and cultural cooperation program (1989-2000) in Moscow.”⁷⁶⁶ The 1990s witnessed the expansion of a “New” Great Game where Russia and Britain continued their struggle for control over Central Asia. By early 1990, “Russia formed a joint research organization with Iran called Persepolis, which provided Iran with Russian nuclear experts and technical information.”⁷⁶⁷ In 1991, new discussions about Iranian-Russian relations began as the Cold War ended. Moscow had tactfully used Iran’s nuclear ambitions to influence its relations with Washington. Despite growing tensions between Moscow and Washington over Iran’s nuclear program, in 1992, the IAEA inspectors found Iran’s nuclear activities to be consistent with the peaceful use of atomic energy.⁷⁶⁸

In 1995, Tehran and Moscow signed a nuclear contract to recommence the construction of the partially completed Bushehr nuclear plant, which had been abandoned by the Germans after the Islamic Revolution and severely damaged by the Iraqi forces during the war.⁷⁶⁹ According to IAEA report, Moscow and Tehran concluded a revised \$800 million contract in 1995 “for Russia to fuel a light-water nuclear power reactor near the Iranian city of Bushehr.”⁷⁷⁰ After encountering repeated delays due to international concerns, the project was finally completed in 2010. Based on the same report, the two nations concluded another agreement in February 2005, for Russia to “supply fuel for the reactor for a period of 10 years.”⁷⁷¹ This project was delayed as well. In September 2006, Moscow signed an agreement with Tehran to “deliver the low-enriched uranium fuel for the reactor by March 2007.”⁷⁷² The last negotiation increased the U.S.’s concerns about Iran’s attempts of obtaining a “gas centrifuge-based uranium-enrichment program” for a nuclear weapons program scheme. Tehran insisted that its program was peaceful with intentions of producing fuel for future nuclear reactors.⁷⁷³

Growing Tensions Over Iran’s Nuclear Program

The first series of sanctions were imposed by President Bill Clinton in 1995 through the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) “in response to Iran’s stepped up nuclear program,” and accusations that Iran supported U.S.-declared terrorist organizations such as Hizbullah, Hamas and Palestine Islamic Jihad. The Act placed restrictions on foreign companies that intended to make investments in Iran.⁷⁷⁴

In August 1999, the IAEA reported that Iran had begun to construct uranium ore concentration (UOC) at Gachin uranium mine and mill, known as “Project 5/15.”⁷⁷⁵ As a response, President Bill Clinton signed the “Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000.” Sections 3 and 7 authorized the President “to take punitive action against individuals or organizations known to be

providing material aid to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs in Iran.”⁷⁷⁶ It also provided guidelines for sanctioning foreign persons who had provided “proliferation-related transfers to Iran since January 1, 1999.”⁷⁷⁷ This measure placed pressure on foreign countries not to interact with Iran and in April 2000, the Czech government banned domestic companies from supplying parts and equipment to the Bushehr facility.⁷⁷⁸ Reportedly, Russia revoked its plans for supplying laser equipment to Tehran for its uranium enrichment program.⁷⁷⁹ The reluctance of countries to deal with Iran forced it to seek contracts with private companies. In early 2002, AEOI concluded a contract with a private company to manufacture and modify a P-2 centrifuge. The contract was terminated in March 2003.⁷⁸⁰

In December 2002, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), an Iranian watchdog and opposition group, reported the existence of two additional Iranian nuclear facilities, “a vast uranium enrichment plant in Natanz and a heavy water plant at Arak.” The revelation came to NCRI through “the People’s Mojahedin Organization’s Command Headquarters inside Iran.”⁷⁸¹ This revelation was also confirmed by CIA’s operatives through British and French intelligence.⁷⁸² In the face of U.S. accusations that Iran was pursuing WMDs, Tehran agreed to IAEA inspections. Based on reports, a nuclear cooperation between Iran and North Korea may have begun in 1993 after General Manteghi’s visit to North Korea. Although the precise nature of the cooperation is unknown, it is alleged that Iranians may have used a “North Korean No Dong medium-range ballistic missile” to manufacture the Iranian version of the missile, the Shahab-3.⁷⁸³ Additionally, both nations had been customers of the Khan Network and had collaborated on ballistic missiles.⁷⁸⁴

Pursuant to the NPT’s Safeguards Agreement, under Article 8, Iran had violated its obligations by failing to declare the existence of the Natanz and Arak facilities and reporting the

“possession, processing and use of nuclear material.”⁷⁸⁵ As tensions mounted, IAEA inspected Iran’s facilities and “faulted Iran for its systematic concealment, provision of misleading or false information, and its lack of cooperation on safeguards verification.”⁷⁸⁶

In the September 2003 report, IAEA inspectors expressed grave concerns about failure to comply with the agency’s safeguards and called upon Tehran to accelerate “cooperation and full transparency.”⁷⁸⁷ Additionally, they called upon “Iran to suspend all further uranium enrichment-related activities, including the continued introduction of nuclear material into Natanz.”⁷⁸⁸ IAEA also called upon Tehran to fully declare “all imported material and components relevant to the enrichment program,” while “granting unrestricted access” to any location the agency deemed necessary. Tehran was cited for failure to comply fully with implementing the agency’s measures.⁷⁸⁹ In response, in a November 10, 2003 letter, Ambassador ‘Ali Akbar Salehi, Islamic Republic’s representative to the IAEA, delivered a letter to Mohammad ElBaradei, IAEA Director General, that his government had accepted the additional protocol. Furthermore, “Iran had decided, as of today, to suspend all uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities in Iran – specifically, to suspend all activities on the site of Natanz, not to produce feed material for enrichment processes and not to import enrichment-related items.”⁷⁹⁰ The IAEA Director and the international community welcomed Iran’s initiatives and reacted in a positive manner.

Soon after the election of Ahmadinejad as President in 2005, Tehran revealed that it had resumed uranium enrichment at its Natanz facility. In response, the U.N. Security Council issued Resolution 1696 in July 2006 asking the Islamic Republic to “suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, and gave it one month to do so or face the possibility of economic and diplomatic sanctions to give effect to its decision.”⁷⁹¹ Despite warnings, in August 2006, Tehran opened a heavy-water reactor in Arak, which

increased tensions between the U.Ss and Tehran. In September, IAEA “called upon Iran without further delay to take the steps required by the Board of Governors,” and to “suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development” until they are fully verified by the agency.⁷⁹² As a result, the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1737 in December 2006, which were the first sanctions in over a decade. The sanctions mandated Iran to suspend its nuclear activities, including “all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, research and development, work on all heavy-water related projects, and the construction of a research reactor moderated by heavy water.”⁷⁹³ In March 2007, the U.N. Security Council toughened its sanctions against Iran by adding an arms embargo and expansion of freezes on Iranian assets through Resolution 1747, demanding Iran to “suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development.”⁷⁹⁴ A year later, in March 2008, the U.N. furthered the expansion of freezes on Iranian assets through Resolution 1803.⁷⁹⁵

Iran began negotiations with P5+1 in July 2008 in Geneva through its chief nuclear negotiator Said Jalili. P5+1 offered an interim proposal which required Iran to stop expansion of its enrichment program in return for a moratorium on added sanctions.⁷⁹⁶ The talks ended in a deadlock as Jalili refused to answer whether Iran would accept a freeze of its uranium enrichment program, however temporary.⁷⁹⁷ Khamenei supported of Jalili’s position.

Talks do not mean one side to impose their views on the other side, and if Westerners insist that no other country other than themselves to have nuclear knowledge that is illogical and we have rejected this notion completely.⁷⁹⁸

He insisted:

Obtaining nuclear knowledge is very critical for the Islamic Republic in terms of economic, scientific, technical, and environmental issues and also self-dependence in terms of managing nuclear facilities.⁷⁹⁹

In response, the U.N. imposed another series of sanctions on Iran in September 2008, reiterating the demands made in Resolution 1696.⁸⁰⁰

Revised U.S. Policy towards Iran's Nuclear Program

As President Barak Obama assumed office, he vowed to “seek engagement with Iran based on mutual interests and mutual respect.” At the same time, he abandoned the previous U.S. policy demanding “Iran to fulfill U.N. Security Council demands” and “suspend nuclear fuel cycle activities prior to negotiations.”⁸⁰¹ To further his commitment, in April 2009, the State Department announced that the U.S. would participate in talks “between U.N. and European powers and Iran over Tehran’s nuclear program.”⁸⁰² President Obama asserted:

We will support Iran’s right to peaceful nuclear energy with rigorous inspections. That’s a path that the Islamic Republic can take. Or the government can choose increased isolation, international pressure, and a potential nuclear arms race in the region that will increase insecurity for all. So let me be clear: Iran’s nuclear and ballistic missile activity poses a real threat, not just to the United States, but to Iran’s neighbors and our allies.⁸⁰³

The P5+1 welcomed “the new direction of U.S. policy towards Iran” and “sought to renew their negotiations” with Tehran.⁸⁰⁴ “They issued a statement in April 2009 formally inviting Iran to another series of talks.”⁸⁰⁵ Iran responded to the invitation five months later and proposed several conditions, among them “UN and Security Council reform” and “NPT universality and WMD nonproliferation.”⁸⁰⁶ Additionally, Iran sought assistance from the IAEA to refuel its 5 megawatt Tehran Research Reactor (TRR) that produces medical isotopes.⁸⁰⁷

The U.S. joined P5+1 on October 1, 2009 for negotiations, and the Obama administration proposed the export of roughly 80% of Iran’s LEU (enriched uranium) to Russia. The negotiations resulted in Russia’s agreement to enrich Iran’s LEU to about 20%; France would “manufacture TRR fuel rods,” as “the United States works with the IAEA to improve safety and control implantation at the TRR.”⁸⁰⁸ The result of these negotiations gave some assurance to the

U.S. and her allies that they were “reducing Iran’s ability to make a nuclear weapon quickly and buying more time for negotiations to bear fruit.”⁸⁰⁹ While President Obama called the talks, “constructive,” he warned Tehran that he would move towards “more stringent sanctions if negotiations over Tehran’s ambitions dragged on.”⁸¹⁰ He affirmed his commitment that as long as he is president of the United States he will not tolerate a nuclear Iran and “Iran will not get a nuclear weapon.”⁸¹¹ He further affirmed his commitment to the U.S. regional allies, especially Israel, identifying Israel as “a true friend,” and the U.S. “greatest ally in the region,” adding that the U.S. “will stand with Israel if they are attacked” by Tehran.⁸¹²

In the months following the October agreement, Iran delayed its response to the terms and conditions agreed with IAEA and P5+1 and suggested “the export of Iran’s LEU to Iran’s Kish Island” instead.”⁸¹³ Tehran’s proposal “eliminated the confidence-building nature of the export of the bulk of Iran’s LEU and began to increase the enrichment level of some of its LEU to 20% in February 2010, ostensibly for TRR fuel.”⁸¹⁴ In a diplomatic initiative, in spring of 2010, Brazil and Turkey brokered “the TRR fuel swap with Iran,” resulting in May 17 Tehran Declaration. The initiative was signed between Presidents Lula da Silva, Erdogan, and Ahmadinejad. Iran was to transfer 1,200 kilograms of LEU to Turkey.⁸¹⁵

In a letter on June 2010, the U.S., France, and Russia rejected the Tehran Declaration offering that “the declaration did not address Iran’s production of 20%-enriched uranium and Iran’s accumulation of a larger amount of LEU.”⁸¹⁶ Due to Iran’s lack of compliance, in June 2010, the U.N. Security Council imposed the harshest sanctions on Iran outlining 38 measures, placing restrictions on all of Tehran’s nuclear activities, to ensure “the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.”⁸¹⁷ Article 37 of the NPT’s safeguards mandates that Iran keep its uranium enrichment below 0.2 (20%).⁸¹⁸ Consequently, the U.N. Security Council imposed Resolution

1984 in June 2011 extending the existing sanctions and the authorization of an “expert panel helping to monitor sanctions on Iran.”⁸¹⁹

Despite NPT provisions, Iran increased its uranium enrichment centrifuges in March 2012. This raised the international community’s concerns about Iran’s ability to soon produce 20 percent enriched uranium. Iran entered into three rounds of negotiations with P5+1 in Istanbul in April 2012, Baghdad in May, and Moscow in June emphasizing its full commitment and opposition to weapons production based on the supreme leader’s nuclear decree.⁸²⁰ Pursuant to talks, in June 2012, through Resolution 2049, the U.N. Security Council recalled “its previous relevant resolutions, including resolution 1696 (2006), resolution 1737 (2006), resolution 1747 (2007), resolution 1803 (2008), 1835 (2008), 1887 (2009), 1929 (2010), 1984 (2011), as well as the statement of its President of 29 March 2006 and reaffirming their provisions.”⁸²¹

Despite discussions, tensions continued to rise between Iran, Israel and the U.S. In an effort to “push Tehran to abandon its alleged nuclear weapons program,” In January 2013, the U.S. “tightened existing sanctions on Iran.”⁸²² As a result, Iran’s economy nearly collapsed with a 45 percent drop in oil revenues.⁸²³ In February of 2013, Tehran entered into three rounds of talks with P5+1 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The P5+1 called on Iran to:

...suspend 20% enrichment; ship out the 20% stockpile it doesn’t require for medical use and agree to enhanced IAEA monitoring; and suspend operations at the fortified Fordow enrichment facility for a period of six months; but not dismantle the cascades. In return, it offers relief from United States and European Union sanctions on trade in gold and precious metals and petrochemical sales; the licensing of US repairs to Iran civilian aircraft; as well as to impose no new United Nations or EU proliferation sanctions.⁸²⁴

The two sides agreed to continue negotiations “after holding ‘expert-level’ talks in the Turkish city of Istanbul on March 17-18.”⁸²⁵ They reconvened Almaty2 talks in April 5-6, 2013. In May, P5+1 mandated that “Iran halts all 20 percent enrichment activities, transfers part of its stockpile of 20 percent enriched uranium to a third country under IAEA custody, and Iran suspends all

operations at the Fordow facility.”⁸²⁶ Due to lack of final agreements, P5+1 and Tehran, decided to continue talks. In June 2013, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 2105, once again recalling all previous resolutions.

According to Steven Spiegel, professor of political science and director of the Center for Middle East Development at UCLA and national scholar at Israel Policy Forum, President Obama “has supported the toughest sanctions on Iran in history, in pursuit of the goal of preventing Tehran from gaining nuclear weapon.”⁸²⁷ This has been the position of the president from his first day in office, asserts Spiegel. President Obama made a vow to America, to Israel, and to regional and Western allies that he would adopt an “aggressive policy” through diplomacy and sanctions with the intentions of “detering Iran from its nuclear ambitions.”⁸²⁸ Furthermore, according to Spiegel, President Obama’s policies are working.

Intensifying sanctions have helped to accelerate economic chaos, and protests, in Iran. Today the nation is weaker than four years ago. Iran is paying a heavy price for its pursuit of nuclear weapons, and that prices will grow higher. There is no argument between Israel and the U.S. on that score.⁸²⁹

The U.S. stands in full support of Israel and is committed to protecting her against any nuclear threats by Iran. President Obama has been consistent with his policies towards Iran since taking office stressing engagement, diplomacy, and the elimination of the threat of a nuclear weaponized Iran by leaving “all options on the table.”

CHAPTER 19
AYATOLLAH KHAMENEI'S VIEWS OF
IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM AND
HIS RESPONSE TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

As Ayatollah Khamenei claimed the seat of supreme leadership, he illuminated and embraced the concept of *progress* in all of its dimensions: economically, politically, militarily, socially, and culturally and on all fronts: domestic, regional and international. He made progress a key domestic policy. He immediately called upon nation-building. Part of this nation-building policy was scientific progress (in science, technology and manufacturing), which advocated independence from foreign powers and promoted Iranian power.

Progress had always been the ultimate objective of the Islamic Republic. While progress encompassed science and technology, it also comprised ethics, morality, justice, faith, economic progress, improving living standards and political independence. Therefore, *progress* in the Islamic Republic has a two-fold definition: a worldly progress (temporal) which includes scientific, technological, economic, political, social and ethical spheres; and eternal progress which comprises faith and relationship with God. On the contrary, “In Western logic, everything is viewed from a material point of view,” asserts Ayatollah Khamenei. Therefore, progress only means “accruing wealth, economic progress, military power, science and technology” for the Westerners.⁸³⁰

Progress as a National Right and Duty

The acquisition of genuine technological and scientific knowledge is not only the right but the duty of every nation, according to the leader. As a right, the Iranian nation must strive to acquire knowledge and have the means to do so. Such knowledge is a source of honor and independence.⁸³¹

Scientific and arms progress, national self-confidence, and gaining honor in different arenas are indicative of the power of the Islamic Republic. Of course the enemies cannot deny these facts. But, their main objective is to make other nations and countries scared of the Islamic Republic by referring to these facts. The great power of the Islamic Republic, its missiles and advanced defense facilities are not a threat to any of the Islamic Republic's neighbors or nations of the world. This is an opportunity to show other nations the path of progress and gaining honor. This will teach other nations that grandeur and power cannot be achieved through reliance on the U.S., and endless purchase of weapons. Reliance on faith and self-confidence are the secrets behind gaining power and glory. The future belongs to the faithful nations of the world when the world will be free of oppression, violation of rights, arms competitions and terror. This will occur as a result of the determination, noble goals, and iron will of the faithful and freedom-seeking nations of the world. Peace, prosperity, and justice are the clear and novel message of the Iranian nation for the other nations of the world.⁸³²

Under this Islamic system, the leaders and the people have certain obligations, asserts the supreme leader. While the people fulfill their duties by selecting their leaders, officials have a duty to act in the best interests of the people. Part of this official duty is to help the nation to progress by investing in the youth, believing in their power, and teaching and training them to become the future soldiers of the Islamic Republic of Iran. These are the soldiers who would strive for the financial, economic, cultural, technological and scientific progress of the country.⁸³³

Progress and National Unity

National rights and duties call upon a nation to unify; hence Khamenei sees a close link between progress and unity. When a nation is united, then it is able to make significant progress.

That nation is able to achieve its national goals and influence the world around it. According to Khamenei, national unity can help Iran advance faster in its scientific and technological research and studies. It can also facilitate economic and intellectual progress, as well as progress in art, music and movies. The same applies to the Muslim world. When the Muslim world is united, then it can achieve higher goals by making significant progress in these areas of cultural significance. As a result of attaining such power, it will be able to influence the entire global system. This is why progress is important.⁸³⁴

Progress and *Jihād*

According to Ayatollah Khomeini, progress without *jihād* (struggle)⁸³⁵ was impossible. *Jihād* was one of the calls and ideals of Imam Khomeini. This critical call was directed to the Iranian youth. Without them, the Islamic revolution would have been impossible. By following the footsteps of his mentor, Ayatollah Khamenei turns his focus to the new generation that has been raised and lived solely under the Islamic principles (as opposed to the older generation who lived under the *ṭāqūt* regime of the Shah). The leader calls upon the youth to continue the revolutionary fervor:

If we want the revolution to continue with the same speed, steadfastness and in the path of Islam without wavering to the left or to the right, we have to set the goals of our nation and also the Islamic nations before us. We have to make efforts in bringing these goals into reality and do not stop trying. The greatest danger is not that we become tired or exhausted, but that we lose sight of the revolutionary goals and ideals. Imam Khomeini began a huge movement in the world. Because of his association with God, he did not see another way. He is not among us today. But if we go before God in prayers, we will be able to connect ourselves to his courage, vigilance, intelligence, tenacity, and his determination will be materialized in our lives.⁸³⁶

Progress and National Security

The leader makes clear the relationship of progress and national security in this statement:

National security is the most critical duty of every Iranian leader. How does national security come about? It is the result of national unity. When the nation is united, when the leaders are united and do not engage in disputes and animosities, or provoke conflicts and confusions in the hearts and minds of the people, then national security is observed and assured. The enemy wants to see a weak Iran, so it can once again invade Iran and impose its will on Iran. That is why the enemy uses every possible tool at its disposal to divide Iran internally and externally.

If there is no security, then the economy will halt. If there is no security, then there will be no social justice. If there is no security, then there will be no knowledge and scientific progress. If there is no security, then all the factions of the government will slowly break and separate from one another. Therefore, security is the basis and foundation.⁸³⁷

From the early stages of his leadership, Khamenei has called upon the defense ministry to increase in power so that it is self-sufficient and does not rely on external resources. He commands the military to continue their progress (the progress of the defense industries and organizations), and to increase their discipline and training; and quality of their equipment and operations. He also encourages the military personnel to dedicate themselves to their religious values and cautions them against being influenced by Western propaganda.⁸³⁸ As Commander-in-Chief of the Armed forces, the supreme leader has appeared to be urging the nation towards a strong defense industry should it ever again be placed in a position to fight another war. One of his concerns as President was Iran's lack of sufficient military equipment during the Iraq-Iran war. Now as leader, Khamenei wants to be prepared. He understands how indispensable a strong military is to the health and well-being of his country. Therefore, from here on, power and self-sufficiency become two critical themes when addressing the military and security forces.⁸³⁹

Progress and the Muslim World

In his call to progress, Khamenei calls upon nation-building and “*ummah*-building” (the advance and progress of the Muslim world). He views progress as a valuable component in independency, both nationally and within the Muslim world. His potent call to progress comes on the heels of his urgent call to Muslim unity. His message is directed to his internal and external audience. Internally, progress will lead to national growth in knowledge, economy and power, which will assure economic and political independence. Externally, this growth will translate into Muslim power, making the Muslim world a colossal force within the global community. Thus, progress becomes an “added value” of the Islamic Republic. Hence, one can sum up Ayatollah Khamenei’s “revised” Islamic revolutionary motto during his supreme leadership as *āzadī, esteqlal, pīshraft, hokūmat-i Islami* (freedom, independence, progress, Islamic government).⁸⁴⁰

Progress is a weapon that can be used to fight the colonization, oppression, domination and opposition (CODO) of the global domineering powers.

Corrupt governments like England and America have ruled over this nation for years because of rulers like Reza Khan, who was willing to give in to them for his own comfort. Nations like Britain and France divided the Muslim countries amongst themselves after WWI, and gave the control of these nations to corrupt people. Through domination of Muslim countries, the main goal of oppressive powers, such as England and America, was to prevent Muslims from uniting and becoming a united force on the world stage. Despite their disagreements, through their financial resources, weapons and scientific knowledge, they cooperated together for one specific goal—to prevent the united presence of Muslims on the global political stage, and to prevent Muslims to know and believe that they too have rights, have power, and can express their views.⁸⁴¹

There is a connection between the export of revolution and scientific progress through a vast number of similar statements made by the leader. While promoting global Muslim unity and the removal of the colonization mentality, Khamenei emphasizes progress in science, technology, scientific studies and manufacturing.⁸⁴² He calls upon the nation to change its way of thinking:

Iran used to be occupied by foreigners. It used to be accustomed to be dependent on foreigners. It used to be dependent on what foreigners commended them, decided for them, or allowed them to do. They made all the decisions for our nation. But Iran does not have to do that any longer. Iran can fully become independent, if Iran chooses to change its mentality and way of thinking. This will mean changing strategies, changing the way the military and the oil industries operate, and the way we think about science and technology, or the way education at universities is conducted. Iran can change its focus to the development of Iran's industries and advance in science, and also learn science from others.

The foreign workers who were in Iran during the Shah did not intend to teach science and technology to Iranians, but to have authority over Iran's resources, using Iranians so that they could steal Iran's capital and hold the keys to Iran's industry. Americans, certain European nations and foreigners had strategized it in a way that when and if they leave Iran, Iranians become crippled, unable to function without them, to be at loss as to how they would run their industries, and have no knowledge of the scientific and technological programs. This way Iran could never be independent and would always need them.⁸⁴³

The supreme leader emphasizes that dependence is simply a way of thinking that can be changed. He asserts that Iran possesses much talent – talent that has been desired by many over the centuries. Iran has the talent, the genius and the ability to advance in science:

Why would we stay behind in terms of science and technology? During the Shah, the foreign companies would not allow an Iranian mechanic to repair a plane.⁸⁴⁴ Through foreign devises, the Shah invested very little in scientific progress and spent most of Iran's capital in purchasing planes and other military equipment. This is injustice against a nation. This is the oppression of a nation.⁸⁴⁵

Science does not belong to one individual or one nation. Science belongs to humanity and is exchanged between nations. There was a time when today's civilized Europe was in its outmost ignorance and lack of knowledge. Muslims were the biggest scholars of the day and they introduced science to Europe. This is something that they themselves say, have written and still write. It is not something unknown that we claim. There was a time when science was in Asia, another time in Europe, and another time somewhere else. Science belongs to all humanity. Science is not something that a nation says it belongs to us and does not belong to humanity. No, science belongs to humanity. We will embrace science wherever we find it.⁸⁴⁶

Nuclear Decree

Following the path of his predecessor, in the midst of controversies over Iran's nuclear program, in 2003, Ayatollah Khamenei issued a *fatwā* (decree), banning the production of nuclear weapons. Echoing the words of Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader called "manufacturing, stockpiling and the use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons prohibited in Islam."⁸⁴⁷

The critics of the Iranian government have questioned the impact and applicability of the Leader's *fatwā* with respect to Iran's nuclear policy. The criticism includes the possibilities of the supreme leader reversing his position by issuing another *fatwā* that orders the production of nuclear weapons. The history of the Islamic Republic confirms this concern. In 1984 then-Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini reversed his position on Iran's nuclear program during the Iraq-Iran war. Khamenei, who was President at the time, played a pivotal role in this reversal. In response to the concerns of the international community, Khamenei responded by saying:

Islamic principles do not allow production of nuclear weapons. Iran will always adhere to these principles. According to Islamic principles, the Islamic Republic of Iran considers the production of nuclear weapons as forbidden and will hold onto this belief. The U.S. officials are aware of this fact, but they make these accusations in order to promote fear of Iran.⁸⁴⁸

In a CNN interview Javad Larijani, top advisor to the supreme leader, affirmed the Khamenei's statements by saying that the *fatwā* was essentially a prohibition on the manufacture and use of weapons of mass destruction during wartime. He further stated:

Iran is a serious player in the region. Iran is not after nuclear weapons. The message is clear. Deal with Iran as it is. Iran is not after nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are not an asset for us. It's more a liability. Pakistan has nuclear weapons. You see it is a shamble country in terms of security. It doesn't add to our security. We are secure enough. We are strong enough without nuclear weapons, and it is against the *fatwā* of Ayatollah Khamenei. Nobody dares to do that.⁸⁴⁹

Although the U.S. officials are aware of this vital Islamic principle, asserts Khamenei, they continue their accusations of Iran and spread fear of Iran. By doing this, they have successfully

spread fear of Islam and the Islamic Republic in the hearts of the global community. In response to President Obama's warnings of a potential military strike against Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei responds:

The Bush administration made several attempts against the Muslim world and the Islamic Republic, and the current administration pursues the policy of promoting fear of Islam and Iran despite its so-called friendly messages and statements. Despite the false accusations, Iran has adopted a friendly policy towards its neighbors and Islamic countries, and it will always adopt a logical stance towards countries which do not pose any threats for the Islamic Republic. However, the Islamic Republic will never stay silent if the Iranian nation and government are attacked.⁸⁵⁰

The Zionists and foreigners are spreading lies in order to mislead the global public with respect to Iran's nuclear activities. The enemies of the Iranian nation have reached a stage where they are trying to mislead global public opinion by spreading lies about the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities. But the truth will ultimately be revealed, and these will not benefit them and will disgrace them even further.⁸⁵¹

The enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran know that the establishment of an Islamic government is the hope and dream of every Muslim nation. As a result, they try to suppress Iran and Iranians so that they can show the failure of a Shi'i government. England, America and Israel are the worst wicked enemies of Iran, the leader being America. For 30 years they have been afraid of Iran as a model for the Muslim world and a source of awakening. They are threatened by Iran and have tried to oppress it in any possible way, but by God's grace they have not been successful. Therefore, the enemies of the Islamic Republic spread lies about Iran's nuclear program so that they can cloud the global public opinion about Iran, and fool them with their lies. Because once truth is known, it will be to their disadvantage.⁸⁵²

To support the leader's position, Iranian leaders look back at their history and argue that they have no reasons to pursue a bomb, since their government has never been an aggressor in a war. In an interview in July 2006, in defense of Iran's enrichment program, Iran's Foreign Minister, Manouchehr Mottaki expressed that Iran's 10,000-year culture has been a culture of peace and stability. He further explained, "This culture is not a mass-murdering culture. This culture is not a terrorist culture, but many Americans don't know this." He blames the Western media for the negative view that Americans have about Iran.⁸⁵³

Furthermore, he contended that Iran survived the international pressures for three decades and even when Saddam used chemical weapons against Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini did not allow the military commanders to use any type of WMDs against Saddam's forces. Mottaki emphasized that Iran's military doctrine does not allow the use of nuclear weapons. He asserted that Iran is not pursuing a bomb, but using its nuclear program for peaceful purposes. Furthermore, Tehran insists that its nuclear program will benefit the international community as they open their "nuclear-fuel facilities to international ownership"—that means any company who desires can take "part in a consortium to produce fuel in Iran."⁸⁵⁴ Iranian leaders often argue that "the U.S. gets 25 percent of its electricity from nuclear power, and if nuclear energy is good, then why can't Iran have it?" For Mottaki, two options remain: either the U.S. accepts Iran's rights or faces confrontation. He insisted that Iran neither accepts preconditions nor threats, for neither leave room for negotiations.⁸⁵⁵

The supreme leader accuses the U.S. of using a "strategy of fear" regarding Iran's progress by calling its missile program dangerous. "Such claims are an accusation which is within the framework of the policy aimed at promoting fear of Iran. But, the Islamic Republic has never attacked a country during the past thirty years," demanded the leader.⁸⁵⁶

Khamenei also perceives this strategy to prevent unity in the Muslim world by promoting fear of Islam and the Islamic Republic. "The former U.S. administration made several attempts against the Muslim world and the Islamic Republic," says the leader. "The current U.S. administration also pursues the policy of promoting fear of Islam and Iran, despite its so-called friendly messages and statements."⁸⁵⁷

Finally, Khamenei believes that Iran must pay close attentions to the nuclear issue and make as much progress as possible so that Iran can remain competitive technologically,

economically, and socially. He further advises “the heads of the U.S., British, and other European governments to avoid spreading lies”⁸⁵⁸ adding:

Regarding the nuclear issue, as I have repeatedly said, the Iranian nation is after gaining the knowledge which the country needs. And we believe that if the Iranian nation fails to acquire the knowledge today, it will not have enough time to do so in the future when the wheels of the world economy will be spinning around nuclear power. Today the Iranian nation is making efforts to acquire knowledge in the field of nuclear energy so that the country’s future generation will not be dependent on Western countries in this regard. The Western countries are trying to prevent us from achieving this national goal by spreading lies and accusations as well as causing uproar.⁸⁵⁹

As we have said on several occasions, in respect to the nuclear issue, the Iranian nation is pursuing knowledge, which is necessary for the country. Iran believes that if it does not obtain that knowledge, science and technology now, it will be too late tomorrow for Iran when the global economic wheels begin to spin based on nuclear energy. Today, the Iranian people are putting forth efforts for obtaining nuclear knowledge, so that in 20-30 years Iranian children and the future generation are not dependent upon the West. However, by creating commotions, accusations, and lies, the West tries to prevent Iran to achieve this national goal.⁸⁶⁰

Khamenei warns the nation to be cautious about the devises of the enemy, and global oppressors and occupiers, who want to deprive Iranians of their legitimate rights. The enemy uses military threats, sanctions, and false propaganda to create internal conflict, asserts the leader. He further states:

America continues to oppress the Iranian nation by placing undue pressure on Iranians for producing nuclear energy. We have over and over again stated that we do not have any nuclear weapons, and we even announced that possession of such weapons is *ḥarām* (unlawful) in the view of Islam. But, Westerners push their false propaganda, in order to prevent Iran to achieve one of its national rights, which is obtaining nuclear energy.⁸⁶¹

Khamenei defends Iran’s foreign policy:

Iran has always adopted a friendly policy towards its neighbors and Islamic countries and it will always adopt a logical stance towards countries which do not pose any threats for the Islamic Republic. However, the Islamic Republic will never stay silent if the Iranian nation and government are attacked.⁸⁶²

The leader demands that the U.S. “rectify its policy” in terms of false accusations against Iran. “The Iranian nation is vigilantly observing these hostile policies and will stand up to them,” and “Iran will not retreat in case its rights are violated.”⁸⁶³ Khamenei perceives this as Western political and propaganda tools to “deny the Iranian nation its indisputable right.”⁸⁶⁴ He further claims:

The current policies of the world’s arrogant powers cause enmity and discord among nations through threats, military attacks, or sanctions. Despite their propaganda, the Iranian nation will remain patient and steadfast. The leaders of the arrogant camp are saying that their patience is running out, but everybody knows that they have never been patient with Iran. They have used every opportunity to hatch various types of political, economic, military, and propaganda plots in order to defeat our nation. The patient Iranian nation will continue ignoring the propaganda and uproar of the foreigners.⁸⁶⁵

The supreme leader uses his speeches to accomplish his objective of sending direct messages to an international audience while continuing with his domestic and foreign policies. He promotes Iran’s right to nuclear “progress” citing Islamic principles of “rights and duties.” These religious “rights and duties” seemingly negate the objections of the IAE and Khamenei’s view, permit Iran to avoid compliance. Under the banner of “progress,” nuclear advancement has a more moderate and peaceful artifice that is justifiable as the youth are encouraged to continue their pursuit of knowledge. He also uses Iran’s nationalism card—an ideal upheld by Ahmadinejad and his camp—in order to gain the support of that faction of the Iranian society who prefer nationalism over Islamicism.

Although Khamenei states that Iran is a peaceful civilization, the concerns of the international community about Iran’s nuclear program is not centered on the peacefulness of the Persian culture but rather on the behavior of the Iranian government. Although the supreme leader claims that Iran is not building nuclear weapons, Iran’s behavior and rhetoric has engendered trepidation throughout the international community that Iran is not committed to its

word. There seem to be inconsistencies between the words out of the mouth of the leader and Iran's violations of NPT safeguards, violations that include secret facilities, secret operations, and secret dealings with other countries outside IAEA's agreements. By his pronouncements, he has strategically positioned Iran in yet another "perceived defensive war" to support his claim for a stronger military with increased arms capabilities. Khamenei's insistence that Iran has the right to nuclear knowledge, coupled with his consistent call on the Iranian youth to mobilize and be ready to die for their country, along with his expressed views that the United States and Israel are the "enemy" raise serious doubts that Iran has any peaceful intentions should they acquire a nuclear weapon.

While Khamenei accuses the U.S. of demonizing Iran and using a fear-strategy in order to prevent Iran from its progresses in its nuclear program, the words out of his mouth are filled with malice when he speaks to his own people and to his Muslim audience throughout the world. Through his messages, he places fear of the U.S. in the hearts and minds of Iranians and his regional Muslim allies and non-allies. He often exaggerates a "perceived" U.S. threat that may not even exist. By doing so, he victimizes Iran while he pursues policies that contradict international norms and treaties as well as the wishes of his domestic audience.

Iran's Proposal for a Middle East Free from Nuclear Weapons

In response to growing tensions between Iran and P5+1 over Iran's nuclear capabilities, Ayatollah Khamenei attempted to divert the focus from Iran's nuclear program by proposing the universality of NPT guidelines for WMD nonproliferation within the region. He expressed concerns about Israel's nuclear capabilities.

The danger of nuclear weapons in the Middle East is very serious. But unfortunately, one cannot deal with this issue and the usurper Israeli regime, which has been converted to a nuclear missiles' storage house; and America, which in its irresponsible politics assists

this regime, so that every day they can increase their nuclear weapons. This issue is one of the principle problems of the American government. We believe that the world has to separately deal with the occupying *Quds* regime. Thus, the unity and active participation of Europe and influential countries in the world, with respect to this issue, is critical.⁸⁶⁶

Although Khamenei's proposal for a Middle East free from nuclear weapons seems sound, he tends to overlook several critical issues: First, *Iran's incendiary anti-semitic rhetoric*: Out of the mouth of the leader, Ayatollah Khamenei continuously uses inflammatory language to describe the Israeli regime, often calling for an end to its existence. For example, during Friday Prayer sermon on February 3, 2012, Ayatollah Khamenei stated: "The Zionist regime is a cancerous tumor that must be removed, and God willing it will be."⁸⁶⁷ On another occasion he avowed that "the Zionist regime will perish away."⁸⁶⁸ President Ahmadinejad was no stranger to such fiery language against the Israeli regime. His controversial statement about the "destruction of Israel" created a great deal of concern for the Israeli leaders since his term began in office in 2005. His confrontational rhetoric continued to the end of his second term. During his address before the U.N. General Assembly on September 24, 2012, he asserted that "Israel has no roots in the Middle East and would be eliminated."⁸⁶⁹ He has also called Israel an "insult to humanity" and has announced Iran's readiness to wipe out Israel, in the event Iran is attacked.⁸⁷⁰ Second, *Iran's military capabilities vs. Israel's military capabilities*: According to the CIA Factbook, Iran's military manpower fit for military service is 23,619,215 males 16-49 years of age. This excludes available Basij forces starting at age 15.⁸⁷¹ Israel's military manpower fit for military services is 1,517,510 males and 1,446,132 females 16-49 years of age.⁸⁷² Iran's military forces include: "Artesh (Iran's regular forces); Ground Forces, Navy, Air Force (IRIAF), Khatemolambia Air Defense Headquarters, IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or *Sepah-i Pasdaran-i Enqelab-i Islami*): Ground Resistance Forces, Navy, Aerospace Force, Quds Force (special operations), and Law Enforcement Forces."⁸⁷³ Israel's military forces include: Israel Defense

Forces, Israel Naval Force, and Israel Air Force. Third, Iran's *population* is 79,853,900 versus Israel's population of 7,707,042. Fourth, *Iran's Middle East alliances*: While Iran enjoys the support of Hamas and Hizbullah, Israel is situated in a region surrounded by Muslim countries with an area of 20,770, which is "slightly larger than New Jersey" vs. Iran's area of 1,648,195, which is nearly 79 times larger than Israel.⁸⁷⁴

Khamenei's political argument that since the U.S. and Israel have nuclear weapons, Iran has a right to "progress" as well is discounted because of Israel's vulnerable position in the region. She is surrounded by Muslim countries with militant groups such as Hamas and Hizbollah with Egypt at its border. This reality is underscored with Khamenei's words along with the leaders of Iran who continuously call upon Israel's obliteration. His "demonization policy" and "false propaganda" accusations are verbal attempts to win the support of the Iranian people and to increase Iran's status in the Muslim world. Khamenei seems unwilling to acknowledge these major differences between the state of Israel in the Middle East vs. Iran. Especially significant is his oversight of such a critical issue as the military differential between Iran and Israel coupled with his anti-Israeli rhetoric as well as the divisive rhetoric of Iranian leaders.

The War Over Sanctions

While the U.S.-imposed economic sanctions as an enforcement tool for "a behavior change" have caused setbacks for the regime, they have not been enough to stop it from moving forward in strength. To combat sanctions and embargoes so that they no longer influence the nation's economy, the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei has continuously called upon the nation to band together in determination, persistence, and the use of all human and economic resources. While addressing a group of citizens in 2008, he stated:

The enemies of the Islamic Republic currently assume that they could undermine the Iranian nation's determination through economic sanctions and threats, but the great Iranian nation will oppose their plots as it has done during the last thirty years, by emerging victorious out of different kinds of sanctions and embargoes.⁸⁷⁵

He continues:

Have you not put the Iranian nation to the test before? We will strongly continue on our path, and will not let the arrogant powers trample upon our nation's rights. The Iranian nation has found its way towards progress, dignity, independence, and implementing the religious principles in the country and no threats could cause the Iranian nation to reverse its decision. The enthusiastic, brave, vigilant, and conscious Iranian nation is well aware of its duties and rights and will decidedly claim those rights.⁸⁷⁶

Sanction As Proof of Iranian Progress

Even when faced with sanctions, criticisms, and controversies over its nuclear program, Ayatollah Khamenei perceives these threats as an "Iranian progress."

When the world criticizes Iran for making a bomb, doing so is a sign of Iran's progress. It shows how far Iran has come from pre-revolutionary era to a post-revolutionary era. Prior to the revolution, 70 percent of the population were uneducated, in comparison to now when Iran is producing nuclear energy independent from reliance on foreign powers. Iran is one of the ten countries that have been able to produce nuclear energy. This is a huge accomplishment. It is not something small. Of course Iran's enemies accuse us of creating a bomb. Nonetheless, this is important progress and it is all because of the blessings of the Islamic system. All these accomplishments Iran has made have sprung out of an infant regime and an eight-year war.⁸⁷⁷

Khamenei considers sanctions as:⁸⁷⁸

- A propaganda ploy and economic injustice against Iran;
- The agenda of the Islamic Republic's enemy to exert "a huge volume of political, security and economic conspiracies against the Islamic Republic;"
- An indication of the strength, accomplishments and advances of the Islamic Republic;
- Testimony to Iran's overwhelming accomplishments post Islamic Revolution and its continuous resistance against Western imperialism.

Furthermore, Khamenei believes that the basic reason for sanctions and pressures on the Iranian nation is Iran's unwillingness to give in to the demands of Iran's opponents. He credits the Iranian government's strong leadership to withstand U.S.-Israeli threats to overthrow the Iranian government or disable its strong political institution, which are examples of Iran's continuous strength and sovereignty. As a result, to Khamenei, Iran is a much stronger nation today than ever before.⁸⁷⁹

For Khamenei, Tehran's nuclear program and the accompanying conflicts are a testament to Iran's source of power. In his address to the people of Kurdistan in May 2011 he said, "The Iranian nation has established progress in the international community to the extent that the enemies have admitted several times."⁸⁸⁰ Khamenei perceives Iran's nuclear program as *Iran's new global image*. For over three decades Iran has progressed in numerous scientific experiments and accomplished impressive achievements, which have been testament to Iran's values, asserts the leader.⁸⁸¹ In various ways, they have shown Iran's power, strength, authority and ability as an independent and powerful nation. Khamenei is confident that Iran will continue in this path and improve its newly-achieved potent image. He states:

2009 began with positive nuclear news. Our nation was informed that our youth and our skilled scientists, through their assiduous efforts despite global sanctions, proved their progress in our country's nuclear issues and proved Iran's abilities in respect to such a critical issue to the entire global community. This has created a new esteem and credence for the Iranian nation, not only in terms of science, but in different fields as well.⁸⁸²

The Supreme Leader: The Iranian Youth and the Nuclear Program

Khamenei makes the Iranian youth a participant in the nation's success. He realizes that the Iranian youth are living in the midst of a modern world and seek economic and political strength. So he uses the nuclear program as a symbol of national pride and progress. By doing so, he believes that the Iranian youth are inclined to take ownership of the program and make it their

cause. The support of the youth encourages Khamenei to pursue his nuclear agenda energetically. Often when America makes nuclear threats against Iran, Khamenei skillfully wards them off and uses them as threats not only directed at the Iranian nation, but the Iranian youth themselves. He tells the youth that the U.S. wants a regressive Iran that goes back to the era of the Shah's regime when the nation was dependent on the West. He also reminds them that this dependence occurred because of weak Iranian leadership. Further, he points to recent regional events such as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to prove his point about American aggression.

A 2010 study conducted by the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland of 1000 Iranians from 30 provinces on Iran's nuclear program, shows the majority supported their country's controversial program:

The survey reported public support for Iran's full fuel cycle nuclear program to be an astounding 91 percent (with 84 percent registering strong support) and agreement with the "need" to develop nuclear energy to be 96 percent (with 89 percent registering strong agreement). The poll also suggests that the opinion of the Iranian citizenry reflects other Iranian government positions strongly, with 69 percent having heard of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), 66 percent approving it, 71 percent approving a nuclear-free Middle East that would include both Israel and Islamic countries, and 82 percent rejecting the notion that the United States fulfills its obligations under the NPT.⁸⁸³

In a meeting with Hosniyeh University students in August 2010, the leader and the youth discussed scientific, cultural, social, political and economic issues. The youth expressed:⁸⁸⁴

1. Appreciation for the measures the leader of the Revolution takes in accomplishing the nation's nuclear rights;
2. Converting Iran into a "global source of knowledge";
3. The necessity for expanding Iran's Islamic cultural society and model;
4. Finding ways to convert sanctions into an opportunity for "self-reliance progress"; and

5. Helping the youth to understand soft war better [and how they can participate in this “war”].

For Khamenei, the youth’s reaction is a testament to his claims. The more America opposes Iran’s nuclear program, the more the U.S. places importance on the critical nature of that program.

America’s reactions to Iran’s nuclear program and aggressions displayed towards Iran are indications that Iran’s acquisition of nuclear power technology is a critical and effective step in claiming Iran’s rights nationally and globally. Westerners know we are not pursuing a bomb. Their anger is because we did not ask their permission and were able to attain this technology without consulting with them.”⁸⁸⁵

The leader compliments 30 of the most prestigious Iranian universities where the youth study science and technology and conduct research. Khamenei also praises the Iranian leaders who prudently dealt with “the enemy” and did not submit themselves to their will.

Diplomacy does not mean that we give up everything we have and do whatever they want so that they do not find other faults and excuses. This is wrong. We should not lose ourselves and hurry. Some in the Islamic Republic think that the enemy controls Iran and they have no other option but to resort to the enemy. This is wrong too. Those who negotiate with Iran must know that today’s Iran is a different Iran from the one that was subject to domination and colonization. The Islamic Republic has a different identity.⁸⁸⁶

He continues:

Today the Islamic Republic is equipped with a weapon that is greater and sharper than an atomic weapon. This weapon is the faith of the people and their presence and support of the government. This is a huge weapon. Of course the enemies try to remove this weapon from us and convince our people that these are false claims. A topic that was discussed during these European negotiations was that they said: “We are not opposed to Iran’s peaceful nuclear program. As a matter of fact, we will build them a facility, will supply them with everything they need and provide them the necessary fuel.” This is unacceptable to us because the facility that the Westerners build for us is useless to us. They will make both Iran and Iranians as their slaves. We will produce the fuel for our own facility.⁸⁸⁷

In his visit with a thousand elite science youth in October 2010, the leader affirmed his commitment to the pursuit of knowledge so that the glorious flag of justice is raised over Iran

and the entire global community. Knowledge is the chief principle for material and spiritual power in Iran, he asserts. “In order to make up for our lack of progress we have to work double.”⁸⁸⁸ Thus, Khamenei calls upon *jihād* (struggle) in progressing in science, stating: “The scientific findings must produce wealth. We pursue science for obtaining true power and raising the flag of justice and humanity in the world so that we can defend the oppressed against oppression and cruelty of those who seek domination (*solṭeh*).”⁸⁸⁹

The supreme leader calls upon Iran’s youth to dedicate themselves to scientific progress as a duty and national pride, and to strengthen Iran’s standing in the region and among the growing regional powers, due to the existing rivalries in the region. He urges a *speedy scientific movement*. This means, the continuation of scientific advances despite economic sanctions against Iran or political threats.⁸⁹⁰ He also urges the nation to continue its research without ceasing. Through this speech, Khamenei sends a clear message to Iran’s youth and the Iranian nation and the world that:⁸⁹¹

- Iran will remain strong despite economic sanctions;
- Iran will remain strong despite economic and political threats;
- Iran will continue its nuclear program and all relevant scientific research, testing, etc.;
- Iran will not give into the demands of the bullying powers (Israel and the West);
- Iran will maintain its independence;
- Iran recognizes the existing powers in the region and intends to be competitive.

While it appears that a large portion of the Iranian population or the youth seem to be supportive of Iran’s nuclear program, there are those who feel their government’s domestic policies and political posture towards Israel, the U.S. and the IAEA negatively impacts them economically and politically.

Khamenei and the Nuclear Law: Final Word

In April 2010, as nuclear tensions grew between Iran, Israel and the West, Khamenei responded to U.S. threats of a possible preemptive strike against Iran. The leader called these threats “stupid” and asked, “What, atomic threat?!”⁸⁹² The leader criticized President Obama’s “extended hand” policy as another U.S. lie.

America’s fox-like character (*rubah manesh*) turned into wolf-like character (*gorg manesh*). What happened to that extended hand? Then it is obvious what they intended to do from the very beginning. They wanted to use nuclear power as a tool to dominate the world. All nuclear powers are the same. They all want to use it to dominate the world. They are the ones who violate all IAEA’s laws and accuse other nations. Our nuclear policy is obvious. We have said it from the very beginning that we do not intend to use WMDs. But let those who make these threats know that the Iranian nation will not remain silent and will defend itself and bring its enemies down to their knees. The international community does not have the right to ignore the threats of the U.S. President and forget them. The U.S. President has no right to use a nuclear threat (*tahdīd-i atomī*) against the Iranian nation. This threat is a threat against global peace and security, and humanity. No one has the right to threaten humanity with such threats. Even using such a language is wrong. Of course the Iranian nation is not defeated with such threats. These threats do not make us fall behind. We will not allow America once again, through these means, to impose their hellish domination in our country. Americans are once again pursuing the same domination that they enjoyed during the treacherous *tāqūtī* Pahlavi rule. May God’s curse be upon them! They are dreaming. Those days will never again return. Despite these threats, with divine help, we will move forward. Our youth will overcome these threats.⁸⁹³

Khamenei intends to continue Iran’s nuclear program. There are no alternatives and no compromise.

We have told them that we are only pursuing peaceful nuclear energy and it is an enrichment program. They came and checked and assured themselves that it is only an enrichment program so that they would know that these are only the lies of the Zionists. This was one venue for the protection of the nuclear technology (*fanāvarī-i hastehī*). Under no conditions does Iran have the right to lose this technology (*fanāvarī*). Some claim that we have not made insignificant accomplishments. They are wrong! Any accomplishment is a good accomplishment and is significant. If it was not, the enemies of Islamic Republic would not have attacked Iran so severely. We have come to a point in our technology that has created progress in our nation. This is a huge deal and what we have accomplished is valuable. The enemy may be able to destroy any systems under the authority of the Islamic Republic, but they will not be able to destroy our technology, because the Westerners and the center of global powers would have never allowed Iran to

accomplish such technology. Therefore, *no* government agency, *no* official, *no* atomic energy organization, and *no* individual in the country has the right to stop this program or make negotiations. No negotiations have been made, nor will any be made!⁸⁹⁴

While the U.S. has never threatened to launch a nuclear attack on Iran, on a few occasions, the supreme leader has told the Iranian people that the U.S. has, in fact, done so, perhaps so that his people view the U.S. and her allies as serious existential threats whose goal is to possibly obliterate Iran.

Additionally, he cites Iran's history to strengthen his arguments by reminding his countrymen about Saddam's use of chemical weapons during the Iraq-Iran war and to associate Saddam's actions directly to those of the U.S. (In March 1988, towards the end of the war, Saddam used chemical agents against civilians in the Northern Iraqi Kurdish town, Halabja, which borders Iran. He also used nerve gas agents against Iranian forces.⁸⁹⁵ While there are compelling accusations that the U.S. administration was aware of Saddam's use of chemical weapons, there is no proof of the U.S.'s participation. However, these facts are absent from Khamenei's rhetoric.)

Over the years, the U.S. administrations have employed more aggressive policies towards such international crimes. For example, during the Gulf war, the U.S. was one of the 34 nations that responded to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1991. Through Operation Desert Storm (January 17, 1991 - February 28, 1991), the U.S. prevented Iraq from abusing its powers in the region.⁸⁹⁶ The U.S. also responded against the use of chemical weapons in June 2013. When the Syrian government used chemical weapons against its own people, President Obama warned the Assad regime that he has crossed the "red line" and there would be serious consequences.⁸⁹⁷ While the U.S. has demonstrated that it has moved beyond some of its so-called "failed policies," Khamenei clings to his 50-year-old isolationist ideology.

It is unclear the direction internal politics will take, given the list of current issues that characterize the nation, nor is it clear how external politics will impact Iran. What is very clear, however, is that Iran is in the middle of a crisis both internally and externally, and the words out of the mouth of the leader may have serious implications for the future of Iran and its standing in a 21st Century global community.

CHAPTER 20

THE SUPREME LEADER AND THE IRANIAN YOUTH

“Iran does not need a nuclear bomb when it is equipped with religious youth (*javan-i mo`men*),” acclaimed Ayatollah Khamenei on November 5, 2004. “The enemy is angry because of the people’s support of their government, especially the youth.”⁸⁹⁸

This quote underscores the supreme leader’s awareness of how critical it is for the youth to be in support of the regime. Capturing the hearts and minds of Iranian youth is, perhaps, the most important goal of the Islamic Republic. The supreme leader recognizes that Iranian nationalism and commitment to the principles of *vilāyat-i faqīh* (Governorship of the Jurisconsult) must develop in the hearts and minds of the youth themselves.

This challenge of making effective emotional, intellectual and religious appeals to the Iranian youth takes place in a context of three critical factors: the demographics of the Iranian population, the role of youth in politics in Iran and elsewhere; and the fluid relationship between today’s youth and the *vilāyat-i faqīh*.

Demographic Characteristics of Iran

According to the Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) statistics, as of July 2013, Iran’s population is estimated to be 79,853,900. About 23.8 percent of the population is 14 and younger, 19.8 percent is between 15 and 24 years of age, 45.3 percent is between 25 and 54 and 11.2 percent is 55 years and older. The median age is 27.8 years. Based on these statistics, more than 50 percent of today’s Iran was born after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Muslims comprise 98 percent of the population (89 percent of which are Shi’ites and 9 percent Sunnis). The remaining 2 percent of the population includes Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians and Baha’is. Sixty-

one percent (61%) of the population is Persian that includes 16 percent Azeris.⁸⁹⁹ Some statistics show that by year 2025, the overall Muslim population will likely be 30 percent of the global community, in comparison to 18 percent in 1980.⁹⁰⁰

Iran's female literacy rate is 70.4 percent and male literacy rate is 83.5 percent. In 2002, for the first time, female students in universities outnumbered male students. Iranian women have gradually become active in their society and occupy many major fields such as medicine, computer technology, emergency services, production industry, arts, and science. They also engage in public affairs, attend demonstrations, and organize human rights organizations in various parts of the country. The most popular women's movement is the 2006 "One Million Signatures," demanding "abolishment of discriminatory laws against women in Iran."⁹⁰¹

Based on the above statistics, in the next decade or so, the Muslim population in Iran will still be disproportionately young people, mostly teenagers and those in their twenties. Samuel Huntington, a political scientist, estimates that this new group of young people "will be overwhelmingly urban" and will at least have a secondary education.⁹⁰²

These statistics suggest a growing reform-minded youth and an aging *valī-i faqīh* (Supreme Jurisconsult), and such information is important to the Iranian leaders who are packaging their appeal to an increasingly young, educated, urban population. It is important information to the West as well with consideration to future diplomacy with Iran.

The Impact of the Youth in Politics

Looking back at the last 50 years of Iran's history, one notices that young people have played a critical role in Iran's political life. They have participated in protests, reforms and a grand Islamic revolution fighting alongside the Shi'i 'ulama' (religious scholars), which overthrew a monarch and placed Khomeini in power.⁹⁰³ These same youth captured the U.S.

Embassy, and later fought in the Iraq-Iran war. They increased Iran's security power by joining the Islamic Revolutionary Guard, Basij and other security and military forces.

More recently, beginning in December 2010 and continuing, youth involvement has been important to the uprisings or "Muslim Awakening" in the Middle East and North Africa, which dramatically changed the political structures in those areas. These youth-involved movements removed the 23-year-old leadership of Tunisian President Zine al-Abidine Ben 'Ali in December 2010 due to "unemployment and political restrictions."⁹⁰⁴ Then, they displaced the 42-year reign of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya through a civil war that lasted from February to October 2011.⁹⁰⁵ The Egyptian youth twice protested against their Egyptian leaders, first by overthrowing the 30-year reign of Hosni Mubarak in February 2011 and four months later by placing Mohammad Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood in power through democratic elections. At the onset of Morsi's second anniversary as Egypt's leader, Egyptians once again protested against their government and deposed him in July 2013.⁹⁰⁶ Syrian anti-government protests against the Ba'ath regime of President Bashar al-Asad began in March 2011, and continue to this date.⁹⁰⁷ In June 2013 mass anti-government protests broke out in Turkey, disputing "the development plans for an Istanbul park."⁹⁰⁸

Based on these events, Ayatollah Khamenei declares: "The youth of each country is the source of change and progress of that nation."⁹⁰⁹ To support his claims and encourage the Iranian youth, the supreme leader uses the example of India and England and the critical role the Indian nationalist Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) played in the freedom of his country. He tells the youth:

You can also become a Gandhi of your time and your society, and fight. At the time of Gandhi, Islam was not even discussed, but know that in near future Islam will become globalized. Nurture this thought in your minds and take responsibility!⁹¹⁰ There were those who criticized Khomeini for relying on the forces of the Iranian youth, but both the

Imam and the youth proved them wrong. Iran was able to mobilize an entire revolution against a powerful dynasty and its superpower supporters through its youth.⁹¹¹

The notion of “youth power” is not a foreign concept to Ayatollah Khamenei. He himself was one of the Iranian youth who was actively engaged in overthrowing the monarchy and establishing the Islamic Republic. He did not inherit his revolutionary ideologies as an adult but was committed to them as a 13-year-old teenager. Later, these ideologies were nurtured in classrooms at the seminary and through his teachers.

Khomeini’s “army of militant youth” was mobilized in universities, schools, mosques and youth organizations. The Iranian youth sought progress, independence and freedom. Although Ayatollah Khomeini did not use the specific term “progress” in his revolutionary slogans, his successor Ayatollah Khamenei has made a clear and close connection between the three principle ideals of the Khomeini-revolution. Placing progress at the center of the revolutionary ideals, he believes that Iran will never be an absolute independent powerful nation that enjoys freedom from domination unless it continuously progresses in faith, knowledge and unity, which will lead to political superiority domestically, regionally and internationally, as well as accomplish domestic economic prosperity.

Often, the greatest weapons for radical Muslims are the youth, especially the poor, alienated, and the hopeless, both socially and economically. These young people are seeking meaning for their lives. They are in search of their dignity and hope for a place of belonging in the world. Through tactical, calculated, and carefully designed programs, the Muslim extremists such as Al-Qaeda, Hizbullah, and Hamas recruit these young people to join their causes. They give them food, a place to live, a group to identify with, and a cause to live, to fight, and to die for. Likewise, the supreme leader uses the “isolated” Iranian youth to mobilize his *army of young people*, who are dedicated to the regime and are willing to die for its cause. The Iranian youth,

like the youth within the global community, seek progress. They, too, want to advance in knowledge, education, science and technology, developing their industries and economy so that they could enjoy prosperity and employment, and be active members of the modern world.

The supreme leader and his camp realize the challenges they face with the Iranian youth who are modernized, connected to the Internet and television, and other technological media. The uprisings and demonstrations of the reform-minded Iranian youth during the 2009 presidential elections have indicated that the Iranian youth are moderate and seek reform. Most reports show that Iran is ready for democracy, perhaps not a “secular” or “Western” democracy, but freedom from hardliners such as the former President Ahmadinejad. This Iranian youth behavior was confirmed in the June 2013 Presidential elections, when they overwhelmingly supported the election of “moderate” cleric, Hassan Rouhani, from the group of conservatives and neoconservatives.

Numerous reports show that most Iranians were weary of their former President Ahmadinejad’s rhetoric that unnecessarily placed their country at risk through his anti-West and anti-Semitic comments while challenging the global community with Tehran’s nuclear program. Sanctions that followed nearly crippled the Iranian economy. Today, Iran’s record of economic failure is at its highest since the Islamic Revolution.

According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), as a result of international sanctions enacted in January 2013 “against Iran’s Central Bank and oil exports,” Iran’s oil revenue declined significantly, fueling “20% currency depreciation,” and forcing the government to cut spending. Consequently, “economic growth turned negative for the first time in two decades.” In 2012 “inflation reached its highest level in four years.”⁹¹² Currently, the unemployment rate is 15.5% and 18.7% of the population lives below the poverty line. The fragile state of the Iranian

economy and lack of employment for the educated Iranian youth has forced many to look outwardly and pursue jobs outside the Iranian borders. This has two implications for Iran and the international community. On a positive note, it opens up greater public diplomacy opportunities for the U.S. by offering employment and higher educational opportunities to the Iranian youth. On the negative side, it results “in a significant ‘brain drain’” for Iran.⁹¹³

***Vilāyat-i Faqīh* and the Youth**

The speeches of the supreme leader show a growing tension between the youth and *vilāyat-i faqīh* (Governance of the Jurisconsult). Today’s Iranian youth is very different from the 1979 or even 1989 youth, who found peace, comfort, security, freedom and independence in the position of a *valī-i amr* (supreme leader). The 1989 youth Khamenei inherited as he claimed the seat of supreme leadership were still the revolutionary youth. The ideals of the Islamic revolution were alive in the hearts of most Iranians, who had fought for their government a decade earlier. The death of the *Father of the Revolution*, Ayatollah Khomeini, had left them orphans. Thus, Iranians were seeking a continuation in their regime, especially after fighting a long eight-year war.

More than half of Iran’s population today has no emotional connection to the Khomeini Revolution. The only connection they have is their Islamic government and a constitution that is based on Islamic principles as interpreted by its founders. Instead, today’s youth is a by-product of the 21st century modern world.⁹¹⁴ As a result, the Iranian nation remains in an internal struggle to define itself in the collision of three different factions of the society: the conservatives, the moderates and the reformists.

Ayatollah Khamenei defines Iran's political system as an Islamic system based on Islamic law and Qur'anic principles.⁹¹⁵ Articles 1 and 2 of the Constitution define the fundamentals of Iran's political system:

Article 1

The form of government of Iran is that of an Islamic Republic, which received an affirmative vote from the Iranian people on the basis of their longstanding belief in the Qur'anic government of truth and justice, after their victorious Islamic Revolution led by the eminent *marja' al-tqlid*, Ayatullah al-Uzma Imam Khomeini, in the referendum of Farvadin 9 and 10 in the year 1358 of the solar Islamic calendar, corresponding to Jummadi al-Ula 1 and 2 in the year 1399 of the lunar Islamic calendar [March 29 and 30, 1979].⁹¹⁶

Article 2

The Islamic Republic is a system based on belief in:

1. The One God (as stated in the Islamic creed "There is no god except Allah"), His exclusive possession of sovereignty and the right to legislate, and the necessity of submission to His commands;
2. divine revelation and its fundamental role in expounding of laws;
3. the return to God in the hereafter, and the constructive role of this belief in man's ascending progress toward God;
4. the justice of God in creation and legislation;
5. continuous leadership and guidance, and its fundamental role in assuring the continuity of the revolution of Islam;
6. The exalted dignity and value of man, and his freedom, joined to responsibilities before God
which secures equity, justice, political, economic, social, and cultural independence, and national solidarity, by recourse to:
 - a. continuous *ijtihad* of the *fuqaha'* possessing the necessary qualifications, exercised on the basis of the Book of God and the Sunnah of the Ma'sumin, upon all of whom be peace;
 - b. recourse to arts and sciences and the most advanced results of human experience, together with the effort to carry them still farther forward;
 - c. rejection of all forms of oppression, both the infliction of and the endurance of it, and of dominance, both its imposition and its acceptance.⁹¹⁷

What complicates this system of government for most Iranians is the notion of *vilāyat-i faqīh*.

Article 5 of the Constitution mandates:

During the Occultation of the Lord of the Age (may God hasten his renewed manifestation!), the governance and leadership of the nation devolve upon the just and

pious *faqih*, who is acquainted with the circumstances of his age; courageous, resourceful, and possessed of administrative ability; and recognized and accepted as leader by the majority of the people. In the event that no *faqih* should be recognized by the majority, the leader, or the Leadership Council, composed of *fuqaha* possessing the aforementioned qualifications, will assume these responsibilities in accordance with Article 107.⁹¹⁸

Historically, *vilāyat-i faqīh* was not part of Shi‘i law. *Vilāyat-i faqīh* is an interpretation by Ayatollah Khomeini of Shi‘i theology. To clarify, the supreme leader provides his definition of *vilāyat* (Governorship or Mandate):

In summary, it means that Islam is not condensed to prayer, fasting, zakat (alms), individual deeds and worship. Islam possesses a political system based on Islamic laws. In Islamic terminology and common law (*‘urf*), the name of the government is “*vilāyat*.” What kind of government is *vilāyat*? *Vilāyat* is a government in which an affectionate (*moḥabatāmīz*), benevolent (*‘ātefī*), intellectual (*fekrī*) and ideological (*‘aqīdatī*) ruler governs. A government that is governed by force, or comes to power by a coup, or the ruler rejects the opinions of the people and does not respect the beliefs and views (*afkar va eḥsasat*) of his people, does not operate based on *vilāyat*. *Vilāyat* means a government in which there are connections between the leader and the people: intellectual and ideological based on compassion, humanity and kindness. Thus, the people are joined and connected to him and are fond of him. The *valī* (leader) is the source of this entire political system and receives his duties from God, and he considers himself the servant and child of God. *Estebkār* (domination) is absent in *vilāyat*. The government that Islam introduces is more humanitarian than all popular global democracies. It is connected to the hearts, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and emotional needs of the people. The government is at the service of the people.⁹¹⁹

The divine source of *vilāyat-i faqīh* has become a contentious issue among the Iranian youth. If the source of the power of *valī-i faqīh* is the divine, and if his duties come from God, then how can the ordinary citizens negotiate with the leader? If the source of the leader’s decisions, actions and statements is the divine, then it leaves little or no room for negotiation, discussion or argument. Then, truly what the leader says, is that the *valī-i faqīh* is the Alpha and Omega on *all* matters of life. This places not only the ordinary citizens to full submission to the *valī-i amr*, but the Iranian officials as well. Thus, as the supreme authority in the land, his decrees and decisions become final policies of Iran.

Ayatollah Khamenei takes a further step and extends this authority outside the Iranian borders, insisting that *vilāyat* is the banner of Islam; a true Islamic notion that would resolve the political problems of the Muslim nations.⁹²⁰ This infers the possible proposal of the supreme leader of a “*Vilāyat-i Faqīh-i Jahanī*” (Global Mandate of a Jurisconsult). The Supreme Leader is often referred to as “*Valī-i amr al-Muslemin*” (the Supreme Leader of Muslims) either domestically or by certain Muslim State leaders such as the Palestinian or Lebanese leaders.⁹²¹

Ayatollah Khamenei further stresses that national unity and political authority will be impossible without the notion of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, as was the case during the Prophet. Imam Khomeini’s concept of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, as expressed in his book “*Hukumat-i Islami*,” “called for direct assumption of political power by the clergy.”⁹²² The Prophet himself was an administrator, executor of justice, political leader and religious leader, asserts Khamenei. As a result, the supreme leader finds support for the legitimacy of *vilāyat-i faqīh* and the authority of *valī-i amr* in the authority the Prophet exercised over the *ummah* (Muslim community). This is one of the reasons that Khamenei continuously makes references to the important role the ‘ulama’ have played and continue to play in the political life of Iran, in particular, from the 1905-6 Constitutional Revolution to Khomeini’s Islamic Revolution. As a result, Khamenei incessantly calls upon the ‘ulama’ to exert their political powers through their theological and religious works, and close interaction with the youth and the Iranian people. On the same token, he calls upon the youth and the nation to obey the ‘ulama’ and adhere to their guidance. Khamenei’s call to the “clerical leadership” is not limited to Iran alone, but to the entire Muslim world. He calls upon the global Muslim ‘ulama’ to continue influencing the regional power monopoly and global political systems by becoming active in the religio-political governorship of the Muslim world. Such stewardship is possible through the willingness of the ‘ulama’ to set aside their doctrinal

differences and sectarian divisions, and come together united as one united Muslim community, as it was under the Prophet.

***Vilāyat-i Faqīh* and Democracy: The Supreme Leader and the Youth in Dialogue**

The divine state of *valī-i faqīh* has created challenges in Iran's so-called democratic system. Although Khamenei takes pride in Iran's religious democracy, where the Iranian people elect their President, Parliamentary leaders or other officials, they cannot elect their *valī-i amr*.

According to Article 107 of the Islamic Republic's Constitution:

The task of appointing the Leader shall be vested with the experts elected by the people. The experts will review and consult among themselves concerning all the fuqaha' possessing the qualifications specified in Articles 5 and 109. In the event they find one of them better versed in Islamic regulations, the subjects of the fiqh, or in political and social issues, or possessing general popularity or special prominence for any of the qualifications mentioned in Article 109, they shall elect him as the Leader. Otherwise, in the absence of such superiority, they shall elect and declare one of them as the Leader. The Leader thus elected by the Assembly of Experts shall assume all the powers of the vilāyat al-amr and all the responsibilities arising therefrom.⁹²³

In the defense of the Constitution, Ayatollah Khamenei explains the election process of the *valī-i amr* as democratic. He asserts that since the people elect the members of the Assembly of Experts, the decision exerted by the Experts is indeed the people's decision. Therefore, the election of the *valī-i amr*, though not directly conducted by the people, is indeed a reflection of the decision of the people through their elected officials.⁹²⁴

To affirm the nature of Iran's democratic system and the legitimacy of the position of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, in his speeches, Ayatollah Khamenei often criticizes the era of the Shah's regime, when Iranians had no voice and no choice in electing their leader. During an interview in 1981, while comparing the political condition of the Islamic Republic to that of the Shah's era, the leader takes pride in the current political freedom and political rights of the Iranian nation by participating in elections. "Nearly 17 million out of 19 million electoral votes supported the

referendum of the Islamic Republic, whereas during the Shah they could not exercise the right to vote for the referendum,” proudly acclaims then-President Khamenei.⁹²⁵

In his criticism, Khamenei criticizes the Shah’s secular regime as a “hereditary monarchy,” where people could not elect the head of the State. He contends that unlike the Shah’s regime, the Islamic government is democratic in two senses: 1) people make independent decisions for their government through participating in elections; and 2) Iranians exercise independence from foreign domination.⁹²⁶

Furthermore, Khamenei argues that the Iranian youth were asleep during the Pahlavi regime. “The first enemy that invaded them was sleep” (*avalīn doshmanī keh bar īshān takht, khawb boud*), asserts the leader.⁹²⁷

The youth had no direction and no purpose. The greatest thing the Islamic movement did in Iran was to awaken Iranians from this careless and negligent condition towards their future. The enemy wanted this for Iran. Before the enemy was able to strike from outside, it had already stricken from inside and that was sleep. But the revolution woke us up. The issue here is that a nation must be active, must move forward, must decide and strive towards its future, and must exercise its will. The Islamic revolution helped us to be able to bring down these walls that restricted us and found freedom from the bondage that had crippled our people and our youth. The Islamic revolution placed a model before us – an Islamic Republic – “Republic” and “Islamic.”⁹²⁸ Thus, contrary to the past, under the Islamic government Iranians are independent from the humiliating powers of the West. Due to the nation’s fervent faith and resilience, the Islamic revolution replaced humiliation with glory, bitter and humiliating dependence of the previous evil regime with independence, and total surrender to the foreigners with resistance and power. Therefore, the “new” Iranian nation gained a “new identity,” which is democracy. The Islamic revolution laid the foundation for a democratic government based on human values by overthrowing the irrational hereditary monarchy, and with the establishment of the Islamic system, the Iranian nation found its way to progress.⁹²⁹

The Islamic revolution gave rise to the spirit and belief of “Yes, they can.” It was the Iranian youth, the revolutionary youth that gave rise to the numerous successes in the areas of building dams, energy facilities, making planes, military equipment and attaining a complicated nuclear knowledge. These are the blessings of the revolution.⁹³⁰

The Iranian Youth as the Army of God

Khamenei considers the Iranian youth to be the future generation that will sustain the revolutionary ideals. He perceives them as the army of God, “if they are trained right. They should be taught and trained correctly so that they move in the right direction, which is fighting for Islam.”⁹³¹ He also sees this goal as his own personal duty. Khamenei seems to place importance on mobilizing his army of youth through his teachings, motivating and encouraging. The supreme leader continuously meets with university students to discuss political issues, to mobilize them for war against enemies of the Islamic Republic, and for their support of the Islamic Republic’s internal and external affairs and agenda.

Universities have always been the battle ground for political wars during the Shah and after the victory. Khamenei himself is a byproduct of this war. His political career was born at the university as a *ṭolbeh* (student). Even early in his supreme leadership, in January 1990, Khamenei had representatives in universities to maintain his connection with the youth. Khamenei always believed in influencing the youth through proper Islamic education. This was something he believed even early on in his twenties, which is undoubtedly a reflection of the influence his father and teachers had on his religious and political thoughts and the Islamic teachings of his youth.⁹³²

Although some Iranian youth would agree with the leader, others would dispute his notion of freedom and democracy under *vilāyat-i faqīh*. There are those who would argue that the very notion of appointive *vilāyat-i faqīh* gives birth to so-called “clerical monarchy.”

When Khomeini was promoting his Islamic government, while in exile, he promised the Iranian people a democratic system, where they could elect their leaders. He even promised them that he personally would not play any political role in the government. By declaring himself as

the *valī-i amr* after the establishment of the government, he himself acted against his own promises. However, one can argue that the appointment of Ayatollah Khomeini as *valī-i amr* was indeed a democratic appointment since the Iranian people had demanded and accepted his leadership through the Islamic revolution and voted for the Islamic government.

But, the more challenging question some ask is the appointment of Ayatollah Khamenei as *valī-i amr*. When it came time to electing Khamenei as Supreme Leader, public elections were not held nor were Iranian citizens consulted. All decisions were made behind closed doors through Hashemi-Rafsanjani's leadership as the Speaker of the Assembly of Experts. Some may argue that the Assembly acted within the parameters of law and the constitution. On the other hand, several testimonials have been given prior to Khomeini's death indicating that he had already selected Khamenei as his successor. According to Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the members of the Assembly wanted to make sure that the Imam's wishes were fulfilled. If indeed this is true, then both Supreme Leaders; Khomeini and Khamenei, and the members of the Assembly acted against the very notion of Iran's democratic system.⁹³³ Thus, one can argue that their actions confirmed that the position of the supreme leader is non-negotiable, therefore hereditary and appointive. Hence, the will of the Iranian people is overlooked in the election of their top leader.

Ayatollah Khamenei disputes this notion by emphasizing the republican and the Islamic nature of the Islamic Republic. During his remarks at the inauguration of President Ahmadinejad on August 3, 2009, while addressing the national crisis over the controversial reelection of the president, he reminds the nation of the political realities of Iran prior to the revolution when people had no voice and no choice. He then emphasizes the great divine security the revolution brought to Iranians which is rule and governorship of the people (*hakemiyyat va vilāyat bar mardom*):

Despite controversies, the very presence of the people at the political scene and their participation in the elections is an indication of their response to their divine duties, which together form one united truth: Islamicism and republicanism, which are one united element. In the heart of Islamicism is republicanism. In the heart of divine principles is reliance and respect for the will and vote of the people. The Islamic republic is one united truth which has been given to the Iranian nation through the Islamic revolution. Those who claim democracy and criticize Iran's democratic system are the very ones who supported the dictatorship of the Shah and an era when Iranians exercised no rights.⁹³⁴

After 30 years of events, challenges, pains and sufferings, Iran has become immune against political blows. That means the Islamic Republic is not a joke. Don't discount the security strength, spy and propaganda agencies of different global security and propaganda systems. Don't discount Hollywood, their influential artistic power, their wealth, and their huge propaganda and political machines. These are no jokes. Our youth must know these, understand these realities, and we must not be afraid or intimidated to talk about them. We must understand and realize the reality, accept them and act upon them. Which country in the world has experienced as much opposition as Iran has? They have all come together attacking Iran from different directions and the Islamic Republic is resisting. Is this a joke?⁹³⁵

When addressing the youth, Khamenei calls himself their "old father" and says, "Listen to the advice of 'your old father' [and his wisdom] based on his past experiences. The thing that will help the progress of our country is indeed through freedom of thought. That means to freely express views; not cause commotions."⁹³⁶ For Khamenei the way this expression of political thought is conducted is in an organized fashion, within legal boundaries, where individuals express their views, while holding a meaningful dialogue. This is a Qura'nic principle he says and quotes *az-Zumar* 17-18.⁹³⁷ He further asserts:

As views and opinions are expressed, then considerations are given, actions are taken, there is no need for commotion, especially when the enemy is watching, helping and reporting. Nonetheless, progress is being made. Our youth have progressed in knowledge, in their political views, and the penetration and influence of religious thinking has deepened in their thinking.⁹³⁸

As tensions grow between the notion of *vilāyat-i faqīh* and democracy, so do the visits of Ayatollah Khamenei to universities and youth organizations. To calm the political atmosphere, he reminds the youth of their religious duties, the ideals of the revolution, and the state of the

Iranian nation during the Shah's regime. He reminds the students of the nation's "suffering" under the CODO (colonization, oppression, domination and opposition) of foreign powers; and he wants them to appreciate the miraculous changes the Islamic government has brought into the lives of the Iranian nation, especially in the areas of science and technology. Khamenei celebrates Iran's status within the region and the global community. He uses external opposition, especially sanctions against Iran's nuclear program, as a tool to affirm the past and prove Khomeini-Khamenei's principles.

Ayatollah Khamenei's Closing Words to the Iranian Youth

You are my children. Human beings automatically love their children whether that child knows or not or whether he [or she] wants or not, or whether he [or she] is grateful for his [or her] father or mother's love.⁹³⁹ Dear youth, this country is yours, tomorrow belongs to you – whether it is scientific authority (*eqtedar-i 'elmī*) or political power (*eqtedar-i sīyāsī*), or economic power (*eqtedar-i eqtešādī*), or intelligence power (*eqtedar-i eṭela 'atī*), or the power of [political] movements (*ḥarekatha-ye sīyāsī*) in different parts of the world, or international power (*eqtedar-i beyn-ol-melalī*) – all are sources of honor (*eftekhar*) for you. They are sources of pride for you and you must struggle for such accomplishment and feel responsible. The youth have responsibility.⁹⁴⁰

What I expect of the Iranian youth is that they do not divert from their path, and reject their Islamic regime. Criticism of certain leaders is not criticism of the [entire] system or the government. Islamic system means the formation of Islamic law. Our greatest responsibility in this Islamic system is the protection and defense of the system. These duties are outlined in our constitution and in the will of the Imam. It is the duty of the Iranian youth wherever they are at work, at school or in the society as a whole, to safeguard and protect the regime. This is a regime for which many young people have sacrificed themselves. Much young blood has been shed. Many young lives have been lost. Many sacrifices have been made to give this regime life and to give this nation a new Islamic identity. Therefore, opposing this regime is inhumane. The key things to remember are to honor the constitution, pathway of the Imam as outlined in his will and the fundamental mottos and policies of the country. We have to protect and defend these at all times. The youth need to think about freedom in terms of Islam, whether it is individual or societal or political freedom, or it is financial or spiritual freedom. They are all in the realm of Islam. Today the enemy tries to use every device through modern communications to change your minds and force you to submit to their ways. Focus on progress in knowledge and make up for lost time. Give importance to sports, first for personal health, and second for the international scene.⁹⁴¹

Ayatollah Khamenei's Closing Words to the Iranian Leaders

In his meeting with a group of scientific elite on October 28, 2009, Ayatollah Khamenei says:

I sit with our youth several times a year for different occasions. We discuss different issues, express our opinions and answer questions. I have independently and freely evaluated different large and small projects in the country. Based on my evaluations, I see a noticeable progress in our country in comparison to 10 years ago. That means progress is clearly evident. Our youth themselves have proven to us that they are focused on critical scientific (*'elmī*) issues of the country. They are concerned about the future of their country and its progress. It is obvious that our youth are concerned about basic issues. One of our youth said: "Activities must be based on the needs of the future. Plan (*tarsīm*) this future. Picture these needs." Or, another young man said, "We must determine our direction ourselves not the direction that others or Westerns have drawn for us so that we can complete their agendas for the future. We have to see what we need and secure it." These are critical statements – statements that are made by wise, alert and aware individuals – by those who understand and analyze the needs and future of their country. However, understanding is not enough. Planning must be done. We have to create cultural development (*farhangsazī*) and expand it in the society. We have to make the components of spiritual insight (*'onşor-i ma'anaviyyat-i dīnī*), not a spirituality that is absent from or separated from religion, which indeed is not spirituality, which is the principle factor in our scientific move (*harekat-i 'elmī*) and scientific research (*pazhūhesh-i 'elmī*).

The secret to the progress of a country is knowledge. The most important issues are science (*'elm*), inquiry (*taḥqīq*) and research (*pazhūhesh*). The reason the West is wealthy is due to its knowledge. Its power and authority is due to knowledge. Its bullying (*zūrgūyyi*) today is because of knowledge. If it had not acquired knowledge, it could not have interfered in global affairs with force. Therefore, give importance to knowledge and pursue it. For years I have emphasized on the issues of knowledge, inquiry, research, innovation, and breaking the borders of knowledge. Power is not possible without a variety of knowledge (*dānesh*).⁹⁴²

Khamenei begins 2013 with a keen awareness of internal and external oppositions and makes every effort to recruit the Iranian nation, especially the youth, to support the regime. He makes special and intentional emphasis on the external enemy and its so-called devices against Iran. He calls upon extra alertness and places fear and intimidation of the perceived enemy in the hearts of the people. Perhaps the heightened concern of the supreme leader during the first several months

is due to a series of recent severe economic sanctions on Iran and the June Presidential elections. In both cases, Khamenei is trying to keep the youth in check and avoid a second 2009 national crisis.⁹⁴³

To Iran's external opponents, Ayatollah Khamenei sends a strong message: "those who threaten to bomb Iran, even if they bomb the nuclear facilities, they cannot achieve their goals."⁹⁴⁴

One of the leaders of the world, which I refuse to name said, "Let us bomb different nuclear centers of Iran." But, he also said, "One cannot bomb knowledge." He is right. Let's say they bombed Natanz, or Isfahan's facilities, how can they bomb knowledge? You see, knowledge brings immunity and power. Be careful they don't create confusion in your universities, classrooms, and research institutions. If you see a group is causing confusion, be pessimistic towards that group. They have targeted your power and your future. Therefore, make power and authority your goal which necessitates attaining knowledge and continuously progressing.⁹⁴⁵

Today's youth, the third young generation's readiness, courage and zeal to defend their religious and revolutionary identity, is no less than the first young generation, who was present during the imposed war and holy defense (*jang-i tahmīlī va defa' moqadas*). The reality is that the revolution belongs to the people. People take ownership of the revolution. They are satisfied with the revolution, because they see that the revolution has shown them the pathway to happiness, prosperity, supreme human ranks, both materially and spiritually, which is the path to Islam, the path to the redemptive teachings of Islam. Our youth will overcome these threats.⁹⁴⁶

So, the struggle to win the hearts and minds of the Iranian youth intensifies...

CONCLUSION

Out of the mouth of the leader—the speeches, interviews, and writings of Ayatollah Khamenei, Supreme Leader of Iran, reveal an individual who is as complex as he is influential. His religio-political ideology began formulating over 50 years ago and was influenced by his father, by Muslim political leaders such as Navab Safavi and Seyyid Qutb, and reinforced during a youthful activism that helped topple the Shah's monarchy. Inspired by the revolutionary goals of his mentor, Ayatollah Khomeini, Khamenei's interpretations of democracy are solely within the framework of an Islamic government based on Qur'anic principles, the Sunnah of the Prophet and religious precepts. Freedom from colonization, oppression, domination, and opposition (CODO) means clerical leadership and complete adherence to Shi'i Islam. Religious rule is interpreted within a political setting that promotes the supremacy of Islam and Islamic government with the goal of ultimate Islamic rule not just for Iran, but for the entire Muslim world and, indeed, for the world at large. The result is isolation and alienation from those whom Khamenei perceives to be the chief enemies of Iran and Islam—the United States, Israel and their allies.

An analysis of over 500 speeches and 100 press interviews along with an intense review of selective articles, books, and writings in the original Persian Farsi language reveal the key themes of Khamenei's political ideologies. These themes include: the supremacy of Islam, freedom and independency, isolation policy of "Neither East, Nor West," progress, America, Palestine, Israel, Muslim unity, the nuclear program, youth and religious democracy. These ideologies have implications for Iran's domestic and foreign policies as well as for the regional developments in the Muslim world.

Analysis of the Development of the Supreme Leader's Political Ideologies

As a political activist who began his struggle against the Shah's regime in 1962, Khamenei's goal was a religious government, a theocracy that reconciled religion and politics. For Khamenei, there is no separation of religion and state as was propagated by his predecessor, Ayatollah Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini. Religious rule is interpreted within a political setting; there is no compartmentalization.

With Khomeini's affirmations of Khamenei by assigning him various offices within the newly-formed Islamic government, Khamenei's faith is affirmed by political power and his political power is influenced by his faith. During this era, and especially during his presidency as he governs a country with internal opposition and external enemies, he realizes that in addition to religion, an advanced military, intelligence, and political alliances are also critical.

When he assumed the role of supreme leader, Khamenei's presidents tested his resolve. Hashemi-Rafsanjani embraced a rapprochement policy towards the U.S. and Khamenei retaliated by affirming his authority to prevent any possible U.S. intervention. The central themes became Islam and Islamic ideals, export of Iran's revolution, Muslim unity and progress. When President Mahmoud Khatami introduced his open door policy, "again, Khamenei retaliated against any Western cultural incursion and stressed Khomeini's ideals of an Islamic democracy centered on progress. The election of a conservative president, Ahmadinejad, enabled Khamenei to intensify focus on his three central ideals—freedom, independence and justice—by stressing the supremacy of Islam, enmity with the West (especially the U.S.), progress (nuclear program), export of the cultural revolution through education (soft diplomacy), and a strong intelligence and military.

The speeches of the supreme leader reveal his intense and determined focus on engaging with the Iranian youth through his “Second Cultural Revolution” and soft diplomacy with frequent visits to universities and other educational systems. His major themes when addressing the youth are Iranian progress and power, enmity with the U.S., Israel and the enemies of Islam and Islamic Iran. In this context, power means military power through advances in knowledge, science (including medical science), technology, energy production, and Iran’s controversial nuclear program. He encourages the youth to be self-reliant and independent through development of their own abilities and Iran’s rich natural resources and Iranian talents, while learning technological advances from the West and other nations that are advanced in scientific knowledge.

The inclusion of moderate-minded President Hassan Rouhani in the 2013 Presidential elections was perhaps the most effective tool utilized by the supreme leader to win the hearts of the Iranian youth during debates over *vilāyat-i faqīh* (Guardianship by the Jurisconsult) which assured him that Iranian leadership remains in the hands of the clerics. Additionally, he had the support of a president who agreed with his vision of an Iran with nuclear knowledge and capabilities.

Personal Political Power

Forbes magazine lists Khamenei among the top 100 leaders and identifies him as, “the America-hating, nuke-hungry country’s top decision maker.”⁹⁴⁷ Khamenei however, through his public statements, sees himself differently. Khamenei was the only Iranian politico-religious clerical leader among Khomeini’s top deputies (including Ayatollah Montazeri and Hashemi-Rafsanjani) who earned the right to become the heir of Khomeini’s politico-religious leadership. As the successor to Khomeini’s power and as Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic,

Khamenei not only inherited Khomeini's political power, but also the ideologies and goals of his Islamic Revolution. For Khamenei, the ideals of Islamic Republic of Iran are the same as the ideals of the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

First and foremost, according to Khamenei and Iran's constitution, the very source of power and authority of the Iranian government is Islam which springs from the divine. Hence, the divine is at the center of the Islamic Republic. This means that based on his perceptions, the leaders of the Iranian Republic are led by the divine and guide Iran through divine laws. Thus, the enemies of the Islamic Republic, internal and external, do not fight flesh and blood but against the divine. Therefore, Khamenei's power and authority as a religio-political leader is not limited to any authority given or supported by mere human beings. The very essence of the source of his power, *vilāyat-i faqīh*, is this undisputed divinely-designated power.

Additionally, Khamenei attributes his success to the power of the clerical establishment in the 1979 Revolution and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Unlike the 1905-6 Constitutional Revolution and the 1953 Mosaddeq's Nationalization of Iran's Oil Movement, the 1979 Islamic Revolution was able to withstand any opposition by the Shah's regime and topple the monarchy. As a young cleric and a member of Khomeini's clerical military camp, Khamenei played a critical role in organizing the Islamic revolution, recruiting Khomeini's militant youth and fighting against the Shah's powerful regime despite imprisonments, tortures and exiles. A group of seminary-trained clerics whose only weapon was their religious faith in Islam, was able to overthrow a powerful monarchy that had a massive military, extensive finances, international influence and foreign support.

For Khamenei, Iran has exerted tremendous power in the Muslim world in two ways: First, through its isolation policy of, "Neither East, Nor West," Iran has become a model of

resistance for the Muslim world. By exerting such political power, Iran displayed to the other Muslim nations that they, too, can exist without influence from foreign powers. Second, Iran's ability to withstand both external and internal opposition has been Iran's "silent power." The supreme leader takes pride in Iran's ability to sustain itself during the eight-year "imposed" Iraqi war against a newly-formed regime. For him, this alone confirms the strength of the clerical rule.

According to Khamenei, Iran has been able to effectively export its "Islamic Cultural Revolution," into the Muslim world, which promoted the Islamization of Muslim societies. In his view, this undisputed Iranian power is witnessed in the exhibition of the 2011 Islamic Awakening. The unfolding events in the Middle East and North Africa—Tunisia, Bahrain, Libya, Egypt and Syria—were major victories for the Islamic Revolution and were the product of the ideals of the Islamic Republic. In his call for an Islamic Revolution, Khomeini demanded absolute independence from any foreign powers, and under Khamenei's leadership, Tehran has been successful in upholding Khomeini's chief revolutionary ideal.

Khamenei believes that he is not only Iran's leader, but he also perceives himself as the leader of the Muslim world and more importantly as Palestine's "foster parent," often combining Palestine's and Iran's interests together. Thus, the enemies of Palestine are enemies of Iran and vice versa. As Palestine's "foster leader" Iran exerts its power in the Muslim world by supporting the Palestinian cause as an Islamic cause. This, too, raises Iran's status despite criticism received by Iranians for potentially sacrificing their interests for Palestine's interests.

Iran's ability to export its "Islamic Cultural Revolution" and rigorously fight for the Palestinian cause against Israel, while progressing in its controversial nuclear program, together have given Iran a "perceived power." Whether Iran is close to making a bomb or not, or if Tehran has any intentions of making a bomb, the mere perception that they *can* or *may* produce a

nuclear bomb places it in a powerful position. This “Iranian threat,” whether true or false, essentially boosts Iran’s political power in the region as well as in the Muslim world.

Khamenei possesses political wisdom and alertness with prodigious insights. Patience and endurance are two personal and political strengths which influence his political ideology and decision-making process. Khamenei does not rush in decision-making on any significant political issue. He often says very little, like his predecessor, and he reveals his policies with words that only those who are familiar with his ideologies may truly grasp.

Themes at the Center of Ayatollah Khamenei’s Political Ideology

Islam and supremacy of Islam, independence and freedom, America or the West and domination, Palestine, Israel, freedom and independence, export of Iran’s Cultural Revolution, Muslim unity, progress, a nuclear program and religious democracy are key themes in Khamenei’s religio-political ideology. Three themes central to his ideology remain constant: the Supremacy of Islam, which means the superiority of the Islamic faith, Islamic principles, Islamic ideals, the Islamic government and ultimate Islamic rule; independence from Western intervention (“Neither East, Nor West policy”) and enmity for the West or those considered to be the “enemies” of Iran, the Islamic Revolution, and Islam; and progress economically, politically, educationally, technologically, scientifically, socially, ethically, and religiously, which will contribute to overcoming the power of CODO.

America and its Western and non-Western allies, chief among them, Israel, are defined by the leader in the following manner:

Aggressive and interfering arrogant powers; international hegemons; domineering Western powers; sponsor of oppression in the international community; corrupt network of global dictatorship; foreign plotters; main perpetrators; leaders of sedition; corrupt and despotic rulers, tyrant and unjust governments; big treason; liars; America the bigger Satan and its accomplices and one who holds the flag of pride and torture; the arrogant

front led by the United States; the dependent, puppet regimes backed by the United States; [Muslim] nations dependent upon America and the CIA; the British government as the key perpetrator inciting sectarian divisions among Muslims; powerful rivals in the region, [and together] opponents of Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran.⁹⁴⁸

Khamenei expresses his disdain for Israel and her supporters:

The fabricated or fake Zionist regime; usurping regime; the criminal Zionist regime; hatred of nations; the complicated networks of global dictatorship and their satanic links to the Zionism; the Zionists and the great Satan and the Western powers; the global arrogance spearheaded by the U.S. and Zionism; all tyrants and the Zionists, the agents of the Zionist regime; America, Zionism and governments that take orders from them; corrupt agents of America, NATO and Zionism; intelligence services of America, England and the Zionist regime; and a cancerous tumor that must be removed.⁹⁴⁹

Following are Khamenei's statements regarding policies implemented in the Middle East by the "enemies" of Islam and Iran:

- Through Western propaganda machines, they have launched psychological war against Iran and the Muslim world;
- Through instigating sectarian divisions among Muslims, America has engaged in a soft war with the Muslim world;
- Through America's interference, the Muslim world has been subjected to humiliation, dominance and oppression;
- Because of their materialistic gains, they have plundered the Muslim world; and
- They have isolated nations that have resisted by raising the flag of Islamic justice, and instigated fear of these nations in the hearts of their neighboring countries and the global community, so that they are isolated from the rest of the world.

Khamenei's response to these global powers is Islam and the ultimate rule of Islam over the global community. By placing Islamic supremacy, resistance to foreign powers, and progress as interrelated themes at the center of his political ideologies, he formulates his policies regarding diplomatic relations with America and its allies, Iran's nuclear program, the regional

Muslim and non-Muslim countries and the unity of the Muslim world through export of Iran's Cultural Revolution, Palestine and Israel, and freedom and democracy.

Palestine-Israel, Export of Iran's Cultural Revolution and Muslim Unity

For Khamenei, Palestine is “the wound of the Muslim world,” and it is an Islamic issue. Although he calls upon the entire Muslim community to engage in ending Palestine's “oppression,” he believes only Muslim states that are devoted to Islam and are free from Western or foreign domination or influence will be able to participate in the resolution of this Islamic problem in the heart of the Muslim world.

To Khamenei, the export of the Islamic Republic's ideals to the Muslim world is critical. Since he claims that Iran is the only Muslim nation that has embraced Islam totally, its Islamic culture is superior to all other Islamic cultures. Additionally, he purports that Iran has continuously progressed in every aspect despite wars, oppositions, threats and sanctions. Therefore, to Khamenei, the status of Iran is raised as leader of the Muslim world and the flag-bearer of Islam.

Khamenei seeks to create political alliances similar to the alliances of the Western nations so that a global Islamic force will be created that upholds Islam, Islamic faith, Islamic ideals and Iran's Islamic culture. This United Muslim Alliance (UMA) will then have economic and political power, superior military intelligence, and will not only be able to resolve the Palestinian issue but also every political issue within the Muslim world and beyond.

America and Its Allies

Like his predecessor, Khamenei insists that the Muslim world has suffered for decades under the severe hands of the United States because of CODO, and Iran and the Muslim world

will only become victorious against the U.S. domination policy by maintaining Iran's chief Islamic ideals. All negotiations with America and her Western and non-Western allies are dependent upon acceptance of these ideals and Iran's Islamic philosophy. Only then may Iran be willing to consider negotiations.

The Nuclear Program

For Khamenei, Iran's nuclear program is the outcome of the chief ideals of the Islamic Republic and is the source of Iran's pride or "Persian pride." By emphasizing Iran's ancient history, its heritage and greatness of its civilization, the supreme leader believes in the right and duty of Iran to continuous progress. Thus, based on his chief ideals, a nuclear program is not only Iran's right but also a religious duty as well. He asserts that religiously, Islam has called Muslims to continuously progress in temporal and eternal affairs which includes advances in all types of knowledge including nuclear advancement. Politically, it is the duty of Iranians to become a powerful Muslim nation to protect their interests and the interests of "oppressed" Muslim nations. For the leader, all negotiations must be held based upon these ideals.

Freedom and Religious Democracy

For Khamenei, it is the duty of the Muslim leader to assure that the Muslim society is protected from any Western infiltration. Since a Muslim society is governed by Islamic religious principles and resistance is at the core of Iran's ideals, the only form of an acceptable democracy is a religious democracy that demands resistance towards the West and enmity for any Western ideals.

An Islamic society based on religious democratic ideals has its limits, or so-called rights and duties. The rights are to participate in "free elections" and duties are to refrain from acting in

ways that would threaten national security or give rise to foreign infiltration or domination of the Iranian society. Rights will be restricted for those who violate their duties. The rights of the nation supersede individual rights.

The Issue of Youth

The future of continuing the Islamic Republic's ideals depend on the Iranian youth to accomplish its foreign policies, export its culture of revolution, unite the Muslim world, create a massive Islamic force, and spread the power of this force into the global community. To Khamenei, youth hold the key to defeating the enemies of Islam and ultimately freeing Palestine. Domestically, Iran will maintain its isolation policies, progress in its nuclear program, and increase in military power as it continues its religious democratic system.

Implications for the Future of Iran

As statistics have shown, more than 50 percent of the Iranian population was born after the Islamic Revolution. While Khamenei is emotionally, politically, psychologically and ideologically connected to the Islamic Revolution, the majority of the youth may have little or no connection. For them, the Islamic Revolution is merely part of Iranian history. Their desire is to progress in the 21st century modern world and to be an active participant in the global community.

Modern Islamists movements have become the dominant voice in Iran today. In recent years, the world has witnessed the proliferation of liberal Iranian youth who are in search of democracy, secularism, modernity, and human rights. While the Iranian regime remains static in its traditional values, the Iranian youth may be attempting to break through the barriers of traditionalism and press toward a new era that is compatible with the more democratic values of

the 21st century. The 2009 Iranian protests are an indication that the majority of Iranian youth reject religious governance because it is incompatible with their worldview. They maintain that the rules and traditions set by their government “relate to a specific era and can and must be adapted to meet the specific requirements of the day, even if they are written in the Qur’an.”⁹⁵⁰ Putting the Islamic law in this context opens the door to the modern world, human rights, and democracy. For these protesting youth, “Islamic legislation should be rewritten and religion should be separated from politics,”⁹⁵¹ which is not a move against Islam, but progress that will result in significant advances in the domestic and foreign affairs of their nation. The recent intellectual movements in Iran and the influence of Western media have helped shape this contemporary mindset. Their cry is a cry for freedom, for progress, for rights, for growth, and for integration within the international community.

In the minds of these youth, the concept of *vilāyat-i faqīh* may no longer apply to their present world. They have a voice and they want their voice to be heard. They have opinions and they want to be able to implement them into their government through just and fair elections, where the presidential candidates are not selected by the government. They are asking for participation and freedom of expression without retribution.

The clash of will between the Iranian government and the youth may eventually influence the politics of Iran and have the potential to instill welcomed changes. The Iranian regime intends to dominate the region with advanced nuclear capabilities despite the rising conflicts with the U.N., the U.S., Israel, and most nations in the world. Although the Iranian youth seek progress and the ability to fit within the global community, they may be divided on the nuclear issue. Some may find that the defiant attitude of their government is an existential threat. Others may fully support an Iran with advanced nuclear capabilities, including a nuclear bomb.⁹⁵²

Despite this divide, the imposition of sanctions, the continuous battle with the West and threats of military invasion by Israel or the U.S., Iran's youth may be aware that conflicts keep their nation in a static position politically and economically while the rest of the world progresses.

Implications for U.S. and Iran Relations

Iran's non-intervention foreign policy of "Neither East, Nor West," coupled with its perceptions of U.S. ill-will based on past relations results in continued political conflict. From his speeches, it is evident that Khamenei is convinced that the chief intent of the U.S. is to topple the Islamic Republic through internal or external forces, or both. In his view, America has demonized Iran by engaging in several "wars" with Iran since the establishment of the Islamic Republic and these wars continue to date. They include:

- *Propaganda War* – From the outset of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Khamenei asserts that the U.S. has engaged in a propaganda war with Iran, a war that "indirectly" interferes with Iran's policies. He accuses the U.S. of the following false propaganda: the absence of democracy in Iran; Iran's support of terrorism; violations of human rights committed by Iranian leaders; Iran developing a nuclear weapon to overpower Arab and non-Arab neighbors; Iran's attempts to export its revolution to other Muslim countries in order to overthrow their governments or change Sunni governments into Shi'i governments; Iran's intentions of becoming the leader of the Muslim world; and Iran's intentions of becoming a regional power.
- *Psychological War* – In order for the U.S. to succeed in this propaganda war, Khamenei asserts that America attempts to influence the hearts and the minds of the Iranian youth by criticizing the policies of their government and by offering alternative policies such as secular democracy instead of religious democracy.

- *Soft War* – To Khamenei, the combination of the propaganda and psychological wars leads to a soft war designed to devise “suspicion and discord among” Iranians. In this war, the enemy makes use of advanced communication tools to spread lies and rumors and take advantage of certain opportunities to create suspicion and discord among the people. For example, during the 2009 elections, the “enemy” created doubts and suspicions about the validity of Iranian elections to frustrate the people and the officials. For Khamenei, however, Iran was victorious.
- *Cold War or the War of Wills*: According to Khamenei, the U.S. is in a Cold War mentality and continues to threaten Iran through the imposition of economic sanctions.
- *Potential Hot War*: Khamenei perceives the U.S. and Israel as Iran’s chief threats because of America’s warnings of a possible preemptive strike against Iran either directly or indirectly by possible support of an attack by Israel.

These interpretations of U.S. policy towards Iran made by the supreme leader make diplomacy with Iran difficult and nearly impossible. While the U.S. may use every diplomatic tool (soft, hard or even smart power), as long as the supreme leader holds these ideologies there is little or no hope for negotiations with Tehran. The leader is attempting to chart a course for himself of becoming a global power.

The speeches of the leader clearly indicate his own engagement in these wars with the U.S. through his propaganda machines (mainly his own public discourses) by using Iran’s educational systems and his regional or international allies. Khamenei’s demonization of the U.S. and U.S. policies towards the “Islamic Iran” and the Muslim world continue, even as he accuses the U.S. of demonizing Iran.

The U.S. Diplomacy With Iran

The complexity of Iran's political system, its secretive nature and the various governmental factions raise the following questions for the U.S. and for the international community as well: Who is Iran and what are the intentions of its leaders? What are their domestic, regional and global goals? What are their intentions with their Arab neighbors? What are their intentions with respect to their nuclear program? What forces enable Iran to survive in the face of international threats and sanctions? And, more importantly, who leads Iran?

For America, and for Tehran as well, these speculations may reinforce a mystique about how powerful Iran really is. Iranian leadership may magnify this perception by continuing to create controversies and in return reap the greatest benefit of all—time to accomplish their political agendas domestically, regionally, or internationally. The contention over Iran's rights to a nuclear program may have unwittingly benefited Iran on four levels:

1. Iran has more time to advance in its scientific and technological testing;
2. Iran may have a greater leverage to reaffirm its claim that it is a recipient of America's hostilities;
3. Attention may be diverted from Iran's hostile domestic policies, and
4. The government may now have greater opportunities to indoctrinate the Iranian youth and promote their policies.

Through their analysis and studies of the Iranian government, diplomats, analysts and policy-makers continue to search for answers to a better U.S.-Iran relationship. Although Iran played a role in the stabilization of Iraq in May and July 2007 and cooperated in Afghanistan against al-Qaeda, the tension between Iran and the U.S. seems to remain static.⁹⁵³ Despite their informal cooperative efforts, the U.S. increased its forces in the Persian Gulf to counter the

“growing influence of Iran in the Middle East,” which keeps Iran on high alert.⁹⁵⁴ So far, attempts at a meaningful dialogue with Iran have been unsuccessful.

As the international community’s opposition to Iran’s nuclear program intensifies, so does the efforts of the U.S. to find solutions. In his 2008 inauguration speech, President Barack Obama signaled to Iran that a new era of mutual engagement was possible, even though the U.S. and its allies are convinced that Iran may have the capability of producing a nuclear bomb.⁹⁵⁵ President Obama has been insistent on direct diplomacy with Iran while his security team continuously reviews existing Iran policies and imposition of tough economic sanctions to prevent Iran from gaining the ability to create a nuclear weapon. President Obama further reached out to Iran after the election of President Rouhani, expressing his administration’s interests in engaging in talks with Tehran either through P5+1 or through bilateral channels.⁹⁵⁶ While Washington attempts diplomatic negotiations with Tehran, the U.S. State Department, NGO’s, national organizations, and religious organizations continue with soft diplomacy initiatives.⁹⁵⁷

For the past three decades, each administration from President Ronald Reagan to President George H.W. Bush, President Bill Clinton, and President George W. Bush “sought to explore possibilities for some kind of opening to Iran, either through limited tactical cooperation on specific issues of mutual interest or by testing the waters publicly.”⁹⁵⁸ Both President Reagan and President George H. W. Bush entered into talks with Iran to seek assistance for the release of American hostages in Lebanon. During President Clinton’s administration, Secretary of State Madeline Albright helped to modify some of the sanctions to allow the import of Persian pistachios and rugs with hopes of opening the doors to dialogue with Iran, but the U.S. proposals were dismissed with the demand to lift all of the sanctions.⁹⁵⁹

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice introduced a new strategy during the second Bush administration and with an emphasis on soft diplomacy, pursued increased funding for governmental and non-governmental programs. She worked on expanding cultural and educational fellowships and sponsored U. S.-funded radio, television, Internet and satellite-based broadcasting. In response, President Bush called for people-to-people exchanges with Iran and the State Department initiated new educational and cultural programs through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.⁹⁶⁰ Simultaneously, numerous U.S. private organizations including religious organizations began their own initiatives to build bridges with Iran. After the presidential elections in Iran, on June 16, 2013, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a statement to Iran that the U.S. is “ready to engage directly with the Iranian Government in order to reach a diplomatic solution that will fully address the international community’s concerns about Iran’s nuclear programme.”⁹⁶¹

The U.S. remains hopeful, amid the concerns expressed by the Israeli government and other Arab states in the region. Despite friendly gestures, threats or sanctions, Khamenei has repeatedly stated Iran’s political position regarding any current or future relations with the U.S. – “there will be no relations and no negotiations with the U.S.”⁹⁶² He has further threatened that, should there be a military strike against Iran, Tehran will respond.⁹⁶³ Although the U.S. may be hopeful by the election of the so-called moderate President Rouhani, history has shown that for the past 24 years, despite the position of the presidents on domestic and foreign policies, all policy decisions are dependent upon Khamenei’s consent. The rise and the fall of each president has been subject to the absolute authority (*qodrat-i moīlaq*) of the supreme leader. President Rouhani most likely is headed in the same direction.

Recommendations to U.S. Policy-Makers

Based on the analysis of Khamenei's ideology, U.S. policy makers might consider the key political ideologies of the supreme leader and their implementation in his domestic and foreign policies. Khamenei's political ideologies are a reflection of Iran's domestic and foreign policies. They reinforce his position that no key policy decision domestic or foreign will be executed without his consent. Iran's final policies are expressed by the leader.

“Iranian-Shi'i-Islamic principles” are at the core of Iran's domestic and foreign policies. This means that any negotiations with Iran will be based on an Islamic philosophy as interpreted by the Iranian leaders.

While the Iranian President is the head of the state, his decisions and authorities are subordinate to the supreme leader. Although the president may engage in negotiations over Iran's domestic and foreign policies, his decision is not Tehran's final decision and his approach to key policies may or may not be the supreme leader's position. Thus, in their diplomatic approaches with Iran, especially through high level diplomacy expressed in letters and proposals, U.S. policy-makers should directly engage with the supreme leader since his decision is the final decision for Iran.

Based on the speeches of the leader, Tehran's intentions of acquiring a bomb remain unclear due to the leader's emphasis on Iran's Islamic philosophy, which prohibits a Muslim nation from having WMDs. However, Khamenei has not ruled out the option of Iran's “know-how.” Out of the mouth of the leader, Khamenei intends to have an Iran that has the “knowledge” of producing a nuclear weapon (coupled with advanced intelligence and strong military) to utilize in event of a military confrontation either with the U.S. or Israel. A hypothesis to consider is that Iran may come very close to developing weapons and have the technology in

various covert or non-covert bases that allow it to weaponize in a few weeks, in order to counter a military threat by the West or Israel. Khamenei has continuously assured his domestic, regional and international audience that should Iran be attacked, Tehran would respond. Should Iran threatened by an actual military strike, if Khamenei deems it necessary, he has the authority to reverse his *fatwā* (decree) and call upon weaponization and “holy defense.”

For the supreme leader Iran’s “know-how” is not a political threat to the region or to the global community, including its “chief enemies” the U.S. and Israel, as long as their threats are not materialized. To continue receiving the support of the Iranian people, especially the youth, for his most controversial domestic policy, the supreme leader uses a three-fold strategy: 1) placing fear of obliteration by the U.S. or Israel in the hearts and minds of the Iranian people by exaggerating the U.S. and Israeli possible military strikes against Iran’s nuclear facilities or Iran as a whole; 2) calling Iran’s nuclear program a politico-religious right and duty of the Iranian people, and a sign of Iranian progress or Persian pride; and 3) using sanctions against Iran to further his “CODO narrative.” Through his indoctrination of the Iranian youth, Khamenei would organize his own Iranian Muslim militant youth, who as he says, are ready to die for Iran should he call them in action.⁹⁶⁴

Recommendations for Future Research

Palestine-Israel in the Supreme Leader’s Speeches

For the supreme leader, Palestine remains “the wound of the Middle East” (*zakhm-i khavarmiyaneh*) or “the wound of the Muslim world” (*zakhm-i donya-ye Islam*). Out of the mouth of the leader, it is doubtful that there will be any U.S.-Iran peace unless the Palestinian issue is resolved according to conditions set by Khamenei and his lieutenants. Even if the U.S. relinquishes restrictions on Iran’s nuclear program, removes economic sanctions, and returns

“Iran’s debt,” or apologizes to Iran for the “past errors” committed against Iran as defined by the Iranian leaders, still there may not be any peace or meaningful diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Iran, “until Israelis are exiled from Palestine and from the heart of the Muslim world.”⁹⁶⁵

The Supreme Leader and the Iranian Youth

One of the critical relations the supreme leader continuously tries to maintain is his close relations with the Iranian youth. During the uprisings of the 2009 elections, the international community and Iran’s internal opposition groups assumed that perhaps the Iranian youth were ready to break through the iron wall and rise up against the regime to declare “democracy.” Instead, the supreme leader and his camp were able to successfully suppress any opposition against the regime and maintain their course. Many in Iran and outside the borders of Iran have questioned whether the Iranian youth would have had the courage to protest against the regime during the 2013 elections.

The leader used effective strategies to nullify any internal opposition or uprising. One of his major tools for suppressing such uprising among the youth was the utilization of his “domestic soft power.” Through his own “Second Cultural Revolution,” Khamenei utilized educational settings to reach out to the Iranian youth and used U.S and Western opposition against Iran to his advantage as he progresses with his agenda. He has taken advantage of the “Western isolation of the Iranian society” through sanctions and possible military threats to place hatred in the hearts of these isolated Iranian youth. He has placed progress at the center of his addresses and has begun a progressive revival. Through this, he has raised his very own militant youth. A recommendation for further study is an evaluation of Khamenei’s interaction with the

Iranian youth and their response to his leadership to help U.S. policy makers gain insight into the future of Iran—especially an Iran after Khamenei.

APPENDIX A

HASHEMI-RAFSANJANI AND KHAMENEI

(1958-2013)

After serving as the Speaker and Chairman of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Parliament (Majlis) in 1980-1989, Ayatollah 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani joined the presidential race and became the fourth President of Iran. His first term began on August 3, 1989, he was re-elected in 1993 for a second term, ending on August 2, 1997.

Political Activism During the Revolutionary Era

Born in 1934, Hashemi-Rafsanjani completed his theological studies at Hawzah 'Allmiyeh in Qom under prominent scholars such as Grand Ayatollahs Khomeini (1902-1989), Seyyed Hossein Borujerdi (1875-1961), Mohamad Kazem Shariatmadari (1905-1986) and Ayatollah Mehdi Ha'eir Yazdi (1923-1999). It was his studies under Ayatollah Khomeini that introduced him to Khomeini's views on politics and the latter's call for the establishment of an Islamic government. Moved by his teacher's politico-religious ideologies, Hashemi-Rafsanjani began his political activism against the Shah's regime. As a result, he spent about four years and five months in detention.⁹⁶⁶

During Ayatollah Khomeini's exile, as the leading figure among Khomeini's "unofficial" youth organization, Hashemi-Rafsanjani organized local revolutionary meetings in Tehran and Qom.⁹⁶⁷ Between 1971 and 1976, SAVAK increased prosecution of the opposition by either imprisonment or exile. Fighting fervently side-by-side with his then-Seminary friend Khamenei and other comrades struggling for the establishment of an Islamic government, Hashemi-

Rafsanjani had stark encounters with the Shah's intelligence agents. Reputed as Khomeini's key operative, he was arrested in 1964 and served a two-month prison term, only to be imprisoned again in 1965 for four-and-a-half months.⁹⁶⁸ After his public criticism of the Shah's regime after extravagant coronation ceremonies, Hashemi-Rafsanjani was jailed again in 1967. He was finally sentenced to eight years in prison in 1973 for allegedly being in alliance with the Mujahedin-i Khalq. Hashemi-Rafsanjani was serving his sentence when Khamenei was exiled to Iranshahr in 1977.⁹⁶⁹ When the revolutionary activities intensified, Hashemi-Rafsanjani was released with several other political prisoners on October 25, 1978. Several days later, Ayatollah Hussein-Ali Montazeri and Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleqani were released as well. As demonstrations and strikes intensified, so did the need for an oversight clerical body. As a result, the five-member Islamic Revolutionary Council was formed with the approval of Ayatollah Khomeini in Paris, which Khamenei and Hashemi-Rafsanjani became members through Khomeini's formal request.⁹⁷⁰

Official Positions in the Islamic Government

As one of the pioneers of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Hashemi-Rafsanjani has occupied several critical governing posts in the Islamic Republic for the past three-and-a-half decades. He first served as one of the five prominent governing members of the Islamic Revolutionary Council (*Shura-i Enqelab-i Islami*) along with Seyyed 'Ali Khamenei, Abdul-Karim Mousavi Ardebili, Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini Beheshti and Mohammad-Javad Bahonar. Their primary task was to oversee the affairs of the revolution in the anticipation of Khomeini's return. He was also one of the co-founders of the Islamic Republican Party (*Hezb-i Jomhuri-i Islami*) in 1979.⁹⁷¹

Rafsanjani's other key positions in the Islamic Republic entailed his appointment as leader of Tehran's Friday Prayer (*Imam-i jom'eh*). He was also briefly Chair of the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution (*Ri'is-i Shura-i 'Aali-i Enqelab-i Farhangi*). He was appointed to the Ministry of Interior (*Vezerat-i Keshvar*) in 1979, shortly after the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and served until 1980. After the formation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Council (IRGC), Hashemi-Rafsanjani briefly oversaw the organization and Khamenei followed his lead.⁹⁷²

After the first cycle of Parliamentary elections (*entekhabat-i Majlis*), Hashemi-Rafsanjani was elected as the first Speaker of Iran's Parliament (*Ri'is-i Majlis-i Shura-i Islami*) on May 28, 1980. He served a nine-year term until his election as President in 1989. During the last year of Iraq-Iran war, Ayatollah Khomeini appointed him as the *de facto* Commander-in-Chief of Iran's armed forces. He played a critical role in negotiations over the U.N. Security Council Resolution 598, which resulted in the cease fire of Iraq-Iran's war.⁹⁷³

After his two-term Presidency (1989-1997), Hashemi-Rafsanjani was elected as a member of the Assembly of Experts (*Majlis-i Khobregan*) in 2006.⁹⁷⁴ With the death of Ayatollah 'Ali Akbar Feyz Meshkini (1922-2007), he became the Chairman of the Assembly of Experts and served until his reappointment in 2011. Currently, he is the Chairman of the Expediency Discernment Council of the System (*Majma'-i Tashkhis-i Maslahat-i Nezam*), commonly known as the Expediency Council, which is an administrative body that originally was formed to resolve conflicts between the Majlis and the Guardian Council. However, its primary role is as an advisory body to the supreme leader. Hashemi-Rafsanjani has been serving in this capacity since 1989.⁹⁷⁵ After serving his two-term presidency (1989-1997), he ran for a third term in 2005 against Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, which turned into his defeat.⁹⁷⁶

The History of Khamenei-Rafsanjani Relations

Reputed as two of the principal pillars of the Iranian Revolution and founding Fathers of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Rafsanjani-Khamenei relationship dates back to the late 1950s. The two met at the Hawzah 'Allmiyeh in Qom during their theological studies and joined Khomeini's revolutionary movement.⁹⁷⁷ They both fought fervently for the establishment of an Islamic government despite paying a high personal price. Both were detained on numerous occasions and were subjected to torture.

Along with dozens of other students, Hashemi-Rafsanjani was arrested and imprisoned after the bloody events of Faydiyya School. Khamenei went to visit his friend in prison with their comrades Mohammad Javad-Bahonar. Khamenei recalls:

I did not know where to go...he knew. I told him I want to go visit Sheykh Akbar...we came to the intersection of *Golubandak*...bought mixed nuts, fruit and sweets...several heavy bags...got into the taxi and went to garrison (*padegan*). I think it was Friday. It was crowded. Many had come for visitation, including Mr. Hashemi's family...I saw him holding his children. They had shaved his head. He was without a beard and was wearing a loose military outfit. He looked so funny that we started laughing, but we were also sad since they had taken our friend there.⁹⁷⁸

After his release, Hashemi-Rafsanjani went to Mashhad to visit Khamenei. A group of the clerics which included Khamenei, his brother Seyyed Mohammad, Hashemi-Rafsanjani and nine others, gathered together to strategize their next move in support of Khomeini's movement. They decided to form an organization with formal articles of governance. They met covertly for a while until SAVAK discovered them through its informants.⁹⁷⁹ Together, Khamenei and Hashemi-Rafsanjani were commissioned by Khomeini to deliver his messages to key figures in Iran and his supporters. Both struggled to motivate clerical involvement in the movement and helped Khomeini to build his army of Iranian youth.⁹⁸⁰

In 1966, prior to Khamenei's arrest after the establishment of Sepideh Publishing Company, Khamenei and Hashemi-Rafsanjani rented a house together in Tehran, where they lived secretly with their wives and children for 15 months before SAVAK discovered their whereabouts. Since neither of them had much money, they continuously borrowed money from each other and shared meals. They also shared the monthly rent of 420 *tuman*.⁹⁸¹ Khamenei paid 200 *tuman* while Hashemi-Rafsanjani paid 220.⁹⁸² Through their brotherhood and unconditional support for one another, they not only survived the difficulties of their political activism, but they also helped each other's families to walk through those dark days.

In a statement in June 1985 then-President Khamenei called Rafsanjani "a brother and a partner."⁹⁸³ He stated:

Mr. Rafsanjani and I are two brothers. Our friendship and association goes back to the years prior to the revolution and are related to the issues of the revolution. Since the revolution, we have worked together on a daily basis. We could say that our efforts complement one another – each of us has a specific responsibility and we are performing it. We are two people who consider themselves soldiers at the service of the revolution and we consider it as an ideal of our service and beliefs. We are moving forward together and are pursuing a common goal.⁹⁸⁴

Likewise, Hashemi-Rafsanjani described his friendship and acquaintances with Khamenei in an interview in 1981. He said:

I think it was around 1958 – the year we were able to go to Iraq and Karbala – Mr. Khamenei was studying in Mashhad. As a matter of fact, I had seen him in classes, but did not know him on a personal level. When we went to the pilgrimage in Karbala, he was there too. I saw him more often there and got to know him. It was after that trip and during our political activism that we became best friends. I would say the beginning of our close friendship was the beginning of the Islamic movement – that means from the year 1962, and it grew thereafter.⁹⁸⁵

In an interview during the latter part of his Presidency (in 1989), Khamenei was asked about the possibilities of Rafsanjani as a Presidential candidate. With a vote of confidence Khamenei asserted:

Rafsanjani is as an effective, competent, mellifluous, popular and capable leader who has been exposed to a variety of leadership roles. Hence he is a politico-religious leader who is suitable for a variety of responsibilities within the Islamic Republic, including Presidency.⁹⁸⁶

Rafsanjani is someone whom Imam Khomeini trusts wholeheartedly and has complete confidence in him during the Revolution and after the Revolution. He is an individual who is trusted by the Imam and is close to the Imam. He has heard the Imam's sayings and concerns more than anyone else, and has communicated them with others. There are those who claim to know what the Imam was concerned about, but they do not know. Rafsanjani does.⁹⁸⁷

It was with such a vote of confidence and brotherhood that the two leaders supported one another before and after the revolution, applauding each other's rise in the political life of the Islamic Republic. But, unfortunately that relationship took a bitter turn.⁹⁸⁸

The Decline of Khamenei-Rafsanjani Relations

Khamenei-Rafsanjani relations began declining during the 1997 presidential elections. Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed his support for the reform-minded presidential candidate Mohammad Khatami. Although Hashemi-Rafsanjani's support of the reformists was not fully received by the reformist camp, tensions began to rise between him and the supreme leader and his conservative camp.⁹⁸⁹

During the 2005 presidential elections, Hashemi-Rafsanjani ran for office for the third time, but to his disappointment, he was defeated by the conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In some ways, Ahmadinejad's election was an indirect message of opposition by the supreme leader to his old friend. During the June 2009 elections Hashemi-Rafsanjani supported the moderate Mir-Hossein Mousavi's candidacy, which created further tensions between him and the supreme leader.⁹⁹⁰ After Mousavi's defeat to Ahmadinejad, millions of Iranians rushed into the streets of Tehran in protest of the so-called "fraudulent elections."⁹⁹¹ This gave birth to the Green Movement, in which protestors demanded the removal of Ahmadinejad. Hashemi-Rafsanjani's

daughter Faezeh Hashemi was among the protesters who were arrested. Because of the government's fierce crackdown on the protesters and his daughter's arrest, Hashemi-Rafsanjani supported the Green Movement. Siding with the reinstated President Ahmadinejad, the supreme leader condemned his long time friend's actions.⁹⁹²

Despite tensions between the two lieutenants of the Islamic Republic, Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Khamenei continued their cordial political relations. In his June 19, 2009 Friday Prayer speech after Ahmadinejad's election, Khamenei applauded Hashemi-Rafsanjani's services and sacrifices for the Islamic Revolution stating:

Rafsanjani was one of the principle figures in our struggle against the oppressive Shah. He was one of the fervent activists and followers of the Imam prior to the Revolution. Before the revolution, he gave his possessions for the cause of the movement and the support of the activists. After the revolution, Hashemi-Rafsanjani has been one of the efficacious personalities in the Islamic Republic, working alongside the Imam. He has occupied numerous critical positions and has served at the most acute junctions of the Islamic Republic, serving the revolution and the regime. On several occasions he has come close to death and martyrdom (*shahādat*) for the cause of the Islamic government. So it is important that people pay attention to these details and sacrifices.⁹⁹³

Even in his public condemnation of Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Khamenei maintained a moderate tone during his address in July 25, 2009. He stated:

We should not insult any one foolishly. We should not negate the merits of anyone because of an issue. We have to be fair and act and speak in fairness. God commands us that if we are enemies with another, we should not allow this enmity to force us to treat the other unfairly or unjustly. Now, he is not even an enemy. Everyone set injustice aside. Set unfairness aside also.⁹⁹⁴

Khamenei reemphasized his position in his November 25, 2009 speech:

Be vigilant. Be careful. Just because of one's offense or error we cannot call them *monafeq* (internal enemy; opposition). Simply because one makes comments against what you and I believe, we should not claim he [or she] to be against *vilāyat-i faqīh*. We have to make these distinctions cautiously. We have to be vigilant in making these conclusions, because sometimes they could cause great harm.⁹⁹⁵

Although the two leaders continued their public cordial relations, in his attempts at marginalizing Hashemi-Rafsanjani's political influence, in March 2011, the supreme leader removed him as the Chair of the Assembly of Experts and appointed Mahdavi Kani.⁹⁹⁶ Through this political move, Khamenei eliminated "a Rafsanjani threat" since the main task of the Assembly of Experts is to remove the supreme leader. Frictions between the two leaders intensified when Hashemi-Rafsanjani's daughter, Faezeh Hashemi, was found guilty by Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court for being accused of spreading anti-regime propaganda and "making blunt statement and chanting provocative slogans" during the 2009 protests. She was sentenced to a six-month prison term, which began in September 23, 2012 and ended in March 19, 2013.⁹⁹⁷

The final showdown between the two leaders was witnessed during the 2013 Presidential elections. After his reluctant last-minute announcement for candidacy, the Guardian Council disqualified Hashemi-Rafsanjani on May 21, 2013. Hashemi-Rafsanjani took his defeat graciously and did not challenge the decision.⁹⁹⁸ However, Ayatollah Khomeini's daughter Zahra Mostafavi protested the Guardian Council's decision in a letter to the supreme leader.⁹⁹⁹ Likewise, Hasan Khomeini, grandson of Ayatollah Khomeini, expressed his sorrow and disbelief for the decision of the Guardian Council. He called Hashemi-Rafsanjani his grandfather's confidant and best friend.¹⁰⁰⁰

Currently, Hashemi-Rafsanjani serves as the Chairman of the Expediency Council. On August 3, 2013, the leader appointed the out-going President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to the Council as one of his designated members.¹⁰⁰¹

REFERENCES

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- ⁹ Hedayatollah Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*” (Tehran: Mo’aseseh-i Motale’at va Pazhouhesh’ha-ye Siyasi, 2011), 615-6.
- ¹⁰ Anoushiravan Ehteshami, and Majoob Zweiri (eds.), *Iran’s Foreign Policy: From Khatami to Ahmadinejad* (UK: Ithaca, 2008), 2. Additional recommended source see Amelie Kuhrt, *A Corpus of Sources From the Achaemenid Period* (New York: Routledge, 2007) .
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- ¹⁵ Ferdosi was a Shi’ite Muslim who wrote the great epic *Shahnameh* (The Book of Kings), which took him nearly 35 years to complete. See Ehteshami and Zweiri, *Iran’s Foreign Policy: From Khatami to Ahmadinejad*, 3-4. Also see “Ferdowsi,” *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, (2011) <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9034029>>.
- ¹⁶ *The Shi’ite Doctrine of the Imamate (Ithnā-‘Ashariyya) or Twelver Shi’ism*: The Shi’ite Imami doctrine is dominated by the Fourteen Inerrant and Impeccable (*Chardah Masum*) Ones. The Fourteen Proofs (*hujja*) consist of Prophet Mohammad, his daughter Fatima, ‘Ali, the latter’s two sons al-Hasan and al-Husayn, and the nine subsequent Imams. The twelve Shi’i Imams are as follows: 1) ‘Ali b. Ibn Talib (d. 40/661); 2) al-Hasan b. ‘Ali (d. 49/669); 3) al-Husayn b. ‘Ali (d. 61/680); 4) ‘Ali b. al-Husayn (Zayn al-‘Abidin) (d. 95/714); 5) Mohammad al-Baqir (d. 115/733); 6) Dja’far al-Sadiq (d. 148/765); 7) Musa al-Kazim (d. 183/799); 8) ‘Ali al-Rida (d. 203/818); 9) Mohammad Djawad al-Taki (d. 220/835); 10) ‘Ali al-Naki (d. 254/868); 11) al-Hasan al-‘Askari (d. 260/874); and 12) Mohammad al-Mahdi (al-Kazim and al-Hudjdja who entered into Lesser Occultation in 874. This period continued until 941, which marks the beginning of the Greater Occultation.). See *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, “Ithna ‘Ashariyya,” 277. Shi’ites believe that through the doctrine of *naṣṣ* (specific designation of an Imam by the preceding Imam) the inerrancy (*isma*), authority and knowledge of the Prophet was transmitted to all twelve

Imams. The twelve Imams exercised the judiciary authority and *vilāya* (Guardianship) they had inherited from the Prophet through ‘Ali. As the head (*ra’is*) of the *ummah*, the succeeding nine Imams found legitimacy in their political and religious authority due to their inheritance from Mohammad. This very concept of a single line of twelve hereditary Imams separated Imamism or Twelvers (*Ithnā-‘Ashariyya*) from other Shi‘ite sects. The Shi‘ite tradition shows that the *Chahardah Masum* existed even before the creation and that God delegated (*tafwiz*) the task of creation to them. Therefore, these infallible Imams are the means (*ṣabab*) to God’s creation. They maintain that the Imams responded to their divine call in pre-eternity and declared their readiness to serve God and his community of believers then. See “Chahardah Masum,” *Encyclopedia of Iranica Online*, (2011) <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/chahardah-masum>>. The Imamate is based on the principle of vicegerency, where God has called upon a series of “rightly guided men” as successors to His chosen Prophet Mohammad. These Viceroy of God (*khalifat Allah*) are the Vehicles and the Organs through whom God reaches out to humanity so that human beings can gain access to the knowledge (*‘elm*) of God. Allah revealed the divine Truth (*al-ḥaqq*) to humanity through lawgiving prophecy and the revelation of the Sacred Book, which descended from Heaven (*tanzil*) to Mohammad. The revelation of His will was further extended to the ‘amma (mass of humanity) through the mission of these twelve imams, who are His *vilāya*. These Impeccable Ones are the only ones who have complete knowledge of the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Imams are endowed with *ruh al-quds* (the Holy Spirit), which enables them to communicate with the divine. As a result, they are inspired with knowledge and wisdom not accessible to ordinary believers. Imams are the Eyes, Tongue, and benevolent Hands of Allah to bring about God’s justice, mercy and grace here on earth. They are the path of God (*sirat Allah*) to guide the faithful to the will and justice of Allah through their interpretation (*ta’wil*) of the Qur’an. They are the Proof of God (*hujjat Allah*) or the Greatest Sign (*al-ayat al-kubra*) from God. Due to their heritage from the Prophet and Fatima, they have inherited the Light which is transmitted to them through paternal blood and maternal heritage, therefore, continuing the blessings of the “Golden Age” of the Prophet to the Muslim community. See Mohammad Amir-Moezzi, Ali. *The Spirituality of Shi‘i Islam: Beliefs and Practices*, 112-155; 133; 204-208.

¹⁷ Ehteshami and Zweiri (eds.), *Iran’s Foreign Policy: From Khatami to Ahmadinejad*, 4.

¹⁸ Refers to Twelver School of Shi‘i Islam. Explanations are provided in reference number 16.

¹⁹ Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi‘i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi‘ism*, (New York: Yale University Press 1985), 107. Also see Isa Ade Bello, “The Safavid Episode: Transition from Spiritual to Temporal Leaders,” *Islamic Studies* 23.1 (1984), 1-19.

²⁰ Ja‘far al-Sadiq was the last Shi‘ite Imam to die in Medina. Beginning with Musa al-Kazim, all Shi‘i Imams died in Iraq, mainly because they were under the surveillance of the ‘Abbasid Caliphs. See Patricia Crone, *God’s Rule: Government and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 112-118. Therefore, the Imamate of al-Kazim marks the beginning of Shi‘i Imams’ arrests and confinements. The persecution of Imam al-Kazim began with the first ‘Abbasid caliph but became more intense during the reign of his successor Harun al-Rashid (786-809). He was the most influential of ‘Abbasid caliphs mainly because during his reign the caliphate obtained maximum geographical extent, prosperity and also intellectual authority in Baghdad. After arresting Imam al-Kazim, Harun al-Rashid exiled him to Basra in Southern Iraq. The Imam remained under close surveillance of the caliph. A year later the caliph removed the Imam, exiled him to Baghdad, and placed him in prison. Finally, al-Kazim was poisoned and killed by the caliph’s orders. Harun al-Rashid ordered for al-Kazim’s body to be displayed publically in Baghdad to show that the Imam was dead and avoided rumors as with previous imams that the Imam was not dead but in hiding. Imam al-Kazim’s death was considered the martyrdom of the Imam in the hands of an illegitimate ruler. Even though the ‘Abbasid caliphs used the position of the Imams to claim their religious legitimacy for their caliphal rule, placing the Imams under house arrest became normative for the caliphs in their dealings with the Imams. The ‘Abbasid caliphs took advantage of the appeal and influence of the imams among the Shi‘i community. Therefore, beginning with the second caliph, the ‘Abbasid caliphs claimed religious dignity and superiority. The second caliph during the Imamate of al-Kazim called himself “one made victorious by God. From here on caliphs included divine names in their titles until the end of their rule in the mid-13th century. Caliphs called themselves *khalifat Allah*, which implied they were deputies to Allah, operating directly under his authority, irrespective of descent or any association to the Prophet. See Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God’s Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 5.

²¹ W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Political Thought: The Basic Concepts* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1968), 111-2.

²² The Twelfth or Hidden Imam: The Period of Lesser Occultation (874-941): This period is characterized as a period of obscurity in the organization of Imami Shi‘ism. The crisis in the Shi‘i sect came in 260/874 when the eleventh imam Hasan al-‘Askari died and at the time of his death his young son had either died or disappeared.

Nonetheless, he seemed not to have left a successor. The lack of an heir and successor to the Imam gave birth to a period of confusion in Shi‘i history and a major doctrinal crisis in the community, where rival Shi‘i groups multiplied in the search of a successor to the Imam, leading to internal discord. Hamid Algar explains that due to the confusing circumstances surrounding the birth and existence of the 12th Imam, historians account for more than 22 groups that emerged during this period, more than in any other periods with the previous Imams. This is an indication of the different reactions the community expressed in response to the crisis of this period. Since in the Shi‘i tradition the *ummah* cannot remain without the oversight of an Imam, Shi‘is desperately looked for a solution. Some suggested that al-Hasan indeed did have a son named Mohammad who had gone into hiding at a very young age to free himself from the oppression of the Caliph. Others believed that al-Hasan’s surviving brother Ja‘far was the next Imam. Another group claimed that al-‘Askari was the last Imam and was in occultation since the earth could not be without a *hujja*. Others believed that al-‘Askari was dead but would resurrect, calling him *al-gayem al-Mahdī*. There were still those who claimed al-‘Askari was not an Imam therefore it was unnecessary to search for a successor. Others claimed that the Imamate like the Prophethood had come to an end. They argued that God had intentionally removed the Imamate from the earth due to his anger with humankind. See Hamid Algar, Lecture Notes. *Shi‘i Islam*, “Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (a) and the birth of his son, the 12th Imam (a),” (University of California, Berkeley 30 Oct 2001). To calm dissent and confusion among the community, ‘Uthman b. Sa‘id al-‘Amri, who had served as a financial aid to the tenth and eleventh Imams advocated the doctrine of occultation (*al-ghayba*) of the Imam. As a result, the majority agreed that the Imam’s young son had gone into hiding due to “adverse political conditions” under the ‘Abbasid Caliphs, but the Imam was not absent from the earth, and that he would return as al-Mahdī. See Poonawala, Ismail (Reviewer) Modarressi, Hossein, “Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi‘ite Islam: Abu Ja‘far ibn Qiba al-Razi and His Contribution to Imamite Shi‘ite Thought,” *Journal of Law and Religion*, 455. This led to the doctrine of Imami Shi‘ism or Imamism, which asserted the leadership of twelve Imams as the legitimate leaders of the *ummah* due to their connection to the Prophet. Consequently, the Shi‘is gained extreme political power during the ‘Abbasids, at a time when the government had committed itself to the support of the Sunnites. See Wael B. Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 110-2.

²³ Heinz Halm, *Shi‘ism*, trans. Janet Watson and Marian Hill, Second Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 81. Also see Momen, *An Introduction to Shi‘i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi‘ism*, 107.

²⁴ The four Caliphs were Abu Bakr (c. 570-634 A.D.), ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (634-644 A.D.), ‘Uthman ibn Affan (577-656 A.D.) and ‘Ali ibn Abi Tallib (ca. 596-661 A.D.). The era of their caliphate was as follows: Abu Bakr (632-634), ‘Umar (634-644), ‘Uthman (644-656) and ‘Ali (656-661).

²⁵ Halm, *Shi‘ism*, 81. Also see Momen, *An Introduction to Shi‘i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi‘ism*, 107-109.

²⁶ “Safavid Dynasty,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (2011)

<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/516019/Safavid-Dynasty>>.

²⁷ Momen, *An Introduction to Shi‘i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi‘ism*, 110. In Iranian lands *šadr* was used in reference to a scholar or an outstanding person. Initially, it referred to leading religious scholars. Later it was also used for high administrative dignitaries. At about 1380 until the end of the 18th century, it was used for the head of the government-appointed religious establishment and finally for the grand *wizier* and other dignitaries under the Qajars. The office of *šadr* was known as *šadārat*. Under the Safavids, the *šadr* was the most important religious state official. His role was limited to managing the properties, finances, religious endowments, and distributing its largesse to the various entitlement holders such as the ‘ulama’, sayyeds, and *ṭollab*. In addition, the *šadr* was the chief judicial officer for the religious courts and participated in military campaigns during the Safavid period. Like other high-ranking state officials under the early Safavids, the *šadr* held the rank of *amir*. The last *amir šadr* died in 1525. See “Šadr,” *Encyclopedia of Iranica Online*, (2011) <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/šadr>>.

²⁸ *Shaykh al-Islam* is a title given to Muslim scholars with superior authority on Islamic issues. See Momen, *An Introduction to Shi‘i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi‘ism*, 112-113.

²⁹ *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, “Law”, 408. Also see N.J. Coulson. *A History of Islamic Law*. Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, Ltd., 1964, 121.

³⁰ Halm, *Shi‘ism*, 82-3. The function of the *qādī* or proto-*qādīs* is seen as early as the caliphates of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. Even the Prophet assigned *qādīs* to the occupied territories that came under Medinese dominion. ‘Ali himself acted as a *qādī*. Often those who were appointed to *qādā’* (judgeship) were arbitrators (*ḥukkam*). The earliest so-called *qādīs* were often illiterate who were appointed to conquered provinces and their jurisdiction was limited to the population within the conquered territory or tribe. Their primary responsibility was to adjudicate

conflicts or the administration of finances and state policies. Sometimes *qāḍīs* held dual appointments such as *wizier*, deputy commander, military post or adjudicating criminal cases. The illiteracy of the *qāḍīs* and the high-level skill requirements of the office moved the office of *qāḍī* into a religious direction where the *qāḍīs* were required to have some knowledge of the socio-religious values of Islam. Another significant function of the *qāḍīs* was story-telling which entailed Qur'anic and Prophetic narratives. This particular function of the *qāḍī* required familiarity with the Qur'an. By the 60s/680s some *qāḍīs* had begun circulating Prophetic material. By the late 90s/710s most *qāḍīs* began relying on three sources of authority: the Qur'an, *sunan* (the Sunnah of the Prophet and caliphal laws), and *ra'y* (discretionary opinion.) Up until the 80s/700s and even 90s/710s the office of the proto-*qāḍī* was responsible for adjudication of legal disputes between individuals and tribes, maintaining law and order by enforcing regulations, financial administration and story-telling. Beginning in the ninth decade of the Hijra, the office of the *qāḍī* progressively changed to only "conflict resolution and legal administration," See Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law*, 35-99. During the latter part of the first century we notice the centralization of the legal administration, specifically during the Umayyad dynasty. This centralization process reformulates the functions and duties of the *qāḍī*, removing them from non-judicial or administrative tasks and focusing them primarily on judicial matters. This growing complexity of the function of the *qāḍī* and how cases were to be adjudicated leads to the establishment of *Majlis al-qāḍā'* (judge's court). These courts or hearings were held either at a local mosque or in the marketplace, or the *qāḍī's* private home, or even on public streets. The complexity of the system gave birth to a class of legal experts called *mufṭīs* (jurist-consults), who were knowledgeable in the law. Due to the growing complexity of the socio-economic life, it was impossible to employ illiterate judges. Therefore, this period experiences the emergence of individuals who dedicated themselves to the personal study of religious narratives in public circles held at local mosques called *halaqa*. Some *halaqas* were focused on story-telling, others on Qur'anic exegesis, Prophetic *sīrah*, or rituals, yet others solely on law. This scholarship gave birth to a generation of men who were considered "the elite of the legally minded in the Islamic tradition. These men "excelled in law, but not in jurisprudence as a theoretical study," which was developed later on. See Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law*, 35-99. The later decades of the second century (ca. 740-800 AD) experienced a major shift in the judicial system – the centralization of the judge's office as an official legal institution. Thus, the appointment of the judges fell directly in the hands of the caliph himself instead of his governors. This move may have been the results of the steady growth of professional legal elites entering the legal professional. This political centralization process led to the development of the office of chief justice (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*) around 170/786, whose primary duty was to appoint provincial judges. The court's prestige was increased due to the increased presence and interest of men who dedicated themselves to the learning of religious law (*fiqh*) mostly out of piety and private concerns and became legal specialists (*fuqahā'*). These legal specialists remained to be an important part of the court system where the proto-*qāḍī* solicited the opinions of these expert jurists (*mushawars*) especially in complicated cases. During 3rd/9th century or later the Islamic non-judicial duties of the *qāḍī* were removed from his office. The centralization of the judicial hierarchy especially during the 'Abbasids gave rise to this new tribunal which "stood at the margins of the *Sharī'ah* courts." See Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law*, 35-99.

³¹ Halm, *Shi'ism*, 89.

³² Shohreh Gholosorkhi, "Ismail II and Mirza Makhdum Sharifi: An Interlude in Safavid History," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 26, no. 3 (Aug, 1994), 477-488.

³³ Halm, *Shi'ism*, 89.

³⁴ Sufi literally means "one who wears a coat of wool. This term has been applied to Muslim who seek to achieve higher degrees of spiritual excellence or those who pursue Islamic mysticism or those who belong to a mystical order." See Khaled Abu El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women*, (Oxford: One World, 2001), 307.

³⁵ Halm, *Shi'ism*, 89.

³⁶ Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, 110-2.

³⁷ "Safavid Dynasty," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (2011)
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³⁸ Rainer Brunner, "*Shi'ite Doctrine ii. Hierarchy in the Imamiyya*," *Encyclopedia Iranica Online*, (1 Oct 2010)
<<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/shiite-coctrine-ii-hierarchy-imamiya>>.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Also see Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, 117.

⁴¹ Khaled Abu El Fadl, Lecture Notes, *Islamic Jurisprudence* (California State University, Los Angeles, Spring 2009).

⁴² Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, 117; 120.

⁴³ Halm, *Shi'ism*, 93-5.

⁴⁴ As the main branch of Islam, Sunnis are distinguished from Shi'is based on their acceptance of "the legitimacy of the caliphate of Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, and 'Ali." See Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women*, 307.

⁴⁵ Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, 115-8.

⁴⁶ Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, 123.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 127-8.

⁴⁸ Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, 115-8. Also see Khaled Abu El Fadl, Lecture Notes. *Islamic Jurisprudence* (California State University, Los Angeles, Spring 2009).

⁴⁹ Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, 131; 142.

⁵⁰ Baha'i is a monotheistic religion that places emphasis on the unity of humankind. Its core religious principles are the unity of God, unity of religion and unity of humanity. See Manfred, Hutter, "Baha'is." In Lindsay Jones (editor in chief), *Encyclopedia of Religion 2* (2nd ed.) (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA), 737-740.

⁵¹ Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, 136.

⁵² *Ibid*, 118; 136-9. Also see, "Baha' ad-din Mohammad ibn Husayn al-'Aamili," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (2011) <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/20637/Baha-ad-din-Muhammad-ibn-Husayn-al-Amili>>. Also see, "Muhsin-i Fayd Kashani," *BrillOnline*, (2011) <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/muhsin-i-fayd-i-kashani-COM_0785?s.num=0&s.q=Mu%E1%B8%A5sin-i+FAy%E1%B8%8D+K%C4%81sh%C4%81n%C4%AB+>>. Also see "Abd al-Razzak al-Lahidji," *BrillOnline*, (2011) <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/add-al-razzak-al-lahidji-Dum_3599>.

⁵³ Arzina R. Lalani, "Early Shi'i Thought: The Teachings of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir," (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 17. Also see Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, 118; 136-9.

⁵⁴ Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, 130.

⁵⁵ Halm, *Shi'ism*, 98-100.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 98.

⁵⁷ Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, 130-1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*.

⁵⁹ The First Iranian Majlis met from October 7, 1906 to June 23, 1908. The Parliament regulated "important economic policies" by managing "the budget," controlling "the transfer of all national resources to foreign powers," and concluding "international treaties and conventions." See Ehteshami and Zweiri (eds.). *Iran's Foreign Policy: From Khatami to Ahmadinejad*, 6. Also see Gabriel Palmer-Fernández, *The Encyclopedia of Religion and War*, (2010), 131.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=WZdDbmxe_a4C&pg=PA131&lpg=PA131&dq=The+first+Iranian+Majlis+Parliament+during+Pahlavi&source=bl&ots=ya1fXLYB6y&sig=a9cg0ZMpXT3ooB6P0-wE-Y_2uHM&hl=en&ei=D0oSTc6jKpLEsAPu7uGkCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=7&ved=0CEAQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=The%20first%20Iranian%20Majlis%20Parliament%20during%20Pahlavi&f=false>.

⁶⁰ Ehteshami and Zweiri (eds.). *Iran's Foreign Policy: From Khatami to Ahmadinejad*, 6. Also see Gabriel Palmer-Fernández, *The Encyclopedia of Religion and War*, (2010), 131.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=WZdDbmxe_a4C&pg=PA131&lpg=PA131&dq=The+first+Iranian+Majlis+Parliament+during+Pahlavi&source=bl&ots=ya1fXLYB6y&sig=a9cg0ZMpXT3ooB6P0-wE-Y_2uHM&hl=en&ei=D0oSTc6jKpLEsAPu7uGkCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=7&ved=0CEAQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=The%20first%20Iranian%20Majlis%20Parliament%20during%20Pahlavi&f=false>.

⁶¹ F. Kazemzadeh, "Iranian relations with Russia and the Soviet Union to 1921," *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol.7, ed. Peter Avery, G. R. G. Hambly and C. Melville, (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 337. Also see Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, 138.

⁶² Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, 138.

⁶³ Imamate scholars are those from the Twelver branch of Shi'i doctrine. Ayatollah refers to a high-ranking Shi'i authority who is a religious reference or source of imitation in Shari'ah law or religious interpretations. "Ayat" in "ayatollah" is the plural format of "ayah," which has a dual meaning in Arabic: "evidence" or "sign." It also refers to the verses in the Qur'an. Surat Adh-Dhariyat (20-21) says: "On the earth are Signs for those of assured Faith, as also in your own selves: will you not then see?" 'Allama Hilli introduced the principle of *taqlid*, which was further developed in the 17th century along with *ijtihad*. See Halm, *Shi'ism*, 62-9. *Taqlid* literally means imitation in Islamic law. This "term signifies the imitation of more knowledgeable scholars, usually within a particular school of

thought. *Taqlīd* is often considered the opposite of *ijtihād*,” which literally means exertion. *Ijtihād* is “the process of exerting one’s utmost in an effort to deduce laws from sources in unprecedented cases.” See Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God’s Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women*, 301; 308.

⁶⁴ Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi’ism*, 206-9.

⁶⁵ *Marja’ al-taqlīd* is the honorific title of foremost religious authorities in Shi’ite jurisprudence who are considered as a religious reference or source to follow. See Roy Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*, (Oxford: One World, 2000), 231. Also see Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi’ism*, 206-9.

⁶⁶ Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi’ism*, 206-9.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 250

⁶⁸ *Maktab* is the Persian word for *Madhhab* in Arabic. It refers to “school of thought, juristic school, legal guild, orientation, opinion or view. A juristic school of thought is distinguished by its jurisprudential methodology for deducing laws. Disagreements over methodology often distinguish one school from another.” See Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God’s Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women*, 303.

⁶⁹ Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi’ism*, 251. Also see Roy Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*, 227.

⁷⁰ “History of Iran: Oil Nationalization,” *Iran Chamber Society*, (2013)

<http://www.iranchamber.com/history/oil_nationalization/oil_nationalization.php>.

⁷¹ Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2004), 50-51. Also See Abbas Milani. *The Shah* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 144; 194.

⁷² Ehteshami and Zweiri, *Iran’s Foreign Policy: From Khatami to Ahmadinejad*, 8.

⁷³ *Ibid*.

⁷⁴ Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America*, 74.

⁷⁵ See “White Revolution,” *Iran Chamber*, (2012)

<http://www.iranchamber.com/history/white_revolution/white_revolution.php#sthash.MNHuvXSq.dpuf>.

⁷⁶ Delete

⁷⁷ Ehteshami and Zweiri, *Iran’s Foreign Policy: From Khatami to Ahmadinejad*, 6.

⁷⁸ Khomeini was born in 1902 and died in 1989, ten years after the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution of Iran. Khomeini was about three years old when the constitutional movement began.

⁷⁹ Said Amir Arjomand, “Shi’ite Islam and the Revolution in Iran,” *Government and Opposition*, 16 (3), 298.

⁸⁰ Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban of the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 148-9.

⁸¹ Said Amir Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 19.

⁸² *Ibid*. Also see Hamid Algar, trans., “Al-Tawhid: The Fusion of the Gnostic and the Political in the Personality and Life of Imam Khomeini (R.A.),” (2003) <<http://www.al-islam.org/al-tawhid/fusion.htm>>.

⁸³ Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, trans. Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981), 175.

⁸⁴ Baqer Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, (Thomas Dunne Books, 2000), 104. Also see Daniel Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran*, (University of Chicago Press, 2001), 74.

⁸⁵ To define the monarchy, Khomeini stated: “All governments of the world rely upon the power of their bayonets. We know of no monarchy or republic in the world today which is based upon equity and reason; all maintain themselves in power only through oppression. The leaders of our country have been so deeply influenced by the West that they have regulated the standard time of their country upon that of Europe (Greenwich Mena Time). What a nightmare!” See “Sayings of the Ayatollah Khomeini: Political, Philosophical, Social and Religious,” With a Special Introduction by Clive Irving (New York: Bantam Books, Inc. 1980), 10-11.

⁸⁶ “The Years of Struggle and Exile, 1962-1978,” *Al-Islam.org*. (2010) <<http://www.al-islam.org/imambiography/4.htm>>.

⁸⁷ Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, 17. Also see ‘Ali Baqeri, “*Khaterat-i 15-i Khordad*.” (Tehran: Mo’aseseh-i Entesharat-i Sureh), 1995, 9; 61; 111-113.

⁸⁸ Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, 18.

⁸⁹ Abdar Rahman Koya, *Imam Khomeini: Life, Thought and Legacy*, (Malaysia: Islamic Book Trust & Crescent International), 37. Also see “The Islamic Revolution 1978-79,” *The Official Website of Ayatollah Ruhollah Al-Mousavi Al-Khomeini*, (2010) <<http://www.imam-khomeini.com/ShowItem.aspx?id=11646&cat=11460&lang=en>>.

- ⁹⁰ *Hākim* has a dual meaning. It refers to one who holds a political position such as a governor or one who plays a judiciary role such as a judge.
- ⁹¹ Khomeini, “*Hokumat-i Islami va Vilayat-i Faqih*,”. Also see Hui Foong, ed., *Encountering Islam: The Politics of Religious Identities in Southeast Asia*, (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2013), 32-35
- ⁹² Abdar Rahman Koya, *Imam Khomeini: Life, Thought and Legacy*, 37. Originally published in *Vilayat-i Faqih*, Najaf, 204.
- ⁹³ Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*, 22-3.
- ⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 20-1.
- ⁹⁵ Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 474; 485; 612; 626.
- ⁹⁶ Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, 184-5.
- ⁹⁷ F. Rajaei, *Islamism and Modernism: The Changing Discourse in Iran* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 123-6.
- ⁹⁸ Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, 19.
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 20.
- ¹⁰⁰ “1979: Shah of Iran Flees into Exile,” *BBC Persian*, (16 Jan 1979)
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/16/newsid_2530000/2530475.stm>.
- ¹⁰¹ Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, 20. Also see “1979: Exiled Ayatollah Khomeini Returns to Iran,” *BBC News*, (2013)
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/1/newsid_2521000/2521003.stm>.
- ¹⁰² “Islamic Revolution of 1979,” *Iran Chamber Society*, (2013)
<http://www.iranchamber.com/history/islamic_revolution/islamic_revolution.php>.
- ¹⁰³ A. Schirazi, *The Constitution of Iran: Politics and the State in the Islamic Republic*, J. O’Kane, trans., (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 62-71, 97.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ali Gharib, “*Gofteha-ye Ayatollah Khomeini Dar Paris*,” (2011)
<<http://www.Iran57.com/Naghoft%20haaye%20enghelab,06,05,08.doc>>. Also see Khomeini, “*Hokumat-i Islami va Vilayat-i Faqih*,” 337. Also see Ayatollah Khomeini Website (2011) <<http://www.imam-khomeini.com/web1/english/showitem.aspx?cid=1352&h=13&f=14&pid=1445>>.
- ¹⁰⁵ By “a democratic government” Khomeini meant political participation of the people in the affairs of their government, *not* a Western liberal democracy. See Ali Gharib, “*Gofteha-ye Ayatollah Khomeini Dar Paris*,” (2010) <<http://www.Iran57.com/Naghoft%20haaye%20enghelab,06,05,08.doc>>. Also see Khomeini, “*Hokumat-i Islami va Vilayat-i Faqih*,” 337.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ali Gharib, “*Gofteha-ye Ayatollah Khomeini Dar Paris*,”
<<http://www.Iran57.com/Naghoft%20haaye%20enghelab,06,05,08.doc>>. Also see Khomeini, “*Hokumat-i Islami va Vilayat-i Faqih*,” 337.
- ¹⁰⁷ R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*, Second Edition (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 123.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 125.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 124.
- ¹¹⁰ Sadeq Media, “*Ravabet-i Imam Sadr va Imam Khomeini*,” (2013)
<<http://www.sadeqmedia.ir/index.php/article/imamsadr-imamkhomeini>>. Also see Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*, 124.
- ¹¹¹ Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, 62.
- ¹¹² *Ibid*.
- ¹¹³ Hamid Mavani, “Khomeini’s Concept of governance of the Jurisconsult (*Wilayat al-Faqih*) Revisited: The Aftermath of Iran’s 2009 Presidential Election,” *Middle East Journal* 67, No. 2, (Spring 2013): 209.
- ¹¹⁴ Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, 62.
- ¹¹⁵ R. K. Ramazani, “Iran’s Export of the Revolution: Politics, Ends and Means” In John L. Esposito, ed., *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1990), 49.
- ¹¹⁶ Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islamic Government*, (SIME ePublishing: Lexington: KY, 2010), 37-8, 41.
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 37-8, 51.
- ¹¹⁸ Khomeini, “*Hokumat-i Islami va Vilayat-i Faqih*,” 228.
- ¹¹⁹ Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, 27.
- ¹²⁰ Khomeini, “*Hokumat-i Islami va Vilayat-i Faqih*,” 124; 241.
- ¹²¹ *Ibid*, 124; 318.

¹²² “First Decade of the Islamic Republic, Last Decade of the Imam’s Life: 1979-89,” *The Official Website of Ayatollah Khomeini*, (2012) <<http://www.imam-khomeini.com/web1/english/showitem.aspx?cid=1353&h=13&f=14&pid=1446>>.

¹²³ “*Takzibha-ye Makarem-i Shirazi Cheh Miguyad?*” *Enqelab-i Islami*, (2009) <http://enghelabe-Islami.com/arkiv/maghalat/691_makareme_shirazi.htm>. For more details see Razavi, “*Hashemi va Enqelab: Tarikh-i Siyasi-ye Iran az Enqelab ta Jang*”, 251-278.

¹²⁴ “*Vilayat-i Faqih*,” (2009), <<http://3247066.persianblog.ir/post/13/>>. Also see “*Ayatollah Hasan Qomi, Marja’ Montaqed Vilayat-i Faqih dargozasht*,” *Radiofarda.com*, (2010) <http://www.radiofarda.com/content/o2_qumi/397390.html>. Also see “*Mafiyaha-ye Maamour-i Sarkoub’ha-ye Khiyabani*,” *Enqelab-i Islami*, (2009) <http://enghelabe-Islami.com/ketab/Mafiai_khiabani/Mafia_khiabani.doc>. Also see “*Wilayat al-Faqih*,” *Sistani.org*, (2010) <<http://www.sistani.org/local.php?modules=nav&nid=5&cid=366>>.

¹²⁵ “*Mosahebeh-i Rafsanjani ba Ruznameh-i Keyhan*,” *Hashemirafsanjani.ir*, (2010) <<http://www.hashemirafsanjani.ir/?type=dynamic&lang=1&id=66>>.

¹²⁶ Mohsen Kadivar is an Iranian scholar. He obtained his Certificate of *Ijtihād* under Ayatollah Montazeri. He is also a dissident and has been living in exile since 2008. Kadivar began raising questions about the Islamic Republic’s policies since 1987, and in 1989 he voted against the revision of the constitution. Since then, he has been expressing his opposition to the Islamic Republic in his public discourses and writings. He furthered his oppositions after the Chain Murders in 1989 and was arrested and sentenced to 18 months in prison in February 1999. Currently, he is a visiting Islamic Studies professor at Duke University. “*Biography*,” *Kadivar.com*, (2009) <<http://en.kadivar.com/sample-page/>>. The discussions provided by Mohsen Kadivar are based on his original Farsi article *Vilayat-i Faqih va Mardomsalari*, which was translated by this researcher in fall of 2009 and has been used in this work by Kadivar’s consent given in July 2010. See “*Vilayat-i Faqih va Mardomsalari*,” *The Official Website of Mohsen Kadivar*, (2009) <http://kadivar.org/?p=8448#_Toc298183485>. Since then, Kadivar has updated and translated the article himself and posted it on his English website. See “*Vilayat-i Faqih and Democracy*,” *Kadivar.com*, (2013) <<http://en.kadivar.com/wilayat-al-faqih-and-democracy/>>. This researcher has neither referenced nor used Kadivar’s English translation for this work.

¹²⁷ “*Vilayat-i faqih va Mardomsalari*,” *The Official Website of Mohsen Kadivar*, (2009) <http://kadivar.org/?p=8448#_Toc298183485>. Also see “*Vilayat-i Faqih and Democracy*,” *Kadivar.com*, (2009) <<http://en.kadivar.com/wilayat-al-faqih-and-democracy/>>.

¹²⁸ Ayatollah Montazeri, “*Hokumat-i Dini va Hoquq-i Ensan*,” *Montazeri.com*, (2009) <<http://amontazeri.com/farsi/frame10.asp>>. Also see “*Vilayat-i Faqih va Mardomsalari*,” *The Official Website of Mohsen Kadivar*, (2009) <http://kadivar.org/?p=8448#_Toc298183485>.

¹²⁹ “*Vilayat-i Faqih va Mardomsalari*,” *The Official Website of Mohsen Kadivar*, (2009) <http://kadivar.org/?p=8448#_Toc298183485>.

¹³⁰ “*Vilayat-i faqih va Mardomsalari*,” *The Official Website of Mohsen Kadivar*, (2009) <http://kadivar.org/?p=8448#_Toc298183485>. Also see “*Vilayat-i Fqih and Democracy*,” *Kadivar.com*, (2009) <<http://en.kadivar.com/wilayat-al-faqih-and-democracy/>>.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Hamid Algar (trans.), *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran* (Berkeley, Mizan Press, 1980), 29-30.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Ayatollah Salehi Najafabadi, “*Vilayat-i Faqih: Hokumat-i Salehan*,” (Tehran by Omid Fardi, 1999), 65-66; 103-4.

¹⁴¹ Ayatollah Javadi-Amoli, “*Vilayat-i Faqih, Wilayat-i Foqahat va ‘Adalat*,” (2009)

<<http://www.hawzah.net/Hawzah/Books/BookView.aspx?BookID=45227&LanguageID=1&BookArticleID=1682>>.

¹⁴² Ayatollah Shirazi, “*Queries On Wilayat ul-Faqih*,” (2009) <<http://www.shirazi.org.uk/wilayat-ul-faqih.html#rolandauthority>>.

¹⁴³ Ayatollah Montazeri, “*Hokumat-i Dini va Hoquq-i Ensan*,” *Montazeri.com*, (2009) <<http://amontazeri.com/farsi/frame10.asp>>.

- ¹⁴⁴ “*Fatva-ye Khamenei Piramoun-i Vilayat-i Faqih*,” *Khamenei.ir*, (2013) <<http://farsi.khamenei.ir/>>.
- ¹⁴⁵ S. A. Khamenei, “*Didar-i O‘aza-ye Shura-ye ‘Omumi-ye Etehadiyeh-i Anjomanha-ye Islami-ye Daneshjuyan-i Sarasar-i Keshvar*,” *The Office of Supreme Leader Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei*, (2 Jan 2001) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/print/php?sec=content&id=2054>>.
- ¹⁴⁶ “*Vilayat-i Faqih va Mardomsalari*,” *The Official Website of Mohsen Kadivar*, (2009) <http://kadivar.org/?p=8448#_Toc298183485>. Also see “*Vilayat-i Faqih and Democracy*,” *Kadivar.com*, (2009) <<http://en.kadivar.com/wilayat-al-faqih-and-democracy/>>.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁴⁸ Ayatollah Montazeri, “*Hokumat-i Dini va Hoquq-i Ensan*,” *Montazeri.com*, (2009) <<http://amontazeri.com/farsi/frame10.asp>>.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁵⁰ Ayatollah Shirazi, “*Queries On Wilayat ul-Faqih*,” (2009) <<http://www.shirazi.org.uk/wilayat-ul-faqih.html#rolandauthority>>.
- ¹⁵¹ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁵² Manal Lufti, “*Inside Iran: Hujjat al Islam Mohsen Kadivar*,” (08 Apr 2007) <<http://www.aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=3&id=8575>>.
- ¹⁵³ “*Ravayet-i Hashemi-Rafsanjani*,” *Aftabkaran.com*, (2009) <<http://www.aftabkaran.com/akhbar.php?id=63>>.
- ¹⁵⁴ “*Cheguneh Ayatollah Khamenei Rahbar Shodand?*” *Khadamat*, (2009) <<http://www.tebyan.net/index.aspx?pid=17257&threadID=125783&forumID=461>>.
- ¹⁵⁵ Algar, *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, 30.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 69.
- ¹⁵⁷ “*Vilayat-i Faqih va Mardomsalari*,” *The Official Website of Mohsen Kadivar*, (2009) <http://kadivar.org/?p=8448#_Toc298183485>. Also see “*Vilayat-i Faqih and Democracy*,” *Kadivar.com*, (2009) <<http://en.kadivar.com/wilayat-al-faqih-and-democracy/>>.
- ¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁵⁹ “*Maftiyahaye Maamour-i Sarkoub-ha-ye Khiyabani*,” *Enqelab-i Islami*, (2009) <http://enghelabe-Islami.com/ketab/Mafiai_khiabani/Mafia_khiabani.doc>.
- ¹⁶⁰ “*Wilayat al-Faqih*,” *Sistani.org*, (2009) <<http://www.sistani.org/local.php?modules=nav&nid=5&cid=366>>.
- ¹⁶¹ “*Ayatollah Hasan Qomi, Marja‘ Montaqed Vilayat-i Faqih dargozasht*,” *Radiofarda.com*, (2009) <http://www.radiofarda.com/content/o2_qumi/397390.html>.
- ¹⁶² Khomeini, “*Hokumat-i Islami va Vilayat-i Faqih*,” 205; 330-1.
- ¹⁶³ Ayatollah Montazeri, “*Hokumat-i Dini va Hoquq-i Ensan*,” *Montazeri.com*, (2009) <<http://amontazeri.com/farsi/frame10.asp>>.
- ¹⁶⁴ Ayatollah Salehi Najafabadi, “*Vilayat-i Faqih: Hokumat-i Salehan*” (Published in Tehran by Omid Fardi, 1999), 65-66; 103-4.
- ¹⁶⁵ Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*, 15.
- ¹⁶⁶ Ayatollah Khamenei’s paternal grandfather Ayatollah Seyyed Hossein Hosseini Khamenei, known as Seyyed Hossein Tafaroshi was born around 1844 in Khameneh. He was one of the prominent Shi‘i ‘ulama’ and *fuqahā*’ of the 19th century. He spent his childhood and youth in Tabriz and around 1873 he moved to Najaf for his theological training. He completed his higher education in *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *usul* (principles), *kalam* (theology) and *falsafeh* (Philosophy) under prominent ‘ulama’ and philosophers such as Mirza Baqer Shaykhi at *Hawzah-i ‘Allamiyah* in Najaf. After the completion of his studies and years of research and teaching in Najaf, Seyyed Hossein Tafaroshi returned to Tabriz, Azaerbayejan. He continued teaching in Tabriz and also served as Imam of Friday prayers. From there on he was known as “Seyyed Hossein Pishnamaz.” He died in 1907 and was buried in Najaf. See *The Research Institute of Baqir al-‘Ulum*, “*Gulshan-i Ebrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asveh‘ha-ye ‘Elm va ‘Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*,” Vol 2. (Qom: Nashr-i Ma‘arouf, 2006), 970-972.
- ¹⁶⁷ The bloody events of Goharshad Mosque refer to the clerical uprising and demonstrations against Reza Khan’s de-Islamization of Iran in 1935. As the clerical opposition grew, the Shah executed a decree to attack the mosque as the protestors had gathered on July 10-11, 1935. The Shah’s forces killed between 2,000-5,000 people and arrested about 1,500 demonstrators. Khamenei’s grandfather was among the group of clerics who was arrested. See *The Research Institute of Baqir al-‘Ulum*, “*Gulshan-i Ebrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asveh‘ha-ye ‘Elm va ‘Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*,” Vol 2, 970-972.
- ¹⁶⁸ Khamenei’s father, Hajj Seyyed Javad Hosseini Khamenei, was born in 1895 in Najaf. According to Khamenei, he was one of the prominent ‘ulama’, *mujtahids* and clerics of his time. He was two or three years old when his family returned to Tabriz and there he studied under the wings of his father. He then migrated to Najaf for his

theological studies at *Hawzah-i Shokuhmand*. Like his father, he studied *fiqh* and *uṣul* and other religious studies. After receiving his certificate of *ijtihād* and *fuqahā'*, he returned to Tabriz. Seyyed Javad Khamenei's youth was occupied with the events of the constitutional movement. At age 23 he moved to Mashhad and there he began teaching. After his first wife's death from whom he had three daughters, he married Khadijeh, Ayatollah Hajj Seyyed Hashim Najaf-Abadi's daughter, also known as Mirdamadi. Seyyed Javad's life was spent during the Qajar period in Mashhad. He died at age 93 on July 5, 1986. See *The Research Institute of Baqir al-'Ulum*, "*Gulshan-i Ebrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asveh'ha-ye 'Elm va 'Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*," Vol 2, 970-972.

¹⁶⁹ Khamenei has three brothers and four sisters, three of which are step-sisters. He explains: "We were eight sisters and brothers from two mothers. That means my father had three children who were all girls from one woman. After that woman had passed away he married another woman. We are the children of this second woman. I am the second child. In fact, in the middle, two children did not survive, in this order I would be the fourth... Of course our older sisters were from the first wife. They are much older than us." Mo'assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, "*Khaterat va Hekayat'ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo'zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al-'Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh*," (Iran: Mo'assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr va Vilayat, 1999), 10.

¹⁷⁰ *The Research Institute of Baqir al-'Ulum*, "*Gulshan-i Ebrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asveh'ha-ye 'Elm va 'Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*," Vol 2, page 974.

¹⁷¹ Behboudi, "*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Hosseini Khamenei*," 25; 27.

¹⁷² Mo'assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, "*Khaterat va Hekayat'ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo'zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al-'Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh*," 10-11; 13; 23.

¹⁷³ Most 'ulama' sent their sons to this school. It was called Tadin School because the Principal was Mirza Hossein Tadin. See Behboudi, "*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Hosseini Khamenei*," 45. Ayatollah Khamenei's older brother is Mohammad Khamenei. Khamenei is the second son in the family. He has three brothers and one sisters, and three step-sisters.

¹⁷⁴ *The Research Institute of Baqir al-'Ulum*, "*Gulshan-i Ebrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asveh'ha-ye 'Elm va 'Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*," Vol 2, 975.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 974.

¹⁷⁶ Ayatollah Khamenei's four prominent teachers at Hawzah-i 'Allamiyah were Ayatollah Borujerdi (whose classes he continuously attended until Borujerdi's death), Ayatollah Seyyed Mohammad Reza Golpayegani at Imam Mosque, Ayatollah Seyyed Kazem Shariatmadari at Madrasa Hojjatiyeh, Ayatollah Seyyed Ruhollah Khomeini at Salmasi Mosque, Sheykh Abbas-'Ali Shahroudi, Sheykh Morteza Hai'iri (Khamenei ended up to be his only student), Sheykh Mohammad-'Ali Araki, and Ayatollah Hossein 'Ali Montazeri. After Borujerdi's death Khomeini became the *marja' al-taqlid* and continued giving Khamenei the scholarship Borujerdi used to give him to support his studies. Behboudi, "*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Hosseini Khamenei*," 92.

¹⁷⁷ *The Research Institute of Baqir al-'Ulum*, "*Gulshan-i Abrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asveh'ha-ye 'Elm va 'Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*," 976.

¹⁷⁸ Behboudi, "*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Hosseini Khamenei*," 45.

¹⁷⁹ These reforms included the Shah's controversial policy of *Kashf-i Hijāb*, which banned women from covering their hair in public.

¹⁸⁰ Behboudi, "*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Hosseini Khamenei*," 55.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, 56.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, 55-56.

¹⁸³ Though Khamenei's mother was apolitical, according to Khamenei's biography, her hatred for the Pahlavi regime was evident in her encounters with SAVAK or prison officials. Khamenei's brother Seyyed Mohammad Hassan recalls his mother's encounter with prison officials outside prison cell when visiting Khamenei. She told them: "The milk that our mothers gave us was associated with hatred for the Pahlavi." One can conclude that her hatred for the Pahlavi regime was mainly rooted in her husband's beliefs and their family's continuous struggles with SAVAK. See Behboudi, "*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Hosseini Khamenei*," 26.

¹⁸⁴ Behboudi, "*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Hosseini Khamenei*," 58.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 55.

¹⁸⁶ *The Research Institute of Baqir al-'Ulum*, "*Gulshan-i Abrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asveh'ha-ye 'Elm va 'Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*," 977. Also see "Biography," *The Office of the Supreme Leader Seyyed 'Ali Khamenei*, (2009) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=bio>>.

¹⁸⁷ Behboudi, "*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Hosseini Khamenei*," 65.

- ¹⁸⁸ *Tehran: Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, “Musahabah’ha: Majmu’ah-ye Musahabah’ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Ra’is-i Jumhuri-i Islami-i Iran 1361 va 1362” (Tehran: Soroush, 1987), 139-143.
- ¹⁸⁹ Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 97.
- ¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 97.
- ¹⁹¹ The Research Institute of Baqir al-‘Ulum, “*Gulshan-i Abrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asvehha-ye ‘Elm va ‘Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*,” 976-977. Also see Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 97.
- ¹⁹² Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 96-100; 102; 103.
- ¹⁹³ *Ibid*, 126-127.
- ¹⁹⁴ “Biography,” *The Office of the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei*, (2009) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:1970_in_Iran>.
- ¹⁹⁵ The Research Institute of Baqir al-‘Ulum, “*Gulshan-i Abrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asvehha-ye ‘Elm va ‘Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*,” 977.
- ¹⁹⁶ 15 *Khordad* marks the massive popular uprising in Tehran, Qom and several other cities in Iran in support of Ayatollah Khomeini for his arrest after his speech against the Shah’s Regime. According to Khamenei, Khomeini viewed these events as a critical time in the history of the Islamic Revolution where a decisive bond was witnessed between the people and the clergy. See “Supreme Leader: ‘I Do Not Favor Any Candidate.’” *The Office of the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyid ‘Ali Khamenei*, (4 Jun 2013) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/?p=contentShow&id=10768>>.
- ¹⁹⁷ The Research Institute of Baqir al-‘Ulum, “*Gulshan-i Abrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asvehha-ye ‘Elm va ‘Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*,” 976.
- ¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 978.
- ¹⁹⁹ Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 169.
- ²⁰⁰ The Persian Translation of the Title is “*Ayandeh Dar Qalamroh-i Islam*,”
- ²⁰¹ The Research Institute of Baqir al-‘Ulum, “*Gulshan-i Abrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asvehha-ye ‘Elm va ‘Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*,” 978. Also see Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 223
- ²⁰² Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 224-225.
- ²⁰³ *Ibid*, 242.
- ²⁰⁴ *Ibid*.
- ²⁰⁵ *Ibid*.
- ²⁰⁶ Mo’assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, “*Khaterat va Hekayat’ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo’zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al-‘Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh*,” 61.
- ²⁰⁷ Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 226; 233.
- ²⁰⁸ *Ibid*. Also see The Research Institute of Baqir al-‘Ulum, “*Gulshan-i Abrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asvehha-ye ‘Elm va ‘Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*,” 978.
- ²⁰⁹ Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 236.
- ²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 267.
- ²¹¹ *Ibid*, 281.
- ²¹² The Research Institute of Baqir al-‘Ulum, “*Gulshan-i Abrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asvehha-ye ‘Elm va ‘Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*,” 979.
- ²¹³ Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 361; 391.
- ²¹⁴ *Ibid*, 462.
- ²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 395-399. Khamenei married his wife Khojasteh beginning of fall of 1964. According to him, she was a pillar of support for him during his incarcerations.
- ²¹⁶ Mu’awiyah was the caliph of the Umayyad dynasty who fought against ‘Ali, the first Shi’i Imam. Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 319.
- ²¹⁷ Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 319-320.
- ²¹⁸ *Ibid*, 321.
- ²¹⁹ *Ibid*, 311-322; 334.
- ²²⁰ “Biography,” *The Office of the Supreme Leader S. A. Khamenei*, (2009) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=bio>>.
- ²²¹ The Research Institute of Baqir al-‘Ulum, “*Gulshan-i Abrar: Kholaseh-i az Zendegi-ye Asvehha-ye ‘Elm va ‘Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*,” 979.

- ²²² Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 473.
- ²²³ Ibid, 490.
- ²²⁴ Ibid.
- ²²⁵ Ibid, 516.
- ²²⁶ Ibid, 512.
- ²²⁷ Ibid.
- ²²⁸ Ibid.
- ²²⁹ Ibid, 517.
- ²³⁰ Ibid, 529; 534; 549.
- ²³¹ The Research Institute of Baqir al-‘Ulum, “*Gulshan-i Abrar: Kholāṣeh-i az Zendegi-ye Asvehha-ye ‘Elm va ‘Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*,” 980.
- ²³² Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 574.
- ²³³ Ibid, 500-502; 506; 521-522.
- ²³⁴ Mo’assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, “*Khaterat va Hekayat’ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo ‘zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al- ‘Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh*,” 70-71.
- ²³⁵ Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 335.
- ²³⁶ Ibid, 591.
- ²³⁷ Ibid, 609; 612.
- ²³⁸ Ibid, 613.
- ²³⁹ Ibid, 613; 615-6.
- ²⁴⁰ Ibid, 646; 648.
- ²⁴¹ Mo’assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, “*Khaterat va Hekayat’ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo ‘zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al- ‘Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh*,” 213.
- ²⁴² The Research Institute of Baqir al-‘Ulum, “*Gulshan-i Abrar: Kholāṣeh-i az Zendegi-ye Asvehha-ye ‘Alm va ‘Amal az Kulayni ta Ayatollah Khamenei*” 981. Also see "Biography," *The Office of the Supreme Leader S. A. Khamenei*, (2009) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=bio>>
- ²⁴³ Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 71-72.
- ²⁴⁴ Ibid, 68-73.
- ²⁴⁵ Ibid, 68-71.
- ²⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁴⁷ *Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, “*Musahabeh’ha: Majmu ‘ah-ye Musahabeh’ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Ra’is-i Jumhuri-ye Islami-i Iran 1360*,” (Tehran: Soroush, 1987), 42-44; 162; 168-9. Also see *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, “*Musahabah’ha: Majmu ‘ah-i Musahabah’ha-yi Hazrat-i Ayat Allah Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jumhuri-i 1366-1368*” (Tehran: Goruh-i Entesharat-i Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islam, 1991), 28-31. Also see S. A. Khamenei, “*Bayanat-i Rahbar-i Mo ‘azam-i Enqelab-i Islamic Dar Didar-i Javana-i Ostan-i Isfahan*,” (3 Nov 2001) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/print.php?sec=bayanat&id=2179>>.
- ²⁴⁸ After the establishment of the Islamic Republic, Bakhtiar migrated to Paris, France where he was assassinated in 1991 by an agent of the Islamic regime. See *Dr. Shapour Bakhtiar*, (2009) <<http://www.shapourbakhtiar.com/index-english.htm>>.
- ²⁴⁹ Mo’assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, “*Khaterat va Hekayat’ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo ‘zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al- ‘Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh*,” 83-98.
- ²⁵⁰ Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 665.
- ²⁵¹ Mo’assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, “*Khaterat va Hekayat’ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo ‘zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al- ‘Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh*,” 83-89.
- ²⁵² Mo’assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, “*Khaterat va Hekayat’ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo ‘zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al- ‘Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh*,” 83-98.
- ²⁵³ Mehdi Bazargan was the Islamic Republic’s first President. He served from February 4, 1979 to November 6, 1979. Seyyed Masoud Razavi, “*Hashemi va Enqelab: Tarikh-i Siyasi-ye Iran az Enqelab ta Jang*” (Tehran: Entesharat-i Hamshahri, 1997), 157.
- ²⁵⁴ Razavi, “*Hashemi va Enqelab: Tarikh-i Siyasi-ye Iran az Enqelab ta Jang*”, 159.
- ²⁵⁵ Abbas Bashiri, “*Hashemi-Rafsanjani: Karnameh va Khaterat-i Salhai 1357 va 1358: Enqelab va Pirawzi*,” (Tehran: Daftar-i Nashr-i M’aref-i Enqelab, 2004), 214-216.
- ²⁵⁶ Ibid.

- ²⁵⁷ Ibid, 218-219. According to Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the discussions for the establishment of the Islamic Republican Party began prior to the victory of the revolution. Hashemi-Rafsanjani recalls a conversation he had with Ayatollah Beheshti while in prison about the formation of a party. After his release three-four months prior to victory, they discussed the matter further and after Imam's arrival they presented the proposal to him. See Hashemi-Rafsanjani *Mosahebeh'ha*, 91.
- ²⁵⁸ Bashiri, "Hashemi-Rafsanjani: *Karnameh va Khaterat-i Salhai 1357 va 1358: Enqelab va Pirawzi*," 214-219.
- ²⁵⁹ Ibid, 220.
- ²⁶⁰ Ibid, 365-6.
- ²⁶¹ Ibid, 220.
- ²⁶² Daniel Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran* (University of Chicago Press, 2001), 134. Also see Asayesh, Hossein, and Adlina Ab. Halim, and Jayum A. Jawan and Seyedeh Nosrat Shojaei, "Political Party in Islamic Republic of Iran: A Review," *Journal of Politics and Law* 4 (1), March 2011.
- ²⁶³ 'Asr-i Emruz, "Pasokh-i Imam Khomeini (rah) beh Nameh-i Dastnevis-i Hashemi Cheh Boud?" (8 Apr 2012) <<http://www.asremrooz.ir/vdcci4qi.2bqio8laa2.html>>.
- ²⁶⁴ Bashiri, "Hashemi-Rafsanjani: *Karnameh va Khaterat-i Salhai 1357 va 1358: Enqelab va Pirawzi*," 261-262.
- ²⁶⁵ Krysta Wise, "Islamic Revolution of 1979: The Downfall of American-Iranian Relations," *Legacy*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 2, (2011), 5-7. <<http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/legacy/vol11/iss1/2>>.
- ²⁶⁶ Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America*, 149.
- ²⁶⁷ "History of the Tudeh Party of Iran," *Iran Chamber*, (2009) <http://www.iranchamber.com/history/tudeh/tudeh_party01.php>.
- ²⁶⁸ Krysta Wise, "Islamic Revolution of 1979: The Downfall of American-Iranian Relations," *Legacy*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 2, (2011), 5-7. <<http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/legacy/vol11/iss1/2>>.
- ²⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁷⁰ Bashiri, "Hashemi-Rafsanjani: *Karnameh va Khaterat-i Salhai 1357 va 1358: Enqelab va Pirawzi*" 261-262.
- ²⁷¹ Krysta Wise, "Islamic Revolution of 1979: The Downfall of American-Iranian Relations," *Legacy*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 2, (2011), 7-8. <<http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/legacy/vol11/iss1/2>>.
- ²⁷² Bashiri, "Hashemi-Rafsanjani: *Karnameh va Khaterat-i Salhai 1357 va 1358: Enqelab va Pirawzi*," 293.
- ²⁷³ The most popular slogans were "marg bar amrika" ("death to America") and "enqelab, azadi, hokumat-i Islami" ("revolution, freedom, Islamic government"). See Bashiri, "Hashemi-Rafsanjani: *Karnameh va Khaterat-i Salhai 1357 va 1358: Enqelab va Pirawzi*," 293.
- ²⁷⁴ Krysta Wise, "Islamic Revolution of 1979: The Downfall of American-Iranian Relations," *Legacy*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 2, (2011) <<http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/legacy/vol11/iss1/2>>.
- ²⁷⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁷⁶ See "Full Text of President Ahmadinejad's Speech at General Assembly," *GlobalSecurity.org*, (17 Sep 2005) <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/2005/iran-050918-irna02.htm>>.
- ²⁷⁷ Fifteen years earlier, on this date, Khomeini was exiled from Iran. See "Iran Hostage Crisis," *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, (2009) <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/272687/Iran-hostage-crisis>>.
- ²⁷⁸ "Iran Hostage Crisis," *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, (2009) <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/272687/Iran-hostage-crisis>>.
- ²⁷⁹ "Iranians Depict American 'Den of Spies,'" *ABC News*, (21 Feb 2005) <<http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/story?id=508478&page=1>>.
- ²⁸⁰ Mo'assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, "Khaterat va Hekayat'ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo'zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al-'Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh," 124-131.
- ²⁸¹ Ibid.
- ²⁸² Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America*, 167-169.
- ²⁸³ "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976. Volume XXXVII, Energy Crisis, 1974-1980, Document 249," *US Department of State Office of the Historian*, (5 Dec 1979) <<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v37/d249>>.
- ²⁸⁴ "US Plotting Velvet Revolution in Iran?" *Press TV*, (18 Nov 2008) <<http://www.presstv.com/detail.aspx?id=75784§ionid=351020101>>.
- ²⁸⁵ Alireza Ronaghi, "US Embassy Occupation, 31 Years Later. Aljazeera," (4 Nov 2010) <<http://blogs.aljazeera.com/blog/middle-east/us-embassy-occupation-31-years-later>>. Khamenei had made similar declarations in October 1989 as he assumed the office of supreme leadership. See, "Bayanat Dar Didar-i Aqshar-i Mokhtalef-i Mardom va Mas'ulan va Jam'ai az Shi'ayan-i Ostan-i Sarhad-i Pakistan," *S. A. Khamenei Website* (11 Oct 1989) <<http://farsi.khamenei.ir/print-content?id=2201>>.

- ²⁸⁶ Dilip Hiro, *The Longest War: The Iran-Iraq Military Conflict*, (Taylor and Francis, Inc. 1991).
- ²⁸⁷ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, "Musahabah 'ha: Majmu 'ah-i Musahabah 'ha-yi Hazrat-i Ayat Allah Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jumhuri-i 1363-1364" (Tehran: Sazeman-i Chap- va Entesharat-i Vezarat-i Farhang va Ershad-i Islami, 1989), 57.
- ²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 57-58.
- ²⁸⁹ "Biography," *The Office of the Supreme Leader S. A. Khamenei*, (2009) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=bio>>.
- ²⁹⁰ "Bomb Explosion in Friday Prayer of Tehran by Monafeghin," *Islamic Revolution Document Center*, (2009) <<http://www.irdc.ir/en/calendar/415/default.aspx>>.
- ²⁹¹ Mo'assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, "Khaterat va Hekayat 'ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo 'zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al- 'Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh," 104. Also see "Biography," *The Office of the Supreme Leader S. A. Khamenei*, (2009) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=bio>>.
- ²⁹² Mo'assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, "Khaterat va Hekayat 'ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo 'zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al- 'Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh," 103.
- ²⁹³ *Ibid*, 104-106.
- ²⁹⁴ *Ibid*.
- ²⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 131.
- ²⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 108.
- ²⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 132-134.
- ²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 132-134.
- ²⁹⁹ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, "Musahabah 'ha: Majmu 'ah-i Musahabah 'ha-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jomhuri-i 1365," (Tehran: Sazeman-i Chap va Entesharat-i Vezarat-i Farhang va Ershad-i Islami, 1990), 111-112.
- ³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 132-134.
- ³⁰¹ Mo'assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, "Khaterat va Hekayat 'ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo 'zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al- 'Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh," 172-174; 175-176.
- ³⁰² *Ibid*, 183.
- ³⁰³ *Ibid*, 184.
- ³⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 185-187.
- ³⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 188-191.
- ³⁰⁶ *Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, "Musahabah 'ha: Majmu 'ah-ye Musahabah 'ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei Ra 'is-i Jumhuri-ye Islami-i Iran 1360," 25.
- ³⁰⁷ *Ibid*.
- ³⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 53.
- ³⁰⁹ *Tehran: Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, "Musahabah 'ha: Majmu 'ah-ye Musahabah 'ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei Ra 'is-i Jumhuri-i Islami-i Iran 1361 va 1362" 21.
- ³¹⁰ *Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, "Musahabah 'ha: Majmu 'ah-ye Musahabah 'ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei Ra 'is-i Jumhuri-ye Islami-i Iran 1360," 89.
- ³¹¹ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, "Musahabah 'ha: Majmu 'ah-i Musahabah 'ha-yi Hazrat-i Ayat Allah Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jumhuri-i 1363-1364," 54.
- ³¹² *Tehran: Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, "Musahabah 'ha: Majmu 'ah-ye Musahabah 'ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei Ra 'is-i Jumhuri-i Islami-i Iran 1361 va 1362," 22-23; 45-6.
- ³¹³ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, "Musahabah 'ha: Majmu 'ah-i Musahabah 'ha-yi Hazrat-i Ayat Allah Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jumhuri-i 1363-1364," 189.
- ³¹⁴ *Ibid*, 187-189.
- ³¹⁵ *Tehran: Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, "Musahabah 'ha: Majmu 'ah-ye Musahabah 'ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei Ra 'is-i Jumhuri-i Islami-i Iran 1361 va 1362," 154.
- ³¹⁶ *Ibid*, 155-6.
- ³¹⁷ *Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, "Musahabah 'ha: Majmu 'ah-ye Musahabah 'ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei Ra 'is-i Jumhuri-ye Islami-i Iran 1360," 29-30.
- ³¹⁸ *Ibid*, 29-30.
- ³¹⁹ *Ibid*.

- ³²⁰ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, “Musahabah’ha: Majmu’ah-i Musahabah’ha-yi Hazrat-i Ayat Allah Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jumhuri-i 1366-1368,” 59.
- ³²¹ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, “Musahabeh’ha: Majmu’ah-i Musahabah’ha-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jomhuri-i 1365,” 132.
- ³²² *Tehran: Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, “Musahabah’ha: Majmu’ah-ye Musahabah’ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Ra’is-i Jumhuri-i Islami-i Iran 1361 va 1362,” 145.
- ³²³ *Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, “Musahabeh’ha: Majmu’ah-ye Musahabeh’ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Ra’is-i Jumhuri-ye Islami-i Iran 1360,” 200-201.
- ³²⁴ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, “Musahabeh’ha: Majmu’ah-i Musahabah’ha-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jomhuri-i 1365,” 134-5.
- ³²⁵ *Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, “Musahabeh’ha: Majmu’ah-ye Musahabeh’ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Ra’is-i Jumhuri-ye Islami-i Iran 1360,” 90.
- ³²⁶ *Ibid*, 57.
- ³²⁷ *Ibid*.
- ³²⁸ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, “Musahabeh’ha: Majmu’ah-i Musahabah’ha-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jomhuri-i 1365,” 134-5.
- ³²⁹ *Tehran: Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, “Musahabah’ha: Majmu’ah-ye Musahabah’ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Ra’is-i Jumhuri-i Islami-i Iran 1361 va 1362,” 46.
- ³³⁰ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, “Musahabeh’ha: Majmu’ah-i Musahabah’ha-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jomhuri-i 1365,” 134-5.
- ³³¹ *Tehran: Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, “Musahabah’ha: Majmu’ah-ye Musahabah’ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Ra’is-i Jumhuri-i Islami-i Iran 1361 va 1362,” 160-161.
- ³³² *Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, “Musahabeh’ha: Majmu’ah-ye Musahabeh’ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Ra’is-i Jumhuri-ye Islami-i Iran 1360,” 27; 123-4.
- ³³³ *Tehran: Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, “Musahabah’ha: Majmu’ah-ye Musahabah’ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Ra’is-i Jumhuri-i Islami-i Iran 1361 va 1362,” 160-161.
- ³³⁴ Each year Iran celebrates Muslim Unity Week. In his speech on October 11, 1989, Khamenei explains that Muslim unity week was established in 1978 in Iranshahr prior to the victory of the Islamic Revolution while he was in exile. He met his Sunni counterpart Mr. Molavi Qamaraldin in Iranshahr and they decided to celebrate the week of 12-17 of Rabi’ al-awwal (the third month in the Islamic calendar and the occasion of the birth of the Prophet) as Muslim unity week. Khamenei claims that Muslim unity is a motto of the Islamic Republic. On October 11, 1989, during his first session of the Muslim Unity Week as the supreme leader, Khamenei called “unity and integration among Muslims an Islamic and Revolutionary principle.” Khamenei’s message to all Muslims during this Unity Week was unity among Muslims while avoiding enmity. He also added: “After the victory of the Islamic Revolution the global arrogance realized that if Muslim unity is achieved among Muslims across the globe then they too will become a Muslim society like the Islamic Iran. Therefore, from the very beginning the reactionary governments who are linked to colonization will attempt to sabotage this unity through enormous money.” Khamenei emphasized “the importance of unity among Muslims and brotherly relationship between Muslim brethren everywhere and under any circumstance.” See Ayatollah Khamenei Speech. See, “*Bayanat Dar Didar-i Aqshar-i Mokhtalef-i Mardom va Mas’ulan va Jam’i az Shi’ayan-i Ostan-i Sarhad-i Pakistan*,” S. A. Khamenei Website, (11 Oct 1989) <<http://farsi.khamenei.ir/print-content?id=2201>>.
- ³³⁵ *Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, “Musahabeh’ha: Majmu’ah-ye Musahabeh’ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Ra’is-i Jumhuri-ye Islami-i Iran 1360,” 66-67.
- ³³⁶ *Ibid*, 68.
- ³³⁷ *Ibid*, 68.
- ³³⁸ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, “Musahabah’ha: Majmu’ah-i Musahabah’ha-yi Hazrat-i Ayat Allah Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jumhuri-i 1363-1364,” 64.
- ³³⁹ *Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, “Musahabeh’ha: Majmu’ah-ye Musahabeh’ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Ra’is-i Jumhuri-ye Islami-i Iran 1360,” 70.
- ³⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 91.

- ³⁴¹ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, “Musahabah’ha: Majmu’ah-i Musahabah’ha-yi Hazrat-i Ayat Allah Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jumhuri-i 1366-1368,” 59.
- ³⁴² *Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, “Musahabeh’ha: Majmu’ah-ye Musahabeh’ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Ra’is-i Jumhuri-ye Islami-i Iran 1360,” 120-121.
- ³⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴⁴ Khamenei explains that he preferred to continue the oversight of the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution instead. Mo’assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, “*Khaterat va Hekayat’ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo’azam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al-‘Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh*,” 197-8.
- ³⁴⁵ Mo’assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, “*Khaterat va Hekayat’ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo’azam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al-‘Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh*,” 197-8.
- ³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 198-9.
- ³⁴⁷ “Supreme Leader’s Speech at UN General Assembly,” *The Center for Preserving and Publishing the Works of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei*, (22 Sep 1987) <http://english.khamenei.ir/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1413>. Also see “Iran President Speech,” *C-SPAN Video Library*, (22 Sep 1987) <<http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/1206-1>>.
- ³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵² Mo’assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, “*Khaterat va Hekayat’ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo’azam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al-‘Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh*,” 197. Also see “Iranian President Vows Revenge: U.S. Delegation Stalks Out During Khamenei Speech to U.N.,” *Bangor Daily News*, (23 Sep 1987) <<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2457&dat=19870923&id=TalJAAAIBAJ&sjid=RA4NAAAIBAJ&pg=7085,2791716>>.
- ³⁵³ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, “Musahabah’ha: Majmu’ah-i Musahabah’ha-yi Hazrat-i Ayat Allah Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jumhuri-i 1366-1368,” 65.
- ³⁵⁴ Robert Pear, “Khomeini Accepts ‘Poison’ of Ending the War with Iraq; UN Sending Mission,” (21 Jul 1988) <<http://www.nytimes.com/1988/07/21/us/khomeini-accepts-poison-of-ending-the-war-with-iraq-un-sending-mission.html>>.
- ³⁵⁵ This is the abbreviated version of the letter. See Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini, “Letter from Ayatollah Khomeini Regarding Weapons During the Iran-Iraq War” *Council of Foreign Affairs*, (1988) <<http://www.cfr.org/iran/letter-ayatollah-khomeini-regarding-weapons-during-iran-iraq-war/p11745>>.
- ³⁵⁶ Nikola B Schahgaldin, “The Clerical Establishment in Iran,” *RAND Corporation*, (1989) <<http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/2006/R3788.pdf>>.
- ³⁵⁷ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, “Musahabeh’ha: Majmu’ah-i Musahabah’ha-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jumhuri-i 1365,” 129.
- ³⁵⁸ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, “Musahabah’ha: Majmu’ah-i Musahabah’ha-yi Hazrat-i Ayat Allah Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jumhuri-i 1366-1368,” 95-96.
- ³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶¹ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, “Musahabah’ha: Majmu’ah-i Musahabah’ha-yi Hazrat-i Ayat Allah Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jumhuri-i 1363-1364,” 111-112.
- ³⁶² Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 106-107.
- ³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 107.
- ³⁶⁴ S. A. Khamenei, “*Bayanat-i Rahbar-i Moa’zam-i Enqelab-i Islami Dar Ejtema’-i Bozorg-i Mardom-i Shahrestan-i Kashan va Aran va Bidgal*,” *The Office of the Supreme Leader S. A. Khamenei*, (11 Nov 2001) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/print.php?sec=bayanat&id=2189>>.
- ³⁶⁵ Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 121.
- ³⁶⁶ *Qodrat-i ruhaniyat va marja’iyyat* refers to power exerted by spiritual leaders; low-ranking and high-ranking clergy (or those who are the source of reference; *marja’*). Behboudi, “*Sharh-i Esm: Zendeginameh-i Ayatollah Seyyed ‘Ali Hosseini Khamenei*,” 108.
- ³⁶⁷ Mo’assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, “*Khaterat va Hekayat’ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo’azam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al-‘Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh*,” 212-231.
- ³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

- ³⁶⁹ S. A. Khamenei, "Etehad Niyaz-i Mabram-i Ommat-i Islami ast/ Mellat-i Iran ba Vafadari beh Rah-i Imam (rah), Eradeh-i Khod ra bar Doshmanan ghalbeh dad," *The Office of Supreme Leader Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei*, (10 Feb 2012) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/?p=contentShow&id=9124>>.
- ³⁷⁰ S. A. Khamenei, "Remarks at a large group of army officers and members of the Revolutionary Guard," *The Office of Supreme Leader Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei*, (7 Jun 1989) <farsi.khamenei.ir/print-content?id=2078>.
- ³⁷¹ Ibid.
- ³⁷² S. A. Khamenei, "Remarks to Elected Officials and Staff of the defense and three forces," *The Office of Supreme Leader S. A. Khamenei*, (8 Jun 1989) <farsi.khamenei.ir/print-content?id=2081>.
- ³⁷³ *Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, "Musahabeh 'ha: Majmu 'ah-ye Musahabeh 'ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei Ra 'is-i Jumhuri-ye Islami-i Iran 1360," 157.
- ³⁷⁴ Ibid, 157-8.
- ³⁷⁵ Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*, 36-41. Also See Ruhollah al-Mousavi, "Ruznegar / Sodur-i Hokm-i Baznegari-ye Qanun-i Asasi az Suy-i Imam Khomeini," (2010) <<http://www.imam-khomeini.ir/fa/n15008/>>. Also see *Ketabkhaneh, Muzeh va Markaz-i Asnad-i Majlis-i Shura-ye Islami*, "Mashruh-i Mozakerat," (2013) <<http://www.ical.ir/index.php?Itemid=12>>.
- ³⁷⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷⁷ Algar, *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, 29-30; 67.
- ³⁷⁸ "Profile: Iran's Dissident Ayatollah," *BBC News*, (30 Jan 2003) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2699541.stm>. Add into on several thousand Mujahedin killed
- ³⁷⁹ Karim Sandjadpour, "Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader," (2009), 6 <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/sadjadpour_iran_final2.pdf>.
- ³⁸⁰ Mo'assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, "Khatemat va Hekayat 'ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo 'zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al- 'Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh," 212.
- ³⁸¹ Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*, 37.
- ³⁸² Ibid, 39.
- ³⁸³ Ibid, 40.
- ³⁸⁴ Video Recording, "Ruling Iran: A Profile of the Supreme Leader," *BBC World Service*, (2 Aug 2011) <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00j4dp9>>.
- ³⁸⁵ Karim Sandjadpour, "Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader," (2009), 6. <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/sadjadpour_iran_final2.pdf>.
- ³⁸⁶ Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*, 36-38.
- ³⁸⁷ Mo'assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, "Khatemat va Hekayat 'ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo 'zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al- 'Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh," 233-234.
- ³⁸⁸ Ibid, 227.
- ³⁸⁹ Ibid, 228. In his response to his daughter, Khomeini affirms Khamenei's qualifications as a *mujtahid* but not his *marja 'iyyat* and *'alimiyyat*. Khomeini is implicitly indicating that Khamenei has the qualifications for becoming heir to his political authority but he is not qualified to be a *marja 'i*. But he seems to endorse him as his political successor.
- ³⁹⁰ Mo'assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, "Khatemat va Hekayat 'ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo 'zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al- 'Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh," 227.
- ³⁹¹ Ibid, 225-227.
- ³⁹² "Government Profile: Iran," *PBS NewsHour*, (8 Nov 2005) <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/middle_east/iran/structure.html>.
- ³⁹³ These conclusions have been made by Said Amir Arjomand and Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Majoob Zweiri. See Said Amir Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, and Majoob Zweiri (eds.), *Iran's Foreign Policy: From Khatami to Ahmadinejad* (UK: Ithaca, 2008).
- ³⁹⁴ Thaler, David E., and Nader, 'Alireza, and others. *Rand National Defense Institute*, "Mullahs, Guards, and Bonyads: An Exploration of Iranian Leadership Dynamics," 2010, xiii-xiv; 24-5.
- ³⁹⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁹⁶ Ibid, xiii-xiv; 102.
- ³⁹⁷ "The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran," *Iran Chamber*, (2009) <http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/constitution_ch09.php>.
- ³⁹⁸ "Inside Iran," *PBS.org*, (2009) <www.phbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontlines/shows/tehran/inside/govt.html>. Also see "Qoveh-i Qazaiyyeh-i Jomhuri-ye Islami-i Iran," (2013) <<http://www.dadiran.ir/Default.aspx?tabid=40>>.

- ³⁹⁹ *BBC News*. Iran: Who Holds the Power?>
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/middle_east/03/iran_power/html/head_judiciary.stm>.
- ⁴⁰⁰ “Inside Iran.” *PBS.org*, (2009) <www.phbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontlines/shows/tehran/inside/govt.html>. Also see “Qoveh-i Qazaiyyeh-i Jomhuri-ye Islami-i Iran,” (2013) <<http://www.dadiran.ir/Default.aspx?tabid=40>>.
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<<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/constitution-of-the-islamic-republic>>.
- ⁴⁰² “Guide: How Iran is Ruled,” *BBC News*, (2013) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8051750.stm#supreme>. Also see “Shura-i Negahban,” (2009) <<http://www.shora-gc.ir/Portal/Home/>>.
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<http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG693.pdf>.
- ⁴⁰⁵ *The Library of Congress*, “Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence and Security: A Profile” (Dec 2012), 1-2
<<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/iran/mois-loc.pdf>>.
- ⁴⁰⁶ “Iran,” *CIA Factbook*, (2013) <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html>>.
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<http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/constitution_ch09.php>.
- ⁴⁰⁸ Wilfried Buchta, “Who Rules Iran?” (2013), 70,
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- ⁴¹¹ Ibid.
- ⁴¹² Jerrold D. Green, Frederic Wehrey, and Charles Wolf Jr., “Understanding Iran,” (RAND Corporation, 2009), ix-x.
- ⁴¹³ See Karim Sandjadpour, “Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran’s Most Powerful Leader,” (2009), 1
<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/sadjadpour_iran_final2.pdf>. To learn more about Iran’s presidents, see Said Amir Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, and Majoob Zweiri (eds.), *Iran’s Foreign Policy: From Khatami to Ahmadinejad* (UK: Ithaca, 2008).
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- ⁴¹⁵ Ibid.
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- ⁴¹⁷ Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*, 178.
- ⁴¹⁸ Ibid, 178.
- ⁴¹⁹ Ibid, 176-7.
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<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/sadjadpour_iran_final2.pdf>.
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<<http://ghatreh.com/news/5938577.html>>.
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<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/sadjadpour_iran_final2.pdf>.
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http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/sadjadpour_iran_final2.pdf
- ⁴²⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴²⁸ Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*, 181-2.
- ⁴²⁹ Rouhani’s inclusion in the pool of presidential candidates seemed to serve Khamenei’s agenda for Iran on two grounds: First, it “temporarily” silenced the internal and external *ghayr-i khodīs* (opposition; outsiders), by giving

Iran a “moderate political image.” Second, Khamenei was assured that Iran’s leadership remains in the hands of the clerical power during this critical political intersection in the life of the Islamic Republic.

⁴³⁰ Karim Sandjadpour, “Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran’s Most Powerful Leader,” (2009), 2. <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/sadjadpour_iran_final2.pdf>.

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⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ S. A. Khamenei, "Meeting with young Muslims from 73 countries," (30 January 2012) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=contentShow&id=9066>>.

⁵²⁶ Ibid.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² Khamenei declares: "The protection of the Muslim community is an Islamic duty and anyone who thinks that the Palestinian issue is a regional or Arab issue is severely wrong, because the Palestinian issue is an Islamic issue and we all have shared responsibilities. Iran is joined in the struggle for the freedom of Palestine. We consider the resistance of the Palestinian nation the only path to victory and the Islamic world feels strength and power from this resistance," See *Tehran: Entesharat-i Seda va Sima-ye Jumhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran*, "*Musahabah'ha: Majmu'ah-ye Musahabah'ha-ye Hujjat al-Islam va al-Muslimin Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei Ra'is-i Jumhuri-i Islami-i Iran 1361 va 1362*," 161-162. Also see S. A. Khamenei, "*Didar-i Rahbaran-i Siyasi va Mazhabi Afghanistan, Suriyeh, Lobnan, Felesṭin va 'Araq*," (3 Oct 1989) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/print.php?sec=content&id=169>>.

⁵³³ Khamenei describes Israel: "The Zionist regime is a cancerous tumor that must be removed and God willing it will be," S. A. Khamenei, *The Office of Supreme Leader 'Ali Khamenei*, (3 Feb 2012) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=contentShow&id=9094>>.

⁵³⁴ Khamenei describes: "The greatest pain and suffering of humanity is absence of justice. Oppressive systems continuously oppress people in different parts of the world. They put pressure on them, demolish their natural rights. Today, the issue of justice is more pressing than ever before. We know that the destruction of the foundations of *zolm* (oppression; cruelty) is certain. It is not just a possibility, but it is certain. It is such a hope that gives us the strength to press on. Belief in the promised Mahdī springs out a new hope in the hearts of Shi'is. Unlike certain global experts, we look at the future positively and say that victory over oppression not only is possible but is definite. It is for this reason that our nation finds courage to stand still against oppressors. The global oppressive system is not eternal. Today, the propaganda systems for the center of global domineering powers and the intellectuals associated with them claims that no movement and no power can stand against their current oppressive systems. They fight against any revolution and any belief that is contrary to their own. Only belief in Mahdī stands in opposition to this type of oppression and injustice. The supporters of justice must equip themselves with power. The power of Islam stops oppression and corruption. There are those who speak of separation of religion and politics which means to put religion aside in a corner and allow it to only give advice or admonish believers. They want to suppress the political power of Islam – the power that is able to fight against oppression and corruption, which is a divine and Islamic power. Such political power is within Islamic principles. Imam Khomeini utilized this very political power of Islam to stand in authority against global oppressive powers and destroy the palaces of cruelty. It is not easy to be soldiers of Mahdī (*Imam-i Zaman*). Belief in Imam Mahdī means determinations to wait. Waiting does not mean to sit and wait in sorrow but to be prepared for being his soldiers, which is not an easy task. Being soldiers of Imam Mahdī means to fight against international centers of power and corruption, which requires discipline, awareness and being practical. Some neglect their responsibilities today because they believe Imam Mahdī will come and bring justice. We should not think this way. Instead, we have great responsibilities to move in that direction until the Imam reappears. Being equipped means to improve and progress in knowledge – intellectually and scientifically – and to be ready to get to work and act." See S. A. Khamenei, "*Bayanat-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Dar Didar-i Aqshar-i Mokhtalef-i Mardom beh Monasebat-i Nimeh-i Sha'aban Dar Maslāi Tehran*," (22 Oct 2002) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/print.php?sec=bayanat&id=2331>>.

⁵³⁵ S. A. Khamenei, "*Aqlan va Shar'an Vajeb Ast keh Dar Entekhabat Sherkat Konid*," *The Official Website of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei*, (4 Jun 2009) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/?p=contentShow&id=5534>>.

⁵³⁶ S. A. Khamenei, "*Shekasteh'ha-ye Amrika Dar Mantaqeh Edameh Peyda Khahad Kard*," *The Official Website of Supreme Leader Ayatollah*, (21 Mar 2011) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/?p=contentShow&id=7898>>.

⁵³⁷ R. K. Ramazani, "Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East" (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 20.

⁵³⁸ Khamenei asserts: "Islam commands us to rise up against oppression and cruelty, to defend the oppressed, and do not give into the power of the oppressors and cruel systems. Islam is the defender of rights. It is the defender of

justice. We, who are the flag-bearers of Islam, must raise the flag of Islam, the flag of justice, the flag of mercy, the flag of national progress, the flag of compassion and justice. The Iranians have raised this flag against the enemies of humanity and global domineering powers. Our enemies were unable to win against this holy effort which is the banner of Islam, and will resolve the political problems of the Muslim nations,” See Mo’assaseh-i Farhangi-ye Qadr-i Vilayat, “*Khaterat va Hekayat’ha-ye Vizheh-i Zendeginameh-i Maqam-i Mo’zam-i Rahbari-ye Hazrat-i Ayatollah al-’Uzma Khamenei Mozaleh.*” Also see S. A. Khamenei, “*Bayanat Dar Didar-i Saran va Mo’atamedan-i ’Ashayer-i Kordestan,*” (14 May 2009) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/print.php?sec=bayanat&id=5310>>. Also see S. A. Khamenei, “*Bayanat-i Maqam-i Mo’azam-i Rahbari Dar Ajtema’-i Bozorg-i Za’ran va Mojaveran-i Hazrat-i Reza Dar Mashhad-i Moqadas,*” (25 Mar 2000) <<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/print.php?sec=bayanat&id=1884>>.

⁵³⁹ Stephen Kinzer, “Moderate Leader Is Elected In Iran By A Wide Margin,” *The New York Times*, (25 May 1997) <<http://www.nytimes.com/1997/05/25/world/moderate-leader-is-ilected-in-iran-by-a-wide-margin.html>>.

⁵⁴⁰ Telephonic Interview with Ata Hoodashtian, (May 2013).

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² Stephen Kinzer, “Moderate Leader Is Elected in Iran by a Wide Margin,” *The New York Times*, (25 May 1997) <<http://www.nytimes.com/1997/05/25/world/moderate-leader-is-ilected-in-iran-by-a-wide-margin.html>>.

⁵⁴³ According to CIA’s July 1997 statistics, Iran’s population was about 67,540,002. About 44% of the population was 14 years of age and younger. 52% was between 15 and 64. Only 4% was 65 and older. See “Iran,” *CIA HomePage Factbook*, (2009) <<http://www.umsl.edu/services/govdocs/wofact97/country-frame.html>>.

⁵⁴⁴ Stephen Kinzer, “Moderate Leader Is Elected In Iran By A Wide Margin,” *The New York Times*, (25 May 1997) <<http://www.nytimes.com/1997/05/25/world/moderate-leader-is-ilected-in-iran-by-a-wide-margin.html>>.

⁵⁴⁵ Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*, 111.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid. 110-111.

⁵⁴⁷ Stephen Kinzer, “Moderate Leader is Elected in Iran by a Wide Margin,” *The New York Times*, (25 May 1997) <<http://www.nytimes.com/1997/05/25/world/moderate-leader-is-ilected-in-iran-by-a-wide-margin.html>>.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ These codes included having parties, listening to the forbidden music, watching videos or satellite television, or playing cards. See Stephen Kinzer, “Moderate Leader Is Elected in Iran by a Wide Margin,” *The New York Times*, (25 May 1997) <<http://www.nytimes.com/1997/05/25/world/moderate-leader-is-ilected-in-iran-by-a-wide-margin.html>>.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ H.E. Mr. Mohmmad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, “Round Table: Dialogue among Civilizations” *United Nations, New York*, (5 Sep 2000) <<http://www.unesco.org/dialogue/en/khatami.htm>>.

⁵⁵² “Transcript of Interview with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami,” *CNN Interactive* (7 Jan 1998). <<http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9801/07/iran/interview.html>>. Also see “Khatami Suggests Warmer Relations with U.S.,” *CNN Interactive*, (7 Jan 1998) <<http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9801/07/iran/>>.

⁵⁵³ “Khatami Suggests Warmer Relations with US,” *CNN Interactive*, (7 January 1998) <<http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9801/07/iran/>>.

⁵⁵⁴ “Statement by H.E. Mohammad Khatami President of the Islamic Republic of Iran before the 53rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly,” *Pars Times*, 21 (Sep 1998) <http://www.parstimes.com/history/khatami_speech_un.html>.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Refers to the U.S. and the Soviet Union and the end of this bipolar world with the end of the Cold War.

⁵⁵⁸ “Statement by H.E. Mohammad Khatami President of the Islamic Republic of Iran before the 53rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly,” *Pars Times*, (21 Sep 1998) <http://www.parstimes.com/history/khatami_speech_un.html>.

⁵⁵⁹ Seyed Mohammad Khatami, “Dialogue Among Civilizations: Contexts and Perspectives,” *UN Chronicle*, (10 Jan 2012) <<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/chronicle/home/archive/issues2012/dialogueamongcivilizations/dialogueamongcivilizationscontextsandperspectives>>.

⁵⁶⁰ Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*, 95.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid, 110-111.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Telephonic Interview with Ata Hoodashtian (May 2013).

- ⁵⁶⁴ Mansour Farhang, "A lecture by Dr. Mansour Farhang, Bennington College. Part of the Bilingual Lecture Series on Iran," *University of California, Los Angeles*, (2 Apr 2013) <<http://international.ucla.edu/cnes/podcasts/article.asp?parentid=131127>>.
- ⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶⁶ S. A. Khamenei, "Remarks at the inauguration of President," (3 Aug 1997) <farsi.khamenei.ir/print-content?id=2847>.
- ⁵⁶⁷ Ata Hoodashtian was among intellectuals who returned to Iran and participated in conferences and public political discussions. Based on telephone interview, (May 2013).
- ⁵⁶⁸ Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*, 93.
- ⁵⁶⁹ PBS, (2009) <<http://www.phb.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/2009/12/the-chain-murders-1988-1998.html>>.
- ⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷¹ Shahab Nikzad, "*Bazkhani-i Parvande-ha-ye Qatlha-ye Zanjirehi*," *BBC Farsi*, (23 Nov 2009) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2009/11/091123_ag_shn_chain_assassinations.shtml>.
- ⁵⁷² Ibid.
- ⁵⁷³ Mohsen Kadivar, "Biography," (2009) <<http://en.kadivar.com/sample-page/>>.
- ⁵⁷⁴ Robin Wright, *Dreams and Shadows: the Future of the Middle East* (Penguin Press, 2008), p. 296.
- ⁵⁷⁵ Mohsen Kadivar, "Biography," (2009) <<http://en.kadivar.com/sample-page/>>.
- ⁵⁷⁶ Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*, 93-94.
- ⁵⁷⁷ Kashi 'Abdullah Qolamreza, "*Matbu'at Dar 'Asr-i Khatami*" (Mo'aseseh Entesharat-i Salk, Fall 2000).
- ⁵⁷⁸ Ibid, 12.
- ⁵⁷⁹ Ibid, 13.
- ⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸¹ Ibid, 13-14.
- ⁵⁸² Ibid, 14.
- ⁵⁸³ Ibid, 25.
- ⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸⁵ Ibid, 23-24.
- ⁵⁸⁶ It seems that President Khatami is inferring that the ideals of the Islamic Revolution are becoming old for the new young generation who live in a different post revolution world and global networking world. Their ideals are different from the older generation and they are seeking new ways. See Qolamreza, "*Matbu'at Dar 'Asr-i Khatam*," 26.
- ⁵⁸⁷ Qolamreza, "*Matbu'at Dar 'Asr-i Khatami*," 26-27.
- ⁵⁸⁸ Ibid, 28-29
- ⁵⁸⁹ Qolamreza, "*Matbu'at Dar 'Asr-i Khatami*," 14-15.
- ⁵⁹⁰ Ibid, 14-15.
- ⁵⁹¹ Ibid, 15.
- ⁵⁹² Ibid, 29-30.
- ⁵⁹³ Ibid, 15-16.
- ⁵⁹⁴ *Sazeman-i Madarek-i Farhangi-i Enqelab-i Islami*, "*Musahabah'ha: Majmu'ah-i Musahabah'ha-yi Hazrat-i Ayat Allah Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei Dar Dawran-i Riyasat-i Jumhuri-i 1366-1368*," 65. Also see Mansour Farhang, "A lecture by Dr. Mansour Farhang, Bennington College. Part of the Bilingual Lecture Series on Iran," (*University of California, Los Angeles*, (2 Apr 2013) <<http://international.ucla.edu/cnes/podcasts/article.asp?parentid=131127>>.
- ⁵⁹⁵ Qolamreza, "*Matbu'at Dar 'Asr-i Khatami*," 16.
- ⁵⁹⁶ Ibid, 17.
- ⁵⁹⁷ Ibid, 17-18.
- ⁵⁹⁸ Ibid, 30.
- ⁵⁹⁹ Combination of faith and knowledge: Khamenei always promotes knowledge, increase of knowledge, progress in knowledge, yet when knowledge was exchanged through the press, he strongly opposed it. It seems that the knowledge he promotes is a structured knowledge within a predisposed, planned, structured environment – promotion of knowledge which meets the standards and goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Any other knowledge is formidable and *haram*.
- ⁶⁰⁰ Qolamreza, "*Matbu'at Dar 'Asr-i Khatami*," 30-32.
- ⁶⁰¹ What Khatami is proposing is that freedom of exchange of ideas will, in fact, favor the Islamic Republic. As a result, Iranians will seek news within their local resources instead of turning to foreign media for information. This,

in fact, will meet the leader's concerns of the possibilities of Iranians being influenced by foreign propaganda. Counter to Khatami's "logical" proposal, the leader insists that his proposals are direct existential threats to the Islamic Republic. See Qolamreza, "Matbu'at Dar 'Asr-i Khatami," 32.

⁶⁰² Qolamreza, "Matbu'at Dar 'Asr-i Khatami," 18.

⁶⁰³ Ibid, 18-19.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵ Qolamreza, "Matbu'at Dar 'Asr-i Khatami," 20-21.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid, 21-22.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid, 32.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid, 32-33.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid, 22-24.

⁶¹⁰ S. A. Khamenei, "Remarks at the Inauguration of President," (3 Aug 1997) <farsi.khamenei.ir/print-content?id=2847>.

⁶¹¹ Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei" (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006).

⁶¹² S. A. Khamenei, "Bayanat Dar Marasem-i Faregh al-tahsili Gorūhi az Daneshjuyan," 3 Sep 1998. Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006,) 17; 19

⁶¹³ S. A. Khamenei, "Khotbeh 'ha-ye-i Namaz Jom 'eh-ye Tehran," 23 Jan 1987. Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006,) 31-2.

⁶¹⁴ S. A. Khamenei, "Khotbeh 'ha-ye Namaz Jom 'eh-ye Tehran," 23 Jan 1987. Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006,) 30-33.

⁶¹⁵ S. A. Khamenei, "Khotbeh 'ha-ye Namaz Jom 'eh-ye Tehran," 5 Dec 1986. Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006,) 29-30.

⁶¹⁶ Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006,) 30-31.

⁶¹⁷ S. A. Khamenei, "Bayant Dar Didar-i 'Ulama' va Ruhaniyun va Mobleghan Dar Astaneh-ye Mah-i Moharram al-Heram," 12 Apr 1999. Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006,) 31.

⁶¹⁸ S. A. Khamenei, "Bayanat Dar Marasem-i Faregh al-Tahsili Goruhi az Daneshjuyan," 3 Sep 1998. Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 17.

⁶¹⁹ S. A. Khamenei, "Khotbeh 'ha-ye Namaz Jom 'eh-ye Tehran," 5 Dec 1986. Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006,) 17.

⁶²⁰ S. A. Khamenei, "Bayanat Dar Didar ba Mihmana-i Dahomin Salgard-i Ertehal-i Hazrat-i Imam Khomeini," 2 Jun 1999. Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006,) 31.

⁶²¹ Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006,) 32.

⁶²² S. A. Khamenei, "Bayanat Dar Marasem-i Faregh al-Tahsili Goruhi az Daneshjuyan," 3 Sep 1998. Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006,) 23-4.

⁶²³ S. A. Khamenei, "Khotbeh 'ha-ye-i Namaz Jom 'eh-ye Tehran," 5 Dec 1986. Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006,) 33.

⁶²⁴ Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006,) 37.

⁶²⁵ S. A. Khamenei, "Khotbeh 'ha-ye-i Namaz Jom 'eh-ye Tehran," 5 Dec 1986. Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, "Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo'azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei," (Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami, 2006,) 34-6.

- ⁶²⁶ S. A. Khamenei, “*Bayanat Dar Marasem-i Faregh al-Taḥṣīlī Gorūhi az Daneshjuyan*,” 3 Sep 1998. Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, “*Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo‘azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei*,” (Tehran: *Mo‘asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami*, 2006,) 50-51.
- ⁶²⁷ Manouchehr Mohammadi, “*Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo‘azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei*,” (Tehran: *Mo‘asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami*, 2006,) 47.
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- ⁶³⁴ “Constitution of Iran,” (2013) <http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ir00000_.html>.
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- ⁶⁴⁰ S. A. Khamenei, “*Khotbeh ‘ha-ye-i Namaz Jom ‘eh-ye Tehran*,” (5 Dec 1986). Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, “*Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo‘azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei*,” (Tehran: *Mo‘asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami*, 2006,) 17-19.
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- ⁶⁴² S. A. Khamenei, “*Bayanat Dar Didar-i O‘aza-ye Anjoman-i Ahl-i Qalam*,” 27 Jan 2003. Published in Manouchehr Mohammadi, “*Azadi Dar Negah-i Rahbar-i Mo‘azam-i Enqelab-i Islami Hazrat-i Ayatollah Khamenei*,” (Tehran: *Mo‘asseseh-ye Pazhuheshi-ye Farhangi-ye Enqelab-i Islami*, 2006,) 20.
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- ⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁷⁶ Ibid.
- ⁶⁷⁷ Ibid. In both views, people exercise a great deal of power and could influence the decision making process of the officials, and have the power to change their government through the majority vote. Nonetheless, Montazeri reiterated that once a leader or the *faqih* begins to act in injustice, unfairness and dishonesty, and neglects the rights of the Islamic society by oppressing them, he is no longer qualified to lead and can be removed from his position. This dismissal is not optional, but mandatory. It was for this reason that contentions occurred between Montazeri and Khomeini when Montazeri accused Khomeini of committing acts of social injustice, oppression, and torture against the Islamic society of Iran, which led to his dismissal from succession to supreme leadership.
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