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**The Making of a Special Relationship: Iran
in the Foreign Policy of the United States,
1953 – 1979**

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Abstrakt

V období po druhé světové válce se Írán stal jedním z nejbližších spojenců Spojených států amerických na Blízkém východě. Tuto éru však vystřídalo období nepřátelství a vzájemné nedůvěry po Islámské revoluci v roce 1979. Pro porozumění současné situace byla provedena analýza americké zahraniční politiky vůči Íránu v období vlády šáha Muhammada Rezy Pahlavího. Autor diplomové práce nazvané *The Making of a Special Relationship: Iran in the Foreign Policy of the United States, 1953 – 1979* si položil otázku, jakou politiku Spojené státy vůči Íránu vedly, že období spolupráce náhle skončilo? Jakou formu nadvlády aplikoval Washington ve vztahu k Teheránu, že se Islámská revoluce nesla v protiamerickém duchu?

Výzkum byl ukotven v konstruktivistické teorii. Americká zahraniční politika se svými specifickými hodnotami, normami, vírou, kulturou a jazykem vůči ostatním zemím vytváří podle konstruktivistických teoretiků tři různé formy nadvlády: hegemonii, hierarchii a heteronomii.

Analýza americké zahraniční politiky a odtajněných primárních dokumentů ukázala, že mezi Spojenými státy a Íránem existoval heteronomický vztah. Spojené státy vytvořily struktury, v jejichž rámci se Írán stal na Washingtonu plně závislým. Írán se v době šáhovy vlády možná stal vyspělejším a mocnějším, ale ne nezávislejším. Díky velmi úzkému spolenectví a závislosti dynastie Pahlaví na Spojených státech se šíitská opozice rozhodla odmítnout jak šáha, tak i americký vliv v Íránu.

Abstract

In the years following World War II, Iran became one of the closest allies of United States of America in the Middle East. The era of friendship was replaced by hostilities and mutual mistrust after the 1979 Iranian revolution. In order to understand the current situation the analysis of American foreign policy towards Iran during the reign of Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi has been done. The author of the thesis *The Making of a Special Relationship: Iran in the Foreign Policy of the United States, 1953 – 1979* questions what kind of policy the United States adopted towards Iran that inevitably led to such dramatic end? What kind of rule Washington pursued towards Tehran that Revolution arose with anti-American spirit?

The research has been performed in a constructivist framework. American foreign policy with its specific values, norms, beliefs, culture and language towards other states creates, according to constructivist scholars, three different types of rule: hegemony, hierarchy and heteronomy.

The analysis of U.S. foreign policy and declassified primary documents showed that U.S.-Iranian relations operated in heteronomic structures. United States created rules that determined Iran to be dependent on it. The country under Shah's rule became more developed and powerful, but not independent. Thanks to extremely tight connection and dependence of Pahlavi dynasty on United States the opposition forces decided to overthrow them both, the Shah and American influence.

Klíčová slova

Spojené státy americké – Írán – Blízký východ – zahraniční politika – revoluce – konstruktivismus

Keywords

United States of America – Iran – Middle East – foreign policy – revolution – constructivism

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V Praze dne 13. května 2013

Jaroslav Zuckerstein

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Introduction

“The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.”¹

Ludwig Wittgenstein

Considering the endless hostilities and mutual mistrust of the recent years, one can hardly imagine that Iran used to be one of the closest allies of United States of America in the Middle East, not long ago nearly three decades. Opinions regarding why the current situation looks that hopeless widely differ. Is the anti-Americanism feeling in Iran so deep rooted? Are the U.S. foreign policy objectives simply incompatible with Islamic revolutionary ideas? Or does the Iranian government critically need an external enemy to blame in order to hide its own failure to solve its economic and domestic social challenges?

Analysis of the current situation, which is far from ideal, generates more questions than answers. It is plausible to argue that in order to understand the current situation it is essential to take a look at the past history. No explanation of contemporary U.S.-Iranian relations could be complete without a thorough analysis of American foreign policy towards Iran during the reign of Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi, when the U.S. influence in the country reached unprecedented heights.

The United States was a relative latecomer to the Iranian political scene. In the late 19th and early 20th century Iran was a third-world country caught between the reminiscence of triumphs and glory of a bygone Persian era and suffering from Russian and British imperial whims. During the following decades, Iran became a country massively influenced by Great Britain which came with all the related benefits and hardships. Prior to the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry in 1951, the United States involvement in Iranian affairs was only to a limited degree.

The coup d'état that was organized by the British and American intelligence services which deposed of the Mohammad Mosaddegh government started a new era of close alliance between the Iranian regime and the United States. Billions of dollars flowed into Tehran as direct investment, military aid or other support to modernize the Iranian industry and infrastructure. However in 1979 years of friendship came to an end with the Islamic revolution based on a deep anti-American feeling.

¹ Quoted in Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922), 149.

The anti-American nature of the Revolution clearly showed that there was something intrinsically wrong with the U.S. involvement in Iranian affairs. Therefore, it seems necessary to question what kind of policy the United States adopted towards Iran that led to such inglorious end? What kind of rule Washington pursued towards Tehran that Revolution arose with anti-American spirit? Or in broader terms, how American policy towards countries like Iran should *not* look like, when it is rather obvious that this specific example lacked the success?

It is definitely not simple to answer the questions why the American policy has failed. To accurately address the problem it is necessary to look into the core of the U.S. policy towards Iran. Were there hegemonic elements present? Could the American policy be described as a wave of new colonialism or imperialism as some scholars writing in the critical theory framework call it?

To answer these complex questions the author performed an analysis of U.S. foreign policy towards Iran in a constructivist framework and assumed that the rules developed by U.S. foreign policy were incorrectly pursued towards Iran. American foreign policy with its specific values, norms, beliefs, culture and language towards other states creates, according to constructivist scholars, three different types of rule: hegemony, hierarchy and heteronomy. Some states comply with one or another type of rule. Iran was obviously an example of a country that decided to reject the rule. The ultimate question is to determine – which one was it that Iran had rejected.

The nature of the U.S. foreign policy and the language used by American officials towards Iran between 1953 and 1979 provided the basis for the creation of a specific kind of rule under which U.S.-Iranian relations operated. The rule (hegemonic, hierarchic or heteronomic) was rejected by the Iranian people in the form of a revolution, with a strong anti-American sentiment. Application of a modernist-linguistic approach of constructivist theory on the analysis of the U.S. foreign policy will demonstrate what kind of political attitude is likely to fail when applied towards states like Iran.

Since only American policies, approaches and language used towards Iran are important to answer the research questions and to understand the nature of dominance, mainly American sources and scholars have been consulted while writing this thesis.

While conducting the research for this thesis, the author has consulted a large number of primary and secondary sources, all of which cannot be referenced here. In

the following paragraphs only the most important and relevant sources will be discussed and analyzed.

The analysis of primary documents is absolutely essential in order to fully understand the kind of policy that the United States pursued towards Iran. Declassified foreign policy documents, *The Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), edited and published by the U.S. Department of State is the most important primary source for this thesis.² It contains records of diplomatic meetings, letters and telegrams, information and analysis of the then most current situation in Iran, plans and suggestions how to pursue various U.S. policies. It is a highly valuable source which provides us with the insight into the American way of thinking towards Iran. The documents have been arranged chronologically and are easily available online. Of course there are some drawbacks with FRUS, since all the documents have not been declassified and the most sensitive ones will probably never be. Some less important issues are mentioned in developing stories on a daily basis, however during more controversial periods of the U.S. history, there are weeks and months of documents are intentionally missing. Moreover, documents related to Iran and other countries have been cleared for publication only up to the year 1976. Records for the three most critical years just before Islamic Revolution are as of the time this thesis will be defended still classified.

However, there is an additional source that can conveniently fill the three-year gap between 1976 and 1979. During the Revolution Iranian students seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, where they were able to acquire an extensive amount of classified documents. Embassy employees did manage to burn some of them. However due to the limited time they have to do this task, the vast majority of documents were only shredded and some of them not even. Iranians who called themselves Muslim Students Following the Line of the Imam (asked for help from women skilled at weaving Persian carpets) reassembled in a painfully arduous process, all the shredded documents and started to publish them as *Documents from the U.S. Espionage Den*.³ The publication of all the documents captured has become highly valuable for academic purposes, since many are still classified in the United States. When publishing them, Muslim Students

² FRUS documents related to U.S.-Iranian relations are easily available online at the website of the Department of State in pdf or e-book formats. See: United States, Department of State, Office of the Historian. *Foreign Relations of the United States*. Available at <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments> (accessed April 3, 2013).

³ Documents from the U.S. Espionage Den. Available at <http://archive.org/details/DocumentsFromTheU.s.EspionageDen> (accessed April 3, 2013).

added some critical and anti-American essays as an introduction to each volume which provides as an insight into the Iranian (radical leftist) revolutionary thinking. The authenticity of the documents published in Iran has not been challenged by the Department of State or the CIA.

On the other hand this source also has some drawbacks. It came out that the U.S embassy in Tehran was basically a regional base for CIA activities in the region as documents on Saudi Arabia, Israel and Pakistan were acquired. The Iranians were able to assemble a massive amount of documents however they failed to apply a basic notion of selectivity when publishing them, which represents the major problem of *Documents from the U.S. Espionage Den*. To date 77 thick volumes have been published and they include absolutely everything – not only relevant data, but also unimportant descriptions of various personalities that generates into rumors and gossips. The second major drawback is the chaotic ordering of the collected documents which makes it is highly difficult to effectively orientate oneself through this vast amount of data.

In addition to the declassified documents there is one further valuable primary source – press releases, commentaries and speeches express the official policies of Secretary of State on various issues and developments which are published in *The Department of State Bulletin* (DoS Bulletins). The author is fully aware of the fact that official statements and views on foreign policy have in many cases nothing to do with reality which remains undisclosed to the public. However since the basis of this thesis works within a constructivist framework this is not at all a drawback. Social reality is constructed in a discourse manner, so since the official statements are in time converted into rules and norms, they become “a social reality”. It is the use of particular language in official statements that matters. For the specific academic purposes of this thesis the DoS Bulletins represent a highly valuable source.

U.S.-Iranian relations between 1953 and 1979 have attracted the attention of many scholars during the previous few decades. Their monographs have been consulted while the thesis was being written, although the main research relies on primary sources. However, since many scholars and historians also used these sources as well as other features such as interviewing officials or policymakers it provides value to their monographs.

James A. Bill is one of the most distinguished scholars who have written about U.S.-Iranian relations. His book *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-*

*Iranian Relations*⁴ offers probably the most comprehensive study of mutual relations since the early encounters, through the Islamic Revolution and beyond with a strong emphasis on the phenomenon of Pahlavism in Washington discourse. Bill worked with numerous primary sources, conducted interviews and numerous other attributes, which, it could be argued, make the scope of his research unrivalled so far.

All questions, operational details and political background of the 1953 Coup d'état, the situation before the coup and the consequences that followed were thoroughly analyzed by Stephen Kinzer in his book *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*.⁵ In his very extensive research he studied the concept of regime change and its political, economic and socio-cultural outcomes.

The explicit American support of the Shah's undemocratic regime, therefore making Iran a client state of the United States was according to Mark Gasiorowski an indirect push that caused the Islamic Revolution and the emergence of anti-American feeling in Iran. In his book *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State in Iran*⁶ Gasiorowski offers a very plausible explanation of the reality of the complicated U.S.-Iranian relationship which he put into rather critical theory framework. One of the main questions he asks in his monograph is whether Iran was indeed a client state of the United States.

Many other books by distinguished scholars were consulted by the author during the process of writing this thesis. *The United States and Iran: In the Shadow of Musaddiq*⁷ by James F. Goode strongly emphasizes the nationalization process of the oil industry. Richard W. Cottam who served at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran during the 1950s in his book *Iran and the United States: A Cold War Case Study*⁸ put the whole research into broader Cold War discussion. Barry M. Rubin in *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran*⁹ explained from liberal perspective that the failure of U.S. policy in Iran in 1979 was caused by the serious misinterpretation

⁴James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

⁵Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008).

⁶Mark J. Gasiorowski, *U.S. foreign policy and the Shah: building a client state in Iran* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

⁷James F. Goode, *The United States and Iran: In the Shadow of Musaddiq* (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1997).

⁸Richard W. Cottam, *Iran and the United States: A Cold War Case Study* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988).

⁹Barry M. Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980).

and lack of comprehension of Shah's modernization and American assistance by the Iranian public.

Last but not least, the author of this thesis consulted many books and articles by constructivist theorists to fully grasp the whole U.S.-Iranian issue and provide a complete framework of the fundamental research. This included books or articles by Kratochwil, Wendt or Katzenstein. However the theory presented in *The World of Our Making*¹⁰ by Nicholas Onuf is the most significant one for defining the framework of this thesis. Detailed explanation of the theoretical approaches which this thesis is based on will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁰Nicholas Onuf, *The World of Our Making* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013). First published in 1989.

PART I

1. Defining constructivism

Despite being relatively new, social constructivism has successfully established itself into the theory of international relations (IR theory) as one of the most dynamic approaches. Its core assumption is that socio-political international reality is constructed by human interaction. The world is therefore a social construction which is created by interactions among agents¹¹ of international structure.¹²

According to constructivists there are numerous important aspects that have essential influences on the creation and adoption of policy decisions. These are beliefs, national interests, identities, culture, existing norms and influence of the structure to mention some of them. Adoption of the political decision by agents not necessary evolves from the prospect of individual or material gain, but from social rules and norms. When studying international reality through the lenses of the constructivist framework it is therefore necessary to be concerned with socially constructed knowledge and the construction of social reality¹³.

Within a constructivist framework the material world shapes and is shaped by human activity with every interaction depending on normative and epistemic interpretation of this material world¹⁴. Our knowledge of the world depends on our own interpretation and language we use. Emanuel Adler argues that the knowledge emerges not only from the essentials that humans use in their everyday life when constructing the social reality but also from theories, concepts, meanings, values and symbols to interpret the social reality¹⁵. Agents' perception of reality is at any time and space historically constructed¹⁶. Socially constructed structures are products of human activity

¹¹ According to the constructivists agents of the international structure are states with their national interests, identities and culture.

¹² Vendulka Kubálková, Nicholas Onuf and Paul Kowert, *International Relations in a Constructed World* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 3–21.

¹³ Stefano Guzzini, "A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 6, No. 2 (2000): 147–149.

¹⁴ Emanuel Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* 3, No. 3 (1997): 322–323.

¹⁵ Emanuel Adler, "Constructivism in International Relations: Sources, Contributions, and Debates," in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth Simmons (London: Sage Publications, 2013), 112–114.

¹⁶ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 370–378.

and social processes. These structures inevitably change in time, because the collective understanding of the reality can be changed¹⁷.

Constructivist scholars argue that international reality is both material and ideational. Ideational factors have both normative and instrumental dimension, that reflects not only individual but also collective intentions and the importance of these factors is independent of time and space¹⁸. Human knowledge (social ontology) has therefore epistemic consequences, which means that socially constructed reality exists.

Thus constructivist framework with its social ontology and epistemology enables scholars to find answers to various questions that deal with established norms and rules, cultural background, historical and political expedience, discourse or communication. The various aspects mentioned reveal that not only theory of international relations and political science can make use of constructivist framework, but this approach also perfectly fits for a study of history.

1.1 Evolution of constructivist theory

The beginnings of constructivist theory are often connected to the Third Great Debate in the theory of international relations (IR theory) from the late 1980s when the Eastern bloc was about to collapse¹⁹. The existing theories (e.g. realism/neorealism or liberalism/neoliberalism) actually were not able to deliver any plausible explanations why the Cold War ended and the discussion about the nature of international relations (ontology) and means of its cognition (epistemology) could thus begin again²⁰.

The main question of that time was if the reality of international relations can be described empirically or not. Realist, liberal and associated theories believe they can. Social reality of international relations according to advocates of these theories consists entirely of material factors, whereas post-positivists (constructivists among them) consider reality largely dependent on individual agents.

¹⁷ Friedrich Kratochwil, "Constructing a New Orthodoxy? Wendt's Social Theory of International Politics and the Constructivist Challenge," in *Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and His Critics*, eds. Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 21–47.

¹⁸ John G. Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 33.

¹⁹ Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security* 23, No. 1 (Summer 1998): 171–172.

²⁰ Petr Drulák, *Teorie mezinárodních vztahů* (Praha: Portál, 2003), 51.

Some scholars argue that the roots of constructivism can be traced much earlier than to the end of the Cold War. Edward Hallett Carr can be named as the first opponent of empiricism in historiography²¹. Works by Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida in the 1970s and 1980s or even earlier by authors such as J. L. Austin (who defined performative utterances as sentences that do not describe reality, but do change the social reality which they are actually describing) and Ludwig Wittgenstein have greatly influenced the discussion which has led towards post-positivist thinking in the works of James Der Derian, Andrew Linklater or Robert Cox²².

The theoretical framework of this thesis is closely attached to the constructivist authors from the late 1980s, most importantly Nicholas Onuf, Friedrich Kratochwil and Alexander Wendt. Thanks to these scholars, constructivism challenged rationalist approaches in international relations prevalent at that time and became one of the most dynamic topics in the IR theory discourse. International relations were no longer described as empirically examined reality, but as a phenomenon affected by identity, culture or interests.

When Onuf published the essential theoretical work *World of Our Making*²³ in 1989, constructivism had become a fully-fledged approach in the IR theory²⁴. Onuf's works mainly deal with various types of speech act and the corresponding rules, which is in fact the core theoretical base of this thesis. Therefore, Onuf's approaches will be described in greater detail in the chapter *Applying constructivism in the study of U.S.-Iranian relations*.

As already mentioned the use of specific language and speech act matters with regards to constructing the reality. The most prominent contribution to constructivist thinking in this area was presented by Friedrich Kratochwil in 1989. His influential book *Rules, Norms, and Decisions* provided the foundations for constructivist linguistic research²⁵.

One of the core constructivist pieces was written by Alexander Wendt, when in 1992 an article *Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Constructivism of Power*

²¹ Kubáľková, *International Relations in a Constructed World*, 26–27.

²² Adler, "Constructivism in International Relations," 118.

²³ Nicholas Onuf, *The World of Our Making* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013). First published in 1989.

²⁴ Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 166.

²⁵ Friedrich Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). First published in 1989.

Politics was published²⁶, Wendt became highly respected figure in the IR theory. Social constructivism according to Wendt works like positivism with the presumption that states are the most important actors in international relations. However, in international reality they are not motivated by material prospects, but the national interest is shaped by social structures created on the basis of human activity or domestic policies²⁷.

Works by Onuf, Kratochwil and Wendt in late 1980s represented the most important milestone in introducing constructivism into the IR theory – from being an alternative to becoming a mainstream ideational stream and finally a fully established theoretical discipline. In 1990s many scholars contributed to the further development of constructivism and based on the diversity of their opinions, three different types of schools can be recognized.

The *English school* interprets international reality from the socio-historical perspective and recognizes that the international structure is shaped by norms and identity. This has been proposed by scholars such as Timothy Dunne, Andrew Linklater, Friedrich Kratochwil or Alexander Wendt.

The *Copenhagen school* has had a remarkable influence over the IR theory and more importantly in the Security studies. Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde are the most prominent figures from the Copenhagen school based on the development of the concept of securitization²⁸ in their book *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*²⁹.

The *American school* derives its ideas from sociological institutionalism. Michael Barnett together with Emanuel Adler reintroduced the concept of community security in the IR theory.³⁰ Kathryn Sikkink and more importantly Martha Finnemore with her books *National Interests in International Society*³¹ and *The Purpose of*

²⁶ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 46, No. 2 (Spring 1992): 391–425.

²⁷ Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it”, 1992.

²⁸ Concept of securitization in the theory of international relations was developed by scholars of Copenhagen school by introducing elements of classical realism into the constructivist theory. Securitization is the highest stage of extreme politicization that enables the use of extraordinary means in the name of security.

²⁹ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

³⁰ The term Security community was introduced into the IR theory for the first time by Karl Deutsch in 1957 in his work *Political community and the North Atlantic area: international organization in the light of historical experience*. Deutsch defined a security community as “a group of people” believing “that they have come to agreement on at least this one point: that common social problems must and can be resolved by processes of ‘peaceful change’”.

³¹ Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

*Intervention*³² defined the systemic approach to state interests and state behavior by studying not power, but social values.

In the late 1990s Alexander Wendt again published a truly extensive set of ideas. One of the most cited features was that he brought into constructivist theory the concept of culture in anarchic international system which defines the relations of one state to another. This concept was introduced in 1999 in his landmark work *Social Theory of International Politics*³³. Thanks to mutual interactions states are able to form a model of cooperation that would eventually remove conflicts between them. According to Wendt anarchy can exhibit three different cultures – Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian.³⁴ In the Hobbesian culture states perceived themselves as enemies, in Lockean as rivals and in Kantian as friends. While in Hobbesian culture states wage war against each other, Lockean culture includes violence as well, but in a limited and calculated manner. However Kantian culture excludes violence as a means to settle disputes – as Kant’s original thesis of perpetual peace clearly states. In the first two cultures states behave rationally. Motives of the third one are not driven by material prospects – the state adopts a certain *norm* instead.

1.2 Types of constructivism

The Constructivist theory is to a large extent ideationally diverse. Various types of constructivism are derived from their position on the scale between positivism and post-positivism. Softer types of constructivist theory adopt most of their ideational background from rational choice, however on the opposite side there are greater reflectivist ideas – that reality exists outside of our knowledge and material prospects are irrelevant because they are separated from social interpretation and language³⁵.

The most comprehensive typology of constructivism was developed by Emanuel Adler who distinguished four essential types of constructivism based on philosophical and sociological approaches³⁶. The first he called *modernist* which he defines as the

³² Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

³³ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

³⁴ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 246–312.

³⁵ Jeffrey T. Checkel, “The Constructive Turn in International Relations Theory,” *World Politics* 50, No. 2 (January 1998): 324–327.

³⁶ Adler, *Constructivism in International Relations*, p. 95.

combination of objective hermeneutics and cognitive interest in understanding social reality. He includes there the group of authors like Michael Barnett, Martha Finnemore, Peter Katzenstein, Alexander Wendt and many others, including himself³⁷.

The Modernist-linguistic (rule-based) type is defined by Adler as combination of cognitive interest, as well as subjective hermeneutics, but not objective. In understanding social reality it is necessary to uncover processes that shape social facts by language and rules. Friedrich Kratochwil and Nicholas Onuf belong to the group of authors with modernist linguistic tradition thinking. Karen Litfin, Jutta Weldes and Neta Crawford also wrote books and articles that present this particular historic and interpretative research to understand the social reality³⁸. This thesis derives most of its theoretical framework from modernist linguistic authors.

The third type according to Adler is the *radical (narrative knowing)* constructivism. David Campbell, James Der Derian, Steven Weber and others believe that material existence exists, but is not presented correctly. Thus they prefer discussion, narration or texts to construct reality³⁹.

The last type is a combination of objective hermeneutics and rational knowledge. *Critical (post-modernist)* constructivism aims at a better understanding of the mechanisms from which social and political order evolve. Adler includes the works of Andrew Linklater and Robert Cox into this category⁴⁰.

1.3 Principles and concepts of constructivism

Besides the most important fact that constructivist scholars consider states as the most important agents of international structure, they also believe that the identity, culture and norms discursively constructed by speech act are among the essential concepts to understand social reality.

For all constructivist authors, *Identity* is the most important concept, being even more imperative for Wendt and Katzenstein. Understandings, assumptions, collective meanings are the results of mutual interactions which constitutes identities or state identities. They depend on historical, political, cultural and social context. Unlike other

³⁷ Ibid., 97–98.

³⁸ Ibid., 98.

³⁹ Ibid., 98.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 98.

theories constructivism considers identities as dynamic and changing in time, i.e. they can be reshaped by social relations. Identity is important in the way that it allows agents to understand the distinction between themselves and others' difference. Agents (states) and structures are socially constructed in a discourse manner. The discourse in rationalist theory is known as "common knowledge"⁴¹. Discourse is necessary for interactions among agents so that their identity is shaped. And last but not least, changes and variations of state identities shape the national interests⁴².

Culture is another essential concept in constructivist theory, which involves numerous different habits, values, models and norms. All of these factors motivate agents in the international structure to take some specific actions and not others. Culture involves symbols through which agents develop attitudes towards other agents. It forms policies, creates groups and provides the agents with the essential framework or paradigm in which to operate. Different groups of people share culture which is formed by a collection of ideas, norms and rules. Constructivists believe that culture provides incentives for various behaviors of states⁴³.

Through *speech act* agents are able to recognize what goals in international reality are valuable and how they should act. Speech act performs very important constructionist work as it creates new understandings and facts that affect agents' policies. Nicholas Onuf offers three different types of speech act.

- Assertive (instructive) speech acts inform agents about the social reality and indicates the consequences that would follow if the statement is disregarded. (I state that...) They describe a state of affairs.
- Directive speech acts request the agents to take particular actions, which are accepted as imperatives and commands. Directive speech acts create social relations based on the threat of the use of force. (I request that...)

⁴¹Peter J. Katzenstein, Robert O. Keohane and Stephen D. Krasner, *Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 39–42.

⁴² For more on Concept of Identity see: Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sicking, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in Inter-national Relations and Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (June 2001): 391–416.

Hopf, *The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory*, 171-200.

Wendt, *Anarchy is what States Make of it*, 391–425.

Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: The "East" in European Identity Formation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 1–38.

Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

⁴³ Ronald Jepperson, Alexander Wendt and Peter J. Katzenstein, "Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security", in Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 33–75.

- Commissive speech acts commit agents to future actions. These acts involve promises. (I promise that...)

Speech acts create rules and norms that yield a corresponding type of rule in international reality⁴⁴. These rules are hegemony, hierarchy and heteronomy. Adherence to the rule makes the social relations stable, whereas breaching the rule leads to situations very similar to that of 1979 in Iran.

2. Applying constructivism on studying the U.S.-Iranian relations

To provide the most comprehensive and precise answer to the question regarding what kind of U.S.-Iranian relations existed between 1953 and 1979 that led to the ultimate bitter end, it would be best to apply the rule-based approach of constructivist thought. Nicholas Onuf in his most important book *World of Our Making* developed the theory that would enable us to determine what kind of relations, based on the language, agents used.

As mentioned in the previous sub-chapter Onuf argues that three different types of speech act (assertive, directive and commissive) creates the rules for social reality and these rules yield three different types of rule which determine the nature of agents' domestic and international policies. Onuf thus redefined Weberian⁴⁵ ideal types of rule and applied them to the political society. These three different types of rule constitute hegemonic, hierarchic or heteronomic structures of domination in the world. These structures come into effect by the repetition of behavior corresponding with the assertive, directive and commissive rules⁴⁶.

To be more specific with regard to the topic of this thesis, according to this theory American usage of *assertive* statements, proclamations and descriptions towards Iran created a hegemonic status of United States towards Iran. If the statement (locution) "the United States has the right to influence Middle Eastern affairs" is accepted by Middle Eastern agents (illocution), other agents get used to that

⁴⁴ Onuf, *World of Our Making*, 183–184.

⁴⁵ "Legal, traditional and charismatic rule," in *The Three Types of Legitimate Rule*, Max Weber, 1958.

⁴⁶ Nicholas Onuf, "Constructivism: A User's Manual," in Kubálková, *International Relations in a Constructed World*, 74–77.

(perlocution) and thus reality is created. Rules that follow this constructed reality create hegemony or cultural hegemony⁴⁷.

The concept of cultural hegemony applicable for international relations was developed by the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci⁴⁸. American manipulation (Americanization) of the culture with its values, norms, perceptions, beliefs and explanations – the American *Weltanschauung* – is accepted as a cultural norm by other agents. As a result the dominant ideology is not a social construct that is beneficial only for the United States, but other agents believe that is also beneficial for them. This implied domination delivers the status quo as natural and perpetual.

Directive speech act constitutes rules that yield hierarchical structure. These kinds of social relations are heavily based on force. The statement “Britain requests to halt the process of nationalization of oil industry or military action will follow” creates a world with dominant/submissive relations among agents, emergence of imperial powers and client states⁴⁹.

Commissive speech acts involve promises on the part of the speaker (in this case United States) in order to create obligations for the agents⁵⁰. When commissive statements are converted into rules, they reduce the agents’ autonomy and create structure of heteronomous domination. The Kantian concept of heteronomy inspired by J. J. Rousseau is redefined by Onuf as the reality where agents believe they are independent, but in fact are constrained by the rules that constitute their reality. Core-periphery order as defined by the dependency theory is the most accurate example of heteronomous structure of domination⁵¹. In other words, when the United States promises to invest in Iran or provide military or any other assistance, the autonomy of Iran is not enhanced. The contrary is true.

An Iranian compliance with hegemonic, hierarchic or heteronomic rules would have led to a stable and sustainable relationship without crisis. Since it is already known that the era of American influence led to a problematic end, Iran obviously decided to reject the existing rules and thus explicitly demonstrated what kind of rule was not

⁴⁷ Onuf, *World of Our Making*, 196–217.

⁴⁸ More on Hegemony in Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (International Publishers Company, 1971).

⁴⁹ Onuf, *World of Our Making*, 196–217.

⁵⁰ Katja Weber and Paul Kowert, *Cultures of Order: Leadership, Language, and Social Reconstruction in Germany and Japan* (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), 27.

⁵¹ Nicholas Onuf and Frank F. Klink, “Anarchy, Authority, Rule,” *International Studies Quarterly* 33, No. 2 (June 1989): 149–173.

suitable for the United States to pursue. That would have implications for policy-making processes and discourse in the future.

Methodologically to accurately identify the assertive, directive or commissive tone in the documents and U.S. foreign policy itself, Wittgensteinian language philosophy has been used. The overall meaning of words as they appeared in the documents has been taken into consideration and the context in which the words were used provides us with the correct understanding of their meaning. Thanks to Wittgenstein's works and his concept of natural language it is possible to accurately determine how the expression of intention is projected into the words that speaker uses in the speech act.⁵²

⁵² More on philosophy of language in Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922), 103–151.

PART II

3. U.S.-Iranian relations: Contacts before 1953

“You don’t know how crafty they are. You don’t know how evil they are. You don’t know how they sully the things they touch.”⁵³

Mohammad Mosaddegh

Bilateral relations between the United States and Iran before World War II were quite limited. It was Great Britain and Russia that pursued their imperial policies through the 19th century, each fighting for its own sphere of influence. In those years the United States decided to isolate or non-align itself, at least to a large extent, with colonial affairs. Therefore, it was not until 1883 when United States and Iran established diplomatic relations.⁵⁴

Since their official establishment the bilateral relations were developing in the shadow of Russian and British influence and remained only as courtesy. It was a very good opportunity for the United States to build its positive image in Iran. The American officials were critical about Russian and British imperial practices so they have held high credit in the eyes of the Iranians. The positive image was strengthened also by those U.S. individuals that decided to live in Iran. They were teachers, missionaries or humanitarian workers. The young teacher Howard Baskerville became a national hero for Iranian people when he was killed in 1909 during the fight for support of the first country’s constitution movement. He was shot by a sniper while leading a group of students to break through the royalist forces and bring food into the besieged city of Tabriz.⁵⁵ While struggling with the growing influence of Russia and Great Britain, the United States was seen as a potential ally on the international scene by the Iranians.

Until 1941 Iran was ruled by Reza Shah Pahlavi, who in 1925 replaced Ahmad Shah from the Qajar dynasty and thus became the first shah of the House of Pahlavi. Although he was inspired by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in modernization and secularization processes, Reza Shah lacked his own charisma and drive. Formerly a member of Persian Cossack Brigade he tried to restore order and the country’s national pride. In this respect, however, Reza Shah was strongly impressed by Nazi Germany, a

⁵³ Quoted in Mostafa Elm, *Oil, Power, and Principle: Iran's Oil Nationalization and Its Aftermath* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 129.

⁵⁴ U.S. Relations With Iran. Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. U.S. Department of State. August 22, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5314.htm> (accessed May 12, 2013).

⁵⁵ Farnaz Calafi, Ali Dadpay and Pouyan Mashayekh, „Iran’s Yankee Hero“, *The New York Times*, April 18, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/18/opinion/18calafi.html?_r=0 (accessed May 12, 2013).

fact which the Allied powers considered more than disturbing. As a result, Great Britain and Soviet Union entered Iran and forced Reza Shah into exile on September 16, 1941. His son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, accessed to the Peacock Throne on September 19, 1941, where he ruled as *Shahanshah*⁵⁶ of Iran until Iranian Revolution on February 11, 1979.

Although the United States supported the Anglo-Soviet invasion as part of the Allied war effort, long-term interventionism in Iran by Great Britain and Soviet Union was seen very critically in Washington. The United States realized its primary goal in was that of an independent Iran, which would not be so difficult to reach with apparent pro-American tendencies. Washington while pushing for a more visible U.S. presence in the country officially for moral and humanitarian reasons, it was actually for quite pragmatic reasons: Secretary of State Cordell Hull stated in his communication to President F. D. Roosevelt in August 1943: “It is to our interest that no great power be established on the Persian Gulf opposite the important American petroleum development in Saudi Arabia.”⁵⁷

At that time the U.S. legation in Tehran was headed by Louis G. Dreyfus Jr., who was probably the first and the last chief of the American mission in Iran who felt truly committed to understanding the local cultural values and norms and enjoyed large support and popularity from the Iranian people. “Our policy should be firm but kind, forceful but friendly, insistent but considerate.”⁵⁸

However, there were many other American missions operating in Iran – missions of economic and military interests with a much more aggressive agenda. The military mission headed by General Patrick Hurley pushed heavily for a stronger American presence in Iran and started to flood the country with advisors and other staff. This was sharply criticized by Dreyfus who saw these interventionist tendencies as a great risk for American long-term interests as stronger military presence in Iran put the United States in the same unpopular position as Great Britain and Soviet Union. The economic mission led by Arthur Millspaugh also forcefully pushed its agenda in Iran in

⁵⁶ Shahanshah (King of Kings) is a title that has been used by Kings of the ancient Persian Empire. Because they ruled the empire where other kings ruled the provinces, the satraps, the fact that Persian King ruled over other kings created the title King of Kings. Reza Shah Pahlavi from Pahlavi dynasty revived the title in 1925.

⁵⁷ “Memorandum by John D. Jernegan: American Policy in Iran,” in *Architects of Globalism: Building a New World Order During World War II*, Patrick J Hearden (The University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 134.

⁵⁸ Despatch No. 517, “The Minister in Iran to the Secretary of State“, Tehran, April 14, 1943, in *Iran and America: Re-Kindling a Love Lost*, Badi Badiozamani (East-West Understanding Press, 2005), 304.

a manner exactly opposite to Dreyfus's efforts. The American policy towards Iran thus lacked unity and could be described as clumsy. This fact highly disturbed the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) which was worried that the then divided and shaky U.S. policy is "leading Iranians to believe that they will have to look to Soviet Union for aid."⁵⁹

3.1 Oil politics

Oil companies had been seeking concessions in Iran since the 1920s; these efforts however repeatedly resulted in failure due to the strong British opposition. In the 1940s with an increased American presence in Iran and backing of the Department of State (through both Millspaugh's and Hurley's missions) companies started to seek the concessions even more actively. Their activities alarmed Great Britain since the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company had a monopoly over Iranian oil and also the Soviet Union, because Moscow was in the long term interested in concessions in its former zone of influence. In response to the hard push from America for securing their economic interests the Soviets made a bid in September 1944 for oil concession in Northern Iran.

Both the American and Soviet plans were attractive to the Iranian government, but members of Majlis (parliament) did not share such enthusiasm. One of its members Mohammad Mosaddegh proposed in December 1944 a bill that would forbid the government from granting new concessions without approval of the Majlis. Presented with a proper nationalist edge, the proposal attracted even the influential pro-Soviet political party Tudeh, and the bill was passed.

The United States thus gained nothing for all its efforts. Despite the presence of many missions, advisors and negotiators, their work was badly managed. There not only existed a rivalry between U.S., Soviets and British, but also among American oil companies themselves (Standard Oil of New Jersey, renamed Exxon, today part of ExxonMobil; Sinclair Oil and Socony-Vacuum Oil, later Mobil, today part of ExxonMobil)⁶⁰ and the Department of State failed to coordinate their bids. Attempts of economic intervention without Dreyfusian's sense of commitment only supported the idea shared by many scholars - that "due to lack of understanding of internal political

⁵⁹ "OSS 61429," in *The Origins of the Iranian-American Alliance: 1941-1953*, Mark H. Lytle (New York: Holmes and Meyer, 1987), 105.

⁶⁰ Melvyn Paul Leffler and David S. Painter, *Origins of the Cold War: An International History* (Routledge, 1994), 245.

processes, underestimation of their meaning and big power bias United States failed to notice what role Iranians played for themselves.”⁶¹

3.2 U.S. Policy after World War II

Following World War II Iran was searching for a way how to reach political independence, as the country was still occupied by the Allied powers. After complicated and protracted negotiations the date of March 2, 1946 was set for withdrawal.⁶² The Soviet Union, however, did not rush to send its troops home. The young democracy anything but stable; within the three years following the war Iran had eleven different cabinets. In March 1946 the prime minister was Ahmad Qavam⁶³, an old-school aristocrat and cousin of Mohammad Mosaddegh. His efforts to face the Soviet Union were strongly supported by the United States on the international scene. After difficult negotiations Qavam made an agreement with the Soviets that all their troops would leave and in return Moscow would receive an oil concession in Northern Iran with 51% Soviet ownership and 49% Iranian.⁶⁴ This deal would have to be ratified by the Fifteenth Majlis. However, elections for the Majlis in 1947 were blatantly rigged. The new parliament consisted of members who were ostentatiously pro-Qavam, some of them pro-Shah and many pro-British. These groups hardly ever cooperated under normal conditions, but they did share a strong anti-Soviet sentiment. After all the Soviet troops were withdrawn from Iran, Prime Minister Qavam sent the oil proposal to the Majlis. It was rejected unanimously. This time it was the Soviet Union who left Iran empty-handed.

Historians are fairly divided on how much the United States was engaged in Qavam’s maneuvers. Some believe that the Soviets left Iran only after strongly worded ultimatums by President Truman. The majority however argue that the U.S. played a vital role, but only a supportive one for the Iranian political scene as a whole. The main

⁶¹ Lytle, *The Origins of the Iranian-American Alliance*, 168.

⁶² Kristen Blake, *The U.S.-Soviet Confrontation in Iran, 1945–1962: A Case in the Annals of the Cold War* (University Press of America, 2009), 28–36.

⁶³ Since January 28, 1946.

⁶⁴ John H. Bamberg, “Soviet Interest in Iranian Oil During World War II,” *The History of the British Petroleum Company, Volume 2, The Anglo-Iranian Years, 1928* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 250–257.

personality of these turbulent events was Ahmad Qavam, whom the Americans actually did not feel comfortable with.⁶⁵

During these years of Iranian struggle with the Soviet Union, the Americans did not try to develop closer relationship with any Iranian high-ranking politician in government since they held the position for a short period or they were nationalistic political matadors with aristocratic background, like Prime Ministers Qavam, Mosaddegh or Ebrahim Hakimi⁶⁶ who were openly reluctant to be associated with any kind of foreign support.

A much easier and more sophisticated approach that the Americans could apply was to develop a close relationship with the young inexperienced Shah. From the initial occasional meetings, Ambassador George Allen⁶⁷ later regularly enjoyed his Saturday afternoons playing tennis with Mohammad Reza Shah and joint family dinners every Monday.⁶⁸ In this manner the United States started to pursue the long way of fostering a special relationship with the Shah, this avoiding contact with other government officials. The Shah's position in Iran, however, was not as firm as he would desire. In the internal affairs there was only one agenda where he had a true authority – the military. Therefore, the United States entrenched its position in Iran by providing extended military aid and advisors. The first part of \$10 million in military aid to protect the monarchy against internal challenges came early, already in March 1948. John Wiley⁶⁹, U.S. ambassador to Iran, stated, „Iran needs an army capable primarily of maintaining order within the country, an army capable of putting down any insurrection – no matter where or by whom inspired or abetted.”⁷⁰

3.3 Nationalization troubles

A wave of anti-colonialism emerged all over the Third World in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Iran was one of the clearest examples of a country where various political movements and initiatives with a strong nationalist agenda dictated the local

⁶⁵ Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 38–39.

⁶⁶ Ebrahim Hakimi was the Prime Minister of Iran May 13, 1945 – June 6, 1945; October 30, 1945 – January 28, 1946 and December 27, 1947 – June 13, 1948.

⁶⁷ George V. Allen served as U.S. Ambassador to Iran from 1946–1948.

⁶⁸ Richard Pfau, “Containment in Iran, 1946: The Shift to an Active Policy,” *Diplomatic History* 1 (Fall 1977): 359–372.

⁶⁹ John C. Wiley served as U.S. Ambassador to Iran from 1948–1950.

⁷⁰ *Department of State Bulletin*. June 26, 1950, 1048.

policy dynamics. The most logical and accessible was the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the only company provided with concessions and by far the country's largest corporation and employer, whose net profit 200 million pounds sterling annually sharply contrasted with 16 million paid to Iran in royalties.⁷¹

To calm the emotions and appease the resolutely anti-British Iranian feeling, the United Kingdom offered "Supplemental Agreement" to the 1933 Agreement that established the financial and technical details of the concession. Countries like Venezuela and Saudi Arabia were able to negotiate with the United States previously unimaginable fifty-fifty agreements. The proposed Supplemental Agreement, however, was hardly acceptable for Iran. Tehran requested a larger employment of Iranians in technical positions and management, the access to audit the books and an increased share of the profits. The British refused to talk about these issues as did the Iranians. In such escalated atmosphere fifty-fifty agreement was something too much for London to accept and for Tehran not enough. Further negotiations about the new agreement were gradually submitted for ratification by the Majlis's new session in the mid-1950s.

This difficult situation left the U.S. diplomats worried and in an uncomfortable position. The political atmosphere in Tehran was more than favorable for leftist and nationalist movements; and the United States were especially concerned by the strength of the Tudeh party, which was backed by the Soviet Union and enjoyed a wide support. Of course the United States was not happy to see how the British handled the situation (irrespective of concerned voices from Washington), but the U.S. representatives realized that it would be necessary to support London, because the challenge from Moscow and fall of Iran into communist hands was even more imminent. A strong pro-Western prime minister who would turn down the threat of nationalization was needed. At that time the United States acted in a clear directive manner. Washington pushed for a tough military man, viewed by many as oppressive and proven anticommunist, and urged the Shah to nominate General Haj-Ali Razmara as prime minister and repeatedly expressed its support for his views and policies.⁷² Despite the fact that policies of previous Prime Ministers Mohammad Sa'ed⁷³ and Ali Mansour⁷⁴ were considered as pro-British, they lacked according to the United States the strong mandate, position and

⁷¹ John H. Bamberg, "Soviet Interest in Iranian Oil During World War II," 325.

⁷² "The Ambassador in Iran (Grady) to the Department of State," in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Volume X, 4-6.*

⁷³ Muhammad Sa'ed Maragheh served as a Prime Minister of Iran between November 9, 1948 and March 23, 1950.

⁷⁴ Ali Mansour served as a Prime Minister of Iran between March 23, 1950 and June 26, 1950.

also personality to face the alleged communist challenge.⁷⁵ General Razmara became Prime Minister on June 26, 1950.

In the new session of the Majlis, which has opened in the summer of 1950, the oil committee was chaired by Mohammad Mosaddegh. Parliament not only rejected the Supplemental Agreement but further demanded to continue the process of nationalization. On March 3, 1951 while General Razmara spoke before the Majlis he tried to persuade its members not to give up on negotiations and warned against nationalization. Four days later the hope of the West, General Razmara, was assassinated and a week later the Majlis passed a bill of nationalization of Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

The United States again found itself in an uncomfortable position. On the one hand the U.S. resolutely rejected the “strong” British measures that followed the process of nationalization⁷⁶ and on the other side it urged Iran, in an assertive way, not to take unilateral action.⁷⁷ The Shah had no option other than to nominate Mohammad Mosaddegh as prime minister. In April 1951 Washington recognized Iran’s right to nationalize the oil industry, but London seriously considered a military attack, which shocked the U.S. officials,⁷⁸ who were reasonably sure that such an attack would not only be seen as an unwarranted interference, but would be a pretext for Soviet intervention, since Tehran would likely ask Moscow for aid.⁷⁹

In the complicated situation the possibility of Mosaddegh’s removal from the position of prime minister had been discussed. As the U.S. Ambassador to Iran stated, Mosaddegh had the 95-98% backing of the population so it was impossible to force him out; there was simply no other suitable candidate for prime minister.⁸⁰ In another attempt to resolve the Anglo-Iranian dispute, President Truman sent a highly experienced special envoy W. Averell Harriman to Tehran.⁸¹ Extensive efforts were

⁷⁵ Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, 72.

⁷⁶ “Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Greek, Turkish and Iranian Affairs (Rountree),” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, Volume X, 36.

⁷⁷ *Department of State Bulletin*. May 28, 1951, 851.

⁷⁸ “The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Gifford) to the Department of State,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, Volume X, 54.

⁷⁹ Anthony Eden, *Full Circle* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), 216.

⁸⁰ “The Ambassador in Iran (Grady) to the Department of State,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, Volume X, 79–81.

⁸¹ *Department of State Bulletin*. July 23, 1951, 130–131.

⁸² William Averell Harriman since 1941 served President Franklin D. Roosevelt as a special envoy to Europe; since 1943 as the U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union. In 1946 he became an ambassador to Britain, but soon appointed as Secretary of Commerce.

made in Iran and also on the floor of the International Court of justice, but the American proposal of recognizing nationalization and of establishment of a new company with a fifty-fifty ownership was rejected not only by Iran, but also by the United Kingdom.

Although Mosaddegh still had massive domestic support, his cabinet became more concerned day by day, since Britain initiated a boycott of Iranian oil in world market and the government faced the running out of money. Mosaddegh decided to undertake a quite provocative political tactic. Despite his personal disgust over Soviet Union in order to receive immediate financial aid from the United States he started to threaten U.S. officials that if there was no aid, Iran would not be able to stay out of communist world: “Without the assistance of \$10 million monthly, Iran would collapse within 30 days and the Tudeh would take over the government. If U.S. assurances of aid were not given soon, I would be forced to seek Soviet assistance.”⁸³ The only effect this maneuver had was the refusal to provide aid and intensifying the discussions about the fact that the British idea of Mosaddegh’s overthrow was one of the legitimate alternatives. Until the end of Truman’s administration, however, the possibility of a coup d’état remained unthinkable⁸⁴ and any military involvement extremely problematic.⁸⁵ Also in Britain, the Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, was in favor of strengthening economic sanctions rather than a regime change. However, all of that changed in 1953 when Dwight D. Eisenhower became president of the United States, John Foster Dulles the State Secretary and his brother Allen Dulles the Director of CIA.

3.4 The Coup

After recommendations from high ranking Iranian officials loyal to the Shah (e.g. Hossein Ala, Court Minister) the United States and United Kingdom decided that the most suitable candidate for the position of prime minister would be General Fazlollah Zahedi and thus that a military government would be created in Iran after the

⁸³ “Memorandum by Paul A. Borel, Office of National Estimates, Central Intelligence Agency, to the Director of Central Intelligence (Smith),” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Volume X, 328.*

⁸⁴ “Memorandum for the President of Discussion at the 121st Meeting of the National Security Council on November 19, 1952,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Volume X, 430–431.*

⁸⁵ “Memorandum for the President of Discussion at the 125th Meeting of the National Security Council on August 6, 1952,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Volume X, 525–529.*

coup.⁸⁶ The involvement of CIA and top U.S. officials could be described as highly directive at that time since much of the responsibility lay with the Shah who was too indecisive and scared about the operation. Kermit Roosevelt Jr., who was the head of Operation Ajax, finally persuaded the Shah to sign royal decrees (firmans); one to dismiss Mosaddegh and the second to appoint General Zahedi (which was in violation of the Iranian constitution since a prime minister nominated by the Shah had to be approved by the Majlis).⁸⁷

The CIA then organized massive protests in the streets of Tehran and other cities by bribing media, soldiers and mobs which would then gave the Shah an excuse to dismiss Mosaddegh.⁸⁸

The first coup attempt on August 15, 1953 failed since Mosaddegh knew about the plan. The Chief of Imperial Guard Colonel Nematollah Nassiri was arrested when attempting to deliver firmans and arrest Mosaddegh. The Shah fled the country, first to Baghdad and then to Italy. On August 19, 1953 the CIA tried to execute the coup once again and this time with success. Prime Minister General Zahedi replaced Mohammad Mosaddegh who was arrested and following the military trial was sentenced to death which was later mitigated to house arrest for life.⁸⁹

The discussion about the true motives of the U.S. government to authorize the coup d'état remains controversial. It is certainly true that the operation allowed American oil companies to conduct business in Iran (the U.S. companies held 40% of the newly established consortium).⁹⁰ However, on the contrary some historians believe that the communist threat was actually as real as Secretary Dulles officially declared.⁹¹ Mark Gasiorowski argues that, “it was geostrategic considerations, rather than a desire to destroy Mosaddegh's movement, to establish a dictatorship in Iran or to gain control over Iran's oil, that persuaded U.S. officials to undertake the coup”.⁹²

⁸⁶ “The Ambassador in Iran (Henderson) to the Department of State,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1952-1954, Volume X, 719–721.

⁸⁷ “The Chargé in Iran (Mattison) to the Department of State,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1952-1954, Volume X, 745.

⁸⁸ Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 237–239.

⁸⁹ Kinzer *All the Shah's Men*, 167–215.

⁹⁰ E.Lauterpacht, *International Law Reports* (Cambridge University Press, 1973), 375.

⁹¹ *Department of State Bulletin*. August 10, 1953, 178.

⁹² Gasiorowski. *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah*, 274.

4. Iran in U.S. foreign policy during Eisenhower's presidency

“Not so many years ago in Iran, the United States was loved and respected as no other country, and without having given a penny of aid. Now, after more than \$1 billion of loans and grants, America is neither loved nor respected; she is distrusted by most people and hated by many.”⁹³

Abolhasan Ebtehaj

After the coup, U.S.-Iranian relations entered a completely new era. Since the head of the government was no longer “a lunatic”, but a pro-Western military general with strong anti-communist credentials selected by American and British officials, the whole negotiation process was rid of one of its biggest obstacles.

4.1 Oil settlement

The first issue to discuss was the oil problem. The country's political stability largely depended on the rapid return of Iranian oil to the world market since the government treasury was out of cash, due to the very efficient British economic sanctions. London made a series of steps that assured that no foreign country would purchase Iranian oil. During the Mosaddegh period of government all the British technicians were expelled from Iran and because the National Iranian Oil Company (nationalized Anglo-Iranian Oil Company) had no tankers to ship the oil overseas, the operations basically ceased. Most surprisingly, the Iranians were able to maintain the oil facilities in excellent conditions so the business could commence operations immediately after resolving the financial technicalities.

Immediately after the regime change, the U.S. and British officials met with managers of Western oil businesses to discuss the prospective structure of the new company. After the cooperative consortium idea had been accepted, the representatives from Western oil companies started negotiations directly with the Iranian government.

⁹³ Quoted in Ali M. Ansari, *Modern Iran: The Pahlavis and After* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 169.

There were three basic assumptions deemed necessary to proceed with the agreement. The Iranian company National Iranian Oil Company had to remain nationalized so that Iran could “save its face”; a purely British company extracting oil in Iran was unacceptable so a consortium of various companies would have to be created; and finally compensation for nationalization had to be paid to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

Briefly speaking, the results of the negotiations were as follows: all the parties recognized the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) which owned the oil reserves and industrial facilities, and arranged oil distribution within Iran. This company was owned by the government. The foreign consortium of oil companies Iranian Oil Participants Ltd was charged with operations and management on behalf of NIOC. The ownership structure was: British Petroleum (40%), Royal Dutch Shell (14%), Compagnie Française des Pétroles (later Total, 6%) and remaining 40% had American companies (each 8%) Gulf Oil, Standard Oil of California, Standard Oil of New Jersey, Standard Oil Co. of New York and Texaco. From this point Iran has begun receiving royalties on a fifty-fifty basis.⁹⁴

4.2 Economic aid

Another issue of major importance was the economic and military aid from the U.S. government to Iran. This kind of assistance had been provided already before 1953 in smaller amounts and during Mosaddegh’s cabinet the aid was negotiated in a protracted and time consuming process with the U.S. refusal in the end. However, a few days after the coup when the newly (s)elected Prime Minister Zahedi requested assistance from Washington due to the critical economical situation in the country, he received from the President Eisenhower an immediate response and a provision of nearly \$24 million for technical assistance and an additional \$45 million for economic assistance.⁹⁵

Eisenhower’s administration continued to provide economic and military aid to the Iranian government on a large scale. In 1960 at the end of Eisenhower’s second term

⁹⁴P. Avery, G. R. G. Hambly and C. Melville, *The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 7* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 665.

⁹⁵ Yonah Alexander and Allan Nanes, *The United States and Iran: a documentary history* (Frederick: Aletheia Books, 1980), 253–254.

in office, the economic aid to Iran totaled \$567 million and a further \$450 million allocated for military purposes. Some scholars writing in critical theory tradition argue that the United States was promoting these aid programs in order to gain influence over the policy-making process in Iran.⁹⁶ The fact that economic and military aid flowed to Tehran shortly after Mosaddegh's replacement and a large amount (\$127 million) went to Iran immediately after the oil consortium agreement was signed just confirmed their opinion.

The formation of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO, also known as Baghdad Pact), a regional political, economic and military alliance, was heavily supported by the United States, although it did not become a member. From Washington's geopolitical viewpoint, Iran was one of the most important members of the pact because of its size, with the Zagros Mountains as a natural defensive barrier and access to Persian Gulf.⁹⁷

Thus further economic assistance had been sent shortly after Iran joined the pact in 1955; and also after Tehran condemned the revolution in Iraq (led by General Abd al-Karim Qasim who later decided to withdraw from pact) and continued to be a leader in containing the Soviet Union in the Middle East in through the CENTO (the term Baghdad Pact was no longer used after withdrawal of Iraq from the pact). Additional aid was sent to Tehran when the Iranian government publicly endorsed the Eisenhower Doctrine which was intended to support economically and militarily the Middle Eastern countries threatened by communism and pan-Arabic nationalism.

The Shah was however very skeptical about the strength of the Baghdad Pact and later CENTO, because the United States was not an alliance member. He therefore strived for a much closer and more reliable pact with Washington. The result of his effort was bilateral defense agreement with a clearly stated U.S. commitment to the security of Iran: "In the case of aggression against Iran, the Government of the United States of America, in accordance with the Constitution of the United States of America, will take such appropriate action, including the use of armed forces, as may be mutually agreed upon and as envisaged in the Joint Resolution to Promote Peace and Stability in the Middle East, in order to assist the Government of Iran at its request."⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Stephen Kinzer, Mark Gasiorowski, Barry Rubin or David Robarge among them.

⁹⁷ "Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Intelligence Committee Memorandum for the Joint Strategic Plans Committee and the Joint Logistics Plans Committee," in Yonah, *The United States and Iran*, 273.

⁹⁸ Quoted in John P. Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002), 45.

It was largely perceived that at this point the United States pursued a commissive policy of rewards with Washington promising to provide aid if Tehran behaved accordingly; that although economic investment was badly needed in Iran, American officials only promised aid when the Iranian government decided to act according to U.S. desire.

Before 1953 the tendency of the U.S. foreign policy has been in many cases directive. The United States instructed the Shah to nominate Razmara as prime minister, the regime change three years later with selection of the Zahedi government were also directed by the United States; all of this indicated a hierarchic nature of relations. After the coup however, the United States was not involved in Iranian internal political affairs. It was purely the Shah's own decision to remove General Zahedi in 1955 due to his failure to address social and economic challenges in the country and to appoint Hossein Ala as the new prime minister.⁹⁹

Strong adherence to the Baghdad Pact was the Shah's decision as well; the United States was not in the position of one who *requests*. It was the Shah who requested economic and military aid in exchange for expressed enthusiasm for the Baghdad Pact (which in reality he was highly doubtful about).¹⁰⁰ In order to get more cash from the United States, the Shah pursued cordial yet risky relations with the Soviet Union, which he used to his advantage as a great lever, since according to the Shah, the United States was only ready to help those countries in danger of falling to Communist subversion: "I know that one day the U.S. will come to Iran's aid – on the day that a Gamal Nasser¹⁰¹ sits where I sit".¹⁰²

The Iranian leadership recognized that apparently the most useful policy and rational option would be to recognize the American position in the Middle East and identify itself with U.S. objectives. However, the Shah was not instructed to fulfill American orders but was promised rewards for his compliance with Washington's policies. The period of 1953–1960 was a time when it was the Shah who also promised rewards to Washington if the U.S. would behave accordingly, because he understood and recognized how important Iran was from the American perspective. That is the

⁹⁹ "Telegram from the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State," in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1955-1957, Volume XII, 726–729.

¹⁰⁰ "Memorandum of a Conversation Between Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and Secretary of State Dulles, Governors-General's Residence, Karachi, March 9, 1956, 9-10 a.m.," in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1955-1957, Volume XII, 808–811.

¹⁰¹ Gamal Abdel Nasser was the President of Egypt from 1956 until his death in 1970.

¹⁰² Quoted in "Summary Paper Prepared by the Officer in Charge of Iranian Affairs (Hannah)," in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1955-1957, Volume XII, 812.

reason why the Shah pressed for the Baghdad Pact even when at that time the United States was reluctant to provide extensive economic aid.¹⁰³ The Shah could be described as the best blackmailer – if the United States did not give Iran what Iran wanted, Iranian officials threatened that they would have gone to Moscow for aid.¹⁰⁴

The nature of the aid was not excessively military just because of the American interests. The U.S. officials, as the evidence reveals, would have preferred to put more emphasis on allocating aid to social programs. It was the Shah who was obsessed with modern military equipment and behaved more emotionally than logically in this respect.¹⁰⁵¹⁰⁶ Washington would rather have seen the Shah reign, not rule and exercise his duties in a more ceremonial manner¹⁰⁷, because the United States felt that otherwise his days were numbered.¹⁰⁸ However, despite all the Shah's weaknesses, the United States had no other option than to support him.¹⁰⁹ In this respect the United States was in a position of forced heteronomy concerning relations with Pahlavi's regime in Iran.

5. John F. Kennedy and changes

“If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.”¹¹⁰

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

In Iran, the result of the 1960 U.S. presidential election was awaited with great anticipation. The Shah was extremely worried when the Democratic candidate John Fitzgerald Kennedy was elected. His sympathies went with the Republicans who did not

¹⁰³ “National Intelligence Estimate, The Outlook for Iran,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1955-1957, Volume XII, 876.

¹⁰⁴ “Memorandum of Discussion at the 394th Meeting of the National Security Council,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958-1960, Volume XII, 626.

¹⁰⁵ “Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1955-1957, Volume XII, 962.

¹⁰⁶ “Telegram From Secretary of State Dulles to the Department of State,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958-1960, Volume XII, 533.

¹⁰⁷ “Despatch from the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State: The Shah of Iran, 1957 – A Revised Study,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1955-1957, Volume XII, 919.

¹⁰⁸ “Memorandum of Discussion at the 377th Meeting of the National Security Council,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958-1960, Volume XII, 585.

¹⁰⁹ “National Security Council Report: Statement of U.S. Policy Toward Iran,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958-1960, Volume XII, 607.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in April R. Summit, *John F. Kennedy and U.S.-Middle East relations: a history of American foreign policy in the 1960s* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2008), 31.

push so vehemently for social reforms and economic development and were less critical regarding overemphasis on Iran's military aspirations.

The worst nightmares of the Shah seemed to come true. The policy of the Kennedy administration towards the entire Third World was to replace military aid programs, the key priority of the previous Eisenhower's presidency, with development projects. JFK's vision was to encourage rule of law and social reform in problematic countries to avoid the possible overthrow of often unpopular regimes, which also included Iran. Shortly after taking office, Kennedy introduced the program Alliance for Progress, targeted at Latin American countries, which focused on economic development, social reforms and agrarian projects in order to preserve pro-Western regimes. The same policy was planned for the Shah's Iran.¹¹¹

The political situation in Iran in the early 1960s could not be described as stable and many influential voices urgently reassured Kennedy to focus on the social situation and pursue economic aid programs. It was not only Nikita Khrushchev who noted that Iran was the perfect example of a country where a communist revolution could be possible even without strong local communist party and with traditional aloofness towards Russia and Soviet Union.¹¹²

5.1 Fourteen-point program

The most concerned voices could be heard from the Department of State. The situation in Iran had been analyzed and possible outcomes assessed in a complex fashion. The Department identified that the most immediate threat to the Shah's regime was the urban middle class, educated, but dissatisfied due to the level of corruption and lack of opportunities. The option of another regime change, which was on the table and would bring the more nationalist Mosaddeghist government¹¹³, has been after long discussions ruled out, because of the unbearable risks that the change would bring.¹¹⁴

The Department therefore presented a fourteen-point program designed for Iran to satisfy the local population and generate more support for the Shah. The U.S. Embassy in Tehran and other American economic and military advisors were instructed

¹¹¹ Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 5–8.

¹¹² Walter Lippmann, *The Coming Tests with Russia* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961), 16.

¹¹³ Mehdi Bazargan, a prominent Iranian scholar, or Shapour Bakhtiar, a political scientist, were mentioned.

¹¹⁴ "Despatch 186 from the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State," in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume XVII, Document No. 129.*

to press the Shah in a directive way to adopt the reforms specifically presented in the list, which is worth to be quoted. The Shah should have appealed to the Iranian population by:

1. “Channeling current resentments against Ministers rather than against himself.
2. Putting his family, or most of it, in Europe.
3. Abstaining from state visits abroad and discouraging state visits to Iran.
4. Reducing his military forces gradually to a small, tough force of infantry and artillery capable of internal security and guerrilla activities.
5. Gradually removing most of the U.S. advisers from the Iranian Government except the few working in the field engaged in health, education, and welfare.
6. Publicly excoriating the traditional ruling class for a lack of social responsibility.
7. Withdrawing from his openly pro-Western international posture with as little damage as possible to the Free World morale and his own prestige.
8. Ostentatiously reducing his personal standard of living, and the pomp and panoply of his lifestyle.
9. Proceeding forcefully with at least a token land distribution program against the big landlords.
10. Making menacing gestures against the Oil Consortium and “extracting” concessions from it, in such a way as to make it appear that the Consortium was reluctantly bowing to his power and determination.
11. Making public scapegoats of scores of “corrupt” high officials, whether or not the “corruption” could be proved.
12. Appointing respected moderate Mosaddeghists to positions such as Minister of Finance and Head of the Plan Organization, where they could assume responsibilities without being able to reverse policy.
13. Making public all details of the operations of the Pahlavi Foundation, and appointing as its supervisors a few moderate Mosaddeghists.
14. Utilizing his personality to make constant personal contact with the middle class.”¹¹⁵

The list became even more relevant when massive street protests occurred in Tehran and other Iranian cities in May 1961. Approximately fifty thousand teachers

¹¹⁵ “Memorandum From the Vice Chairman of the Policy Planning Council (Morgan) to the President’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy),” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume XVII, Document No. 27.*

joined the demonstrations in Tehran to express their dissatisfaction with working conditions and salaries. These protests turned violent and police, army infantry divisions and Special Forces had to be deployed to suppress the demonstration. The push for the social agenda became imperative and the U.S. officials urged the Shah to remove Jafar Sharif-Emami's government and appoint Ali Amini as prime minister, although the Shah had never personally liked him because of his popularity and friendship with JFK. According to the United States Amini was the man who would be able to prepare and lead the much anticipated and needed reform.¹¹⁶

5.2 JFK and reforms

It was also the Shah's personal dislike of the U.S. President and Amini's friendship with JFK that brought a slight deterioration in the relationship of both countries at that time. The Shah's aversion to any kind of reform was well known, but the strong push for changes by the Kennedy's administration drove him wild; how could young Kennedy dare to advise Shah, King of Kings, on how to rule his own country? The U.S. President also disliked Mohammad Reza Shah and considered him a narrow-minded tyrant who should be eventually forced to abdicate, with Iran ruled by regency, until his son became of age (which would last quite long, his son Reza was born on October 31, 1960).¹¹⁷

However, even when the United States gave full support to Ali Amini in implementing reforms, it guided him in changing his cabinet (replacing an incompetent minister of finance) the process of internal changes remained painfully slow and in many cases only superficial.¹¹⁸ This indication of an overall failure provided the Shah with the pretext to dismiss Amini and put Asadollah Alam, his close and loyal friend in charge to regain control over reforms which would thus be remodeled more to his

¹¹⁶ "Memorandum From Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff to President Kennedy," in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume XVII*, Document No. 50.

¹¹⁷ William O. Douglas, *The Court Years, 1939-1975* (New York: Random House, 1980), 304.

¹¹⁸ "Memorandum From Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff to President Kennedy," in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume XVII*, Document No. 93.

desires. He did this despite the unprecedented pressure by the U.S. officials who persuaded him not to relieve Amini and not to adopt personal rule.¹¹⁹

The Shah refused to abide by the rule that the United States wanted to develop and construct during Kennedy's administration as he was yearning for modern military equipment and aid that could be used to implement his own reforms and not the American ones.¹²⁰ The Shah was probably inspired by General Ayub Khan, the former President of Pakistan, who knew how to deal with Kennedy and his associates. The Iranian Ambassador to the United States Ardeshir Zahedi, told U.S. officials in Washington, that during a private meeting "General Ayub Khan of Pakistan advised the Shah that the only way to deal with the United States is to insult and threaten them; since if this is not done the United States takes its allies for granted and concerns itself only with countries threatening to join unfriendly blocs."¹²¹

Therefore the Shah, together with the Prime Minister Asadollah Alam started to implement his own series of reforms; called the White Revolution. Following the assassination of President Kennedy, Shah hoped that Lyndon Johnson's Administration would appreciate at least a bit and recognize his vision of how to rule the country.

6. Lyndon Johnson's counter-reform

"Our dignity has been trampled upon; the dignity of Iran has been destroyed. They have reduced the Iranian people to a level lower than that of an American dog."¹²²

Ayatollah Khomeini

Lyndon Johnson, as vice-president during the Kennedy era, already gained immense experience with Iran and its politics. Moreover, during his trip to Tehran and also because of the Shah's visit to the United States he was able to develop a true friendship with the Iranian monarch. After taking office, Johnson's foreign policy did

¹¹⁹ "Despatch 186 from the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State," in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume XVII, Document No. 129.*

¹²⁰ Controversial series of reforms, called The White Revolution, were meant besides other things to strengthen classes that would support traditional system (peasants and working class) and eliminate landlords.

¹²¹ "Memorandum to the Department of State: Discussion with the Iranian Ambassador," in Alexander and Nanes, *The United States and Iran*, 329-331.

¹²² Quoted in Ali M. Ansari, *Confronting Iran: The Failure of American Foreign Policy and the Roots of Mistrust* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd., 2006), 53.

not appear much different from that of JFK, with both sharing the commitment to develop the society and human rights. Johnson however put a greater emphasis on the trend that previous administrations introduced – the U.S. conviction that stability, economic and social progress in the Third World should be guaranteed by the use of force. Johnson was therefore especially impressed by the strongly pro-Western Muhammad Reza Pahlavi who, as an extravagant ruler had consolidated power in his own hands and was able to use force appropriately.¹²³

For Lyndon Johnson, the Shah of Iran was undoubtedly the individual the United States needed and the critical voices often present in official documents until that time (“the Shah should reign, not rule”¹²⁴) virtually disappeared.¹²⁵ The Johnson’s administration had no difficulty to approve the White Revolution, an extensive package of social and economic reforms based on the Shah’s own visions, and did not attempt to intervene in the process of implementation. Albeit very controversial, the Shah’s approach towards opposition was uncompromising and in case of demonstrations in summer of 1963 unprecedentedly forceful, also received wide support by U.S. government.

6.1 Status of Forces Agreement

The Johnson Administration achieved an unexpectedly long-lasting impact on U.S.-Iranian relations when on October 13, 1964 the American military personnel and their families based in Iran received full diplomatic immunity under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) that the Iranian parliament reluctantly approved by a narrow margin. The SOFA therefore completely exempted American nationals from being accountable under Iranian law for crimes committed in Iran.¹²⁶

A strong pressure for such an agreement had been exerted by the American officials, especially from the Department of Defense, but even the Shah and the most pro-Western Iranian government officials were gravely concerned with what consequences the SOFA would cause and tried hard to delay the negotiation process. It

¹²³ Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 154–156.

¹²⁴ “Despatch from the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State: The Shah of Iran, 1957 – A Revised Study,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1955-1957, Volume XII, 919.

¹²⁵ United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1964-1968, Volume XXII.

¹²⁶ Richard Pfau, “The Legal Status of American Forces in Iran,” *Middle East Journal* 28, No. 2 (Spring, 1974): 141–153.

meant nearly two years of time buying by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, officially studying the American requests and identifying technicalities from the agreement, before the U.S. suggestions have been finally accepted; the bill was approved by the government and sent to the Majlis.¹²⁷

The Majlis with its two hundred deputies personally approved by the Shah was more than reluctant to pass the bill. Sixty-eight members of the Majlis were intentionally absent for the final vote so that the SOFA could be passed with a 70-62 margin.¹²⁸ The reaction to the approval of the agreement was immediate and wide-ranging. The public bitterness and wave of critical anti-Americanism extended throughout Iran in reaction to the SOFA. The U.S. government had obviously underestimated the resentment felt by the Iranian public and incorrectly analyzed the possible consequences of pushing the SOFA through for the American interests in Iran. The American officials were surprised how unexpectedly high price the Shah's regime paid for approval of the SOFA. The U.S. government raised concerns, but did not come to a conclusion, if the anti-American sentiment in Iran would only be temporary or would have long-lasting effects.¹²⁹ Status of Forces Agreements for American personnel existed in the majority of countries where U.S. troops were stationed (and in many cases, they exist to this day). However the arrangement in Iran was unprecedentedly broad. Iran had waived its right to prosecute not only military personnel, but also all their dependents, even when the U.S. authorities decided not to.¹³⁰

What the Iranian nationalists and general public called as "outrage" and the U.S. officials as "unfortunate coincidence" was the approval of U.S. military aid worth \$200 million at the same time as the SOFA was passed.¹³¹ This generous funding was supposed to be used for purchase of the latest models of military equipment which the Shah personally hand-picked and chose.

Both secular and religious opposition condemned the SOFA, with one of the most distinguished critics of the agreement being the religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. In his appealing speeches, bristling with passion, emotions and pathos, he strongly opposed the Shah's regime and the United States for the attempt to

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Badiozamani, *Iran and America*, p. 298.

¹²⁹ "Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State," in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XXII, Document No. 52.*

¹³⁰ Ruhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1975), 361-363.

¹³¹ "Current Intelligence Memorandum: The Situation in Iran," in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XXII, Document No. 79.*

destroy the sovereignty of the country. The Iranian government reacted immediately. Khomeini was already under close watch of the Iranian secret service for his engagement in the 1963 summer demonstrations and this time he was sent to exile in Turkey.¹³²

Johnson's administration kept the U.S.-Iranian relations under tighter control than ever before. Four presidential missions to Iran occurred between 1965 and 1967 with each bringing specific commitments¹³³ on behalf of the U.S. administration. The Shah had also visited the United States four times, spending time developing his personal friendship with Lyndon Johnson. Still bearing in mind the uncomfortable American pressure from the Kennedy Administration the Shah was apparently determined to make the most from the promises made by the U.S. government through massive political manipulation and bargain.

6.2 Arms and oil

The two prominent issues that dominated the U.S.-Iranian relations during the Johnson Administration were arms and oil. Regarding oil, the Shah directly approached oil companies to increase production in Iran; which was not only due to geopolitical reasons, since production in Arab countries had increased significantly, but he also needed funds to satisfy his appetite for the latest military equipment (especially fighter jets, the Shah himself being a pilot). The hesitant promise by the U.S. government to negotiate a production increase with oil companies did not satisfy Tehran and the Shah escalated his pressure that Washington intervened in the issue in the line of its long-standing commissive policy. As a result, Iran's oil revenues in the mid 1960s went up rapidly due to improved royalty terms and an increase in production.¹³⁴

The second highly important issue was of military nature. Shortly after approval of the SOFA the United States promised \$200 million as military aid for a five-year period. The deal included a favorable interest rate and a supply list of specific arms and

¹³²Misagh Parsa, *Social origins of the Iranian revolution* (Rutgers University Press, 1989), 216–217.

¹³³ Deliveries of modern aircraft and other military investment, including the stationing of more American personnel in Iran.

¹³⁴Thomas R. Mattair, *Iran (Global Security Watch): A reference handbook* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2008), 14.

military equipment. For Mohammad Reza Pahlavi the most important thing was the promise to deliver one squadron of cutting-edge F-4 fighters.¹³⁵

The Shah later realized that it would not be sufficient and there was room for demanding more cash and better prices for desired military equipment. In case of the fighters he was convinced that the United States was trying to overcharge him, since the price of the latest MIG, easily comparable to the F-4, was no more than \$700,000, while the American fighter was offered to Iran for more than \$3 million.¹³⁶ With his unrivaled Iranian bluffing skills the Shah indicated that he was tired of “being treated as a schoolboy” and “being charged discriminatory fees for military equipment”. He warned the United States that because of “maltreatment” and the impression that “America does better by its enemies than it does by its friends” Iran and United States were very near the end of their relationship. The Shah frankly informed the United States that Iran “was no longer to be taken for granted”.¹³⁷

Moreover, the Shah created “a list of reasons” why he was absolutely indispensable for the United States. The U.S. officials could do nothing but agree:

- Geo-strategically Iran served as a buffer zone against Soviet expansionism
- The Iranian regime openly supported the American efforts in Vietnam (US officials themselves had to admit that the Shah of Iran had been able to explain and defend US policy in Vietnam “even better than President Johnson¹³⁸)
- Iran was ready to fill the vacuum in the Persian Gulf when Great Britain began to withdraw its forces
- Regionally Iran strongly opposed the radicalism of the Egyptian President Gamal Nasser
- The Shah’s regime was one of the very few that supported the state of Israel¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 171–172.

¹³⁶ “Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1964-1968, Volume XXII, Document No. 123.

¹³⁷ “Letter From Vice Presidential Aide George Carroll to Vice President Humphrey,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1964-1968, Volume XXII, Document No. 163.

¹³⁸ “Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1964-1968, Volume XXII, Document No. 93.

¹³⁹ The list is taken from: “Letter From Vice Presidential Aide George Carroll to Vice President Humphrey,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1964-1968, Volume XXII, Document No. 163.

The Shah's pressure had been further bolstered by a series of friendly acts towards the Soviet Union. After numerous state visits Iran signed key contracts with the Soviets related to the construction of an enormous steel mill in Iran, gas pipeline and arms worth \$110 million. After the Shah's remark that "would be shame if disagreement on arms supplies should result in another steel mill business"¹⁴⁰, Johnson's administration finally understood the message and accepted the Shah's demands. The U.S. government agreed on a dramatic increase of military assistance to Iran on highly favorable terms and the Shah to his great delight received two whole squadrons of F-4 fighters. The military aid far exceeded the originally promised \$200 million; only between 1967 and 1970, Iran purchased on credit, military equipment worth double that amount.¹⁴¹ During each of the Shah's visits to the United States in 1967 and 1968 he was promised further extension of military assistance and assurance that Washington unconditionally supported his rule.

After Kennedy's attempts of enforced reforms, the Johnson Administration attempted to achieve a genuine shift in U.S. policy towards Iran, which resulted in more tense relations than ever before. The U.S. officials in countless statements promised substantial assistance and Iran not only accepted, but requested more. This strange enforced-heteronomy, in mutual relationships, ultimately satisfied both sides. The Shah had equipment that demonstrated the progress and modernity of his country; Washington besides the enormous profits for American industry from the military sales program realized that it should actually be grateful for such an ally. The U.S. government was occupied by the Vietnam conflict that gradually expanded beyond its control and took it as a plus that in the Shah it had one of the few world leaders, who overtly supported that war. Lyndon Johnson had to admit that the acceptance of the Shah's list of reasons had never been more opportune and necessary.

¹⁴⁰ "United States Embassy in Iran Report: The Current Reorientation of Iran's Military Procurement, A Summary Report of U.S. Efforts to Create a New Relationship," in Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 171.

¹⁴¹ John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 67–69.

7. Nixon, Ford and Shah

“The Shah is the shadow of God. He brought Iran to a threshold of grandeur that is at least analogous to what Cyrus the Great achieved for ancient Persia.”¹⁴²

Time, November 4, 1974

In the early 1970s Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, encouraged by Iran’s economic growth and increasing geopolitical influence, decided to play even more prominent role in international political and economical affairs. The first field where he got personally engaged was the oil business. The Shah was the main leader of the negotiations within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) that finally lead to the acceptance of the Tehran Agreement on February 14, 1971. The one-month long discussion between the OPEC countries and twenty oil companies resulted in a breakthrough in the determination of oil prices – the producer countries had the decisive voice in setting the prices and companies had to accept a 55 percent tax rate. The package included an immediate price increase with successive increases being agreed.¹⁴³

Another of the Shah’s ventures was connected to withdrawal of the British forces from the Gulf announced in January 1968 and effective since December 16, 1971, with the plan of the Iranian regime to fill the power vacuum in the region. Despite the Shah’s ambitious aspiration to make Bahrain an Iranian province (which was thwarted by the United Nations Security Council¹⁴⁴), the Bahraini proclamation of independence was to large extent possible due to the Shah’s intervention. Another proof of decisiveness was given in the case of military occupation of several islands, including one of the most strategic points in the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz, Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tunbs. These islands were formerly under British administration, but officially belonged to emirates Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah.¹⁴⁵ The Shah occupied these islands on November 30, 1971, just one day prior to creation of the

¹⁴² Quoted in Briton Hadden and Henry Robinson Luce. *Time*. Vol. 104, Time Inc., 1974, 138.

¹⁴³ More on Tehran Agreement in: Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, *Shahanshah of Iran on oil: Tehran Agreement: background & perspectives* (Transorient, 1971).

¹⁴⁴ UN Security Council, *Resolution 278 (1970) of 11 May 1970*, 11 May 1970, S/RES/278 (1970), <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f20f68.html> (accessed May 13, 2013).

¹⁴⁵ Brian R. Pridham, *The Arab Gulf and the West* (Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm Ltd., 1985), 31.

United Arab Emirates with numerous Arab states being earnestly afraid of Iranian colonialism.¹⁴⁶

Thanks to other major political maneuvers (the Shah stated that he considered the Indian Ocean vital for Iranian security and exercise of power would not be limited to the Gulf; on another occasion he sent troops and aircraft to help the Omani sultan who faced a long civil war¹⁴⁷) there were no doubts that Iran became the dominant power in the Middle East and represented the perfect example of a country that the United States envisaged according to the Nixon Doctrine.¹⁴⁸¹⁴⁹

7.1 Extended military purchases

On the contrary, the domestic situation in Iran was rather unsatisfactory. The era of the early 1970s was when the first anti-regime tendencies turned violent against both civilian and military American nationals stationed in the country. The violence reached its heights when the Shah organized an extravagant 2,500-year celebration of the Persian monarchy in Persepolis, the ancient capital. The week long decadent party which cost approximately \$200 million occurred when serious famine affected the large provinces of Sistan, Balochestan and Fars, resulting in extreme angry amongst the vast majority of the Iranian population.¹⁵⁰ To solve the critical situation the Shah chose to pursue an even more hard-line policy and provided more competences to his police forces and the Iranian domestic security and intelligence service, SAVAK.

When in May 1972 President Nixon and his National Security advisor Henry Kissinger made a state visit to Iran, what they promised to the Shah had no previous comparison. Besides for military aid greater than \$2 billion¹⁵¹ Nixon and Kissinger gave the Shah virtually a blank military check – Tehran could purchase any weapons desired

¹⁴⁶ “Report by Ambassador to Iran Richard Helms on the prospects for stability in the Persian Gulf,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXVII*, Document No. 22.

¹⁴⁷ Iran sent 1,200 soldiers to assist the Armed Forces of the Sultan of Oman against rebels in 1973. The number increased one year later to 4,000 soldiers. The conflict is known as Dhofar Rebellion, which lasted from 1962 to 1976 and resulted in the defeat of the rebels.

¹⁴⁸ Robert S. Litwak, *Détente and the Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of Stability, 1969-1976* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 140.

¹⁴⁹ The Nixon Doctrine was formulated in 1969; each ally of the United States was responsible for its own security, but the U.S. would assist with nuclear umbrella if requested.

¹⁵⁰ More on grandiose celebration in: Party in Persepolis. LIFE Magazine, Vol. 71, No. 16, October 15, 1971. Time Inc., ISSN 0024-3019, 34–39.

¹⁵¹ “Telegram 1384 From Embassy in Iran to the Department of State,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXVII*, Document No. 9.

from the United States outside the review arms sales processes of the State and Defense Departments.¹⁵² The promise also included the green light to purchase the most advanced F-14 or F-15 aircrafts and laser-guided “redeye” missiles.¹⁵³ This basically meant, as Kissinger stated, that the United States was not the one who offered and decided what kind of equipment it would sent to its allies, but that the decision on acquiring specific weapons was left directly to the Iranian regime.¹⁵⁴ Kissinger justified this step on the “strategic” reasons and the perception that Washington had to have a trusted powerful ally in the Middle East.¹⁵⁵

Nixon and Kissinger pushed the agreement through against the recommendation of the Department of Defense. The Pentagon was too worried about the blank check on military equipment that included the most sophisticated aircraft and missiles, implicating the need to further increase the American military personnel stationed in Iran. According to officials from the Department of Defense this would create too large and unwelcomed commitment for the United States.¹⁵⁶ Despite these worries, Iran ultimately purchased eighty F-14 and a training base for the aircrafts with a prospective 10,000 military and technical advisors from the United States was established near Isfahan.

In the 1970s, American military assistance towards Iran reached unprecedented levels. Between 1972 and 1977, the value of military purchases was estimated at more than \$16 billion. The Shah had no problems of accepting funding for his military spending since the price of oil of the post-1973 period brought him nearly \$20 billion every year in revenue.¹⁵⁷

The justification for the large-scale military support by the United States was ultimately connected to the Nixon Doctrine. Washington needed to have a regional power that would take the lead in potential Middle Eastern conflicts instead of the

¹⁵² “Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance, Staff Report, U.S. Military Sales to Iran,” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1976), viii–ix.

¹⁵³ “Memorandum From the Directors of the Office of Iranian Affairs (Miklos), the Office of Regional Affairs (Schiff), and the Office of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, and Aden Affairs (Dickman) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco),” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXVII, Document No. 17.*

¹⁵⁴ “Memorandum, Henry A. Kissinger to the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense,” in *U.S. Officials and the Fall of the Shah: Some Safe Contraction Interpretations*, Jean-Charles Brotons (Lexington Books, 2012), 43.

¹⁵⁵ Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Simon & Schuster, 2011), 1260–1261.

¹⁵⁶ “Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State and the Embassy in Bahrain,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXVII, Document No. 123.*

¹⁵⁷ Elton L. Daniel, *The History of Iran* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2012), 163.

United States. Thus to ensure stability in the region both Saudi Arabia and Iran were provided with massive support to undertake the responsibility and to protect U.S. interests. The Nixon Administration was more than certain that Iran was a reliable choice: “The United States remains single most important country for Iran. Fundamentally our interests are similar and our relations excellent; and we should continue to play influential, if not exclusive, role in Iran’s development as a substantial power¹⁵⁸. In Kissinger’s words, the interests of Iran are American interests and vice versa.¹⁵⁹ In exchange for their unconditional support President Nixon and Secretary Kissinger asked the Shah repeatedly after the 1973 oil crisis (Arab oil embargo)¹⁶⁰ for an intervention against the increase of oil prices, but the Shah, well aware of his importance for the U.S. administration, used the inquiries concerning oil to strengthen his bargaining position.¹⁶¹

7.2 Ford Administration

With the arrival of the Ford administration there was not much change to the U.S.-Iranian relations as the State Secretary was still Henry Kissinger. Arms sales did not only continue as in the previous years, but on a much larger scale as particular purchases were dealt in billions of dollars. A major military agreement of \$10 billion for weapons was signed in the summer of 1974 with the prospect of another \$10 billion in the next five years. Kissinger argued that Washington had with these arms sales “better chance of assuring our future if we remember who our friends are.”¹⁶² The United States committed itself not only to military support of Iran. During the 1970s the commercial relations also cultural ones were significantly nurtured. At the beginning of 1977 more

¹⁵⁸ “Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Volume XXVII, Document No. 62.

¹⁵⁹ “Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance, U.S. Arms Sale Policy,” 94th Congress, 2nd Session, September 16, 21, 24, 1976, 13.

¹⁶⁰ The Arab members of OPEC proclaimed an oil embargo because of the U.S. emergency aid for the State of Israel who was attacked on Yom Kippur on October 6, 1973. Concurrently the price of oil went up in October 1973 by 70%.

¹⁶¹ “Paper Prepared by an Interdepartmental Working Group: Study Report Joint U.S.-Iranian Cooperation,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Volume XXVII, Document No. 59.

¹⁶² Kissinger, *White House Years*, 1265.

than sixty thousand Iranian students attended universities in the U.S. while approximately the same number of Americans resided in Iran.¹⁶³

However there had been only one issue that raised rather unpleasant concerns in Washington. In Iran anti-regime protests broke out in the streets occasionally and the pressure from the opposition increased. The United States was genuinely surprised when the Shah transferred the criticism of the masses from himself to the U.S. government and the usually government-censored press started to publish anti-American articles.¹⁶⁴ However the tactic was not successful. The American and Iranian power structures were so inter-connected and even more bolstered by the close personal relationship between the Shah, Secretary Kissinger and Presidents Nixon and Ford that the Iranian opposition forces considered it a “joint evil”. It represented a presage of the difficulties which would have to be handled by the upcoming Carter Administration.

The closer U.S.-Iranian relations were a result of an explicitly commissive policy on behalf of the United States. The scope of promises had been extended militarily, financially and culturally. The Shah’s regime happily accepted this norm; both sides well knew only too well that Iran was perhaps independent economically, but remained politically and militarily heavily dependent on the American aid and expertise.

8. Carter’s pillar of sand

“I don’t feel a thing”¹⁶⁵

Ayatollah Khomeini, February 1, 1979

In January 1977 when Jimmy Carter took the oath of office Iran found itself already in economic and political turmoil. In the early 1970s Iran exhibited massive economic growth which was further accelerated by an increase of oil revenues following the Arab oil embargo. The economy went almost out of control with skyrocketing inflation which accelerated the disparity between the rich and poor. When oil prices settled, the economic bonanza came to the end and Iran entered an era of

¹⁶³ Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 211.

¹⁶⁴ “Iranian Outlook,” U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research. May 6, 1976, Report no. 411.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Manouchehr Ganji, *Defying the Iranian Revolution: From a Minister to the Shah to a Leader of Resistance* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 76.

recession followed by a rise in the rate of unemployment and dissatisfaction amongst the population.

The second issue that concerned the Shah was a better organized and determined opposition which in case of Iran was religiously oriented. Political and social issues discussed from the view of Shia Islam and delivered through inflammatory speeches of religious leaders were found particularly appealing by the Iranian population. The unprecedented revival of Shia activism was so strong that it was also noticed by the U.S. embassy in Tehran which usually commented only on communist opposition elements – with the religious one not having been extensively commented to date.¹⁶⁶ The religious activism gradually increased in the Iranian society since late 1960s, but U.S. officials often underestimated its strength and focused on communism instead as anywhere else in the world.

8.1 Problems at home

In the 1960s and early 1970s the Shah to address opposition problems regularly utilized the police forces, secret service SAVAK with its controversial practices or even the military if necessary. However Mohammad Reza Shah with his team of advisors came to the conclusion that this method had been rather counterproductive and also extremely risky in the light of overall developments. Between 1976 and 1977 the motives why the Shah decided to loosen the regime's tight control could be various. Beside the arguable (in)efficiency of the repressive techniques, one of the significant reasons for a slight liberalization was the unpleasant international attention human rights abuses were receiving, rather than the modernization programs that the Shah launched, where even his critics agreed, many of them were successful.¹⁶⁷

Second, and perhaps more important, the Shah was aware that he had cancer and became worried about what would happen to the future of the Pahlavi dynasty. In 1976 his eldest son Crown Prince Reza was sixteen years old. With the current unfavorable popularity of the House of Pahlavi his accession to power would not likely be as smooth

¹⁶⁶ “Ambassador William Sullivan to Secretary of State Vance: Straws in the Wind: Intellectual and Religious Opposition in Iran,” in *Failing the crystal ball test: the Carter administration and the fundamentalist revolution in Iran*, Ofira Seliktar (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000), 67.

¹⁶⁷ While the results of the land reform could be described as questionable, major improvements were achieved in infrastructure (the trans-Iranian railway, seaports, industries), education (new schools, literacy rate increase) and human rights (women gained the right to vote or to run for office).

as the Shah aspired and therefore he considered that a last-minute open liberal reign would minimize the likelihood that the throne would be challenged. He started with personal changes in the SAVAK and the government itself, the removal of long-time Prime Minister Amir-Abbas Hoveyda and appointment of younger liberal ministers among them. Another attempt to change things was the establishment of the Rastakhiz party (with two ideological factions which was meant to create the illusion of democracy in Iranian politics), but in reality it was the single party that held the monopoly in the Iranian political life and all Iranians were required to be members.¹⁶⁸

Initially the Shah thought that some kind of pressure towards the promotion of human right policies and liberalization would eventually come from Washington. The failure of Republican President Gerald Ford left him bitter and he expected that the Democrat Jimmy Carter would try to be another Kennedy, who in early 1960s tried to direct the Shah to reforms according to American liking. To the surprise of the Iranian political establishment this had not at all materialized.

8.2 Support from outside

The Carter administration followed policies completely identical with those of the previous Nixon and Ford governments, bearing in mind the special importance of Iran for the United States in the entire Middle East region. The Secretary of State Cyrus Vance appreciated the Shah's economic and military assistance to other countries in the region (i.e. Oman) and the fact that Iran was the most reliable supplier of oil to the West. Although the Shah pushed for policies that gave more influence to the oil producing countries on commodity prices and ultimately benefited from the market turbulence, in 1973 he did not join the Arab oil embargo. Moreover, Iran was the major oil supplier to the state of Israel. The Secretary of State Vance was therefore convinced that the amount of support the Shah received should not be reexamined. The U.S. officials were also fully aware of the fact that the destination country for more than half of all American arms sales was Iran and the potential loss for U.S. businesses if arms would not be sold to Iran was also taken into consideration.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Joseph J. St. Marie and Shahdad Naghshpour, *Revolutionary Iran and the United States: Low-intensity Conflict in the Persian Gulf* (Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 104–105.

¹⁶⁹ Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1983), 317.

During his first visit to Tehran, Secretary Vance assured the Shah of the unwavering U.S. support and went ahead with the pending sale of 160 F-16 aircraft which Iran claimed were required for air defense. This specific sale had been put on hold the previous year because the Shah accused the United States of overcharging him once more. The renewed negotiations lowered the price tag by more than \$1 billion and both sides were happy to proceed with the contract.¹⁷⁰ Even more controversial in the light of Carter's worldwide human rights agenda was the sale of the technologically highly advanced radar systems AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System). Despite sharp criticism from the U.S. Senate and the arguments that the sale would be very risky for U.S. national security, the Carter Administration was finally able to go ahead with this contract.¹⁷¹ Secretary Vance explained these commitments as the government's attempt to motivate the Shah to influence oil prices and keep them stable.¹⁷²

In Iran itself the Shah's liberalization agenda was not met with the understanding of the masses. In January 1978 after a few years of relative calm, demonstrations turned violent again. Religious leaders and students of Islam staged a massive anti-Shah demonstration in the holy city of Qom. A pretext for organizing a protest march they used the publication of an article in the government-controlled newspaper entitled "Iran and Red and Black Colonialism" denouncing Khomeini. When the army intervened, several citizens were killed among them religious leaders. After this incident violent riots emerged throughout the country. In February a major protest took place in Tabriz, in March in Tehran, Isfahan and other large cities, in April demonstrations turned violent in Shiraz and in May, again in Qom. Protests all through the summer of 1978 in Mashad, Isfahan and Abadan left hundreds dead and during the remainder of the year there was not a single month without a major incident. In December more than one million people in Tehran demanded the removal of the Shah. Political changes in the cabinet like the appointment of the exceptionally religious Prime Minister Jafar Sharif-Emami in August or his replacement by the very liberal Gholam Reza Azhari had no impact on the crowd's opinion.¹⁷³ Despite the turbulent

¹⁷⁰ "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft) to President Ford," in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Volume XXVII, Document No. 190.

¹⁷¹ Robert A. Strong, *Working in the world: Jimmy Carter and the making of American foreign policy* (LSU Press, 2000), 50.

¹⁷² Vance, *Hard Choices*, 320.

¹⁷³ Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions*, 210.

events, the CIA report from late September 1978 indicated that there will be no changes in Iranian politics and “the Shah is expected to remain in power over next ten years” showed an immense misinterpretation and inaccurate assessment of the situation.¹⁷⁴

One of the first U.S. officials who realized that the Shah was in a serious predicament and was convinced that the Iranian regime was incapable of handling the state of affairs was the U.S. Ambassador to Iran William H. Sullivan. Unfortunately for the United States he was virtually the only one. On November 9, 1978 he cabled Washington a message entitled “Thinking the Unthinkable” indicating that the Shah’s regime was about to collapse and the United States should establish improved direct negotiations with the Ayatollah Khomeini in his Paris exile. In Washington his alarming text was not met with understanding. The White House together with the hawkish National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski was fairly convinced that only a hard-line policy with unconditional support for the Shah and his powerful military was the best option to suppress the opposition. Meanwhile the Secretary of State Cyrus Vance who was unable to admit that he had been too optimistic regarding the situation in Iran simply refused to believe Sullivan that the Shah’s regime might fall at all.¹⁷⁵

In December 1978 the Shah reached the conclusion that the situation was out of control, that the use of force against the opponents was counterproductive and there were no prospects of regaining the credibility of the Pahlavi dynasty. His Majesty himself was therefore surprised that Brzezinski turned down Sullivan’s proposal of establishing links to Khomeini, instead fully supported him and believed in a military solution. Carter publicly repeated the U.S. stance by saying that he “fully expect the Shah to maintain power in Iran”, and he thought that “predictions of doom and disaster that come from some sources have certainly not been realized at all.”¹⁷⁶

On January 16, 1979 the Shah and the Empress of Iran fled the country, never to return.

¹⁷⁴ “House of Representatives, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Subcommittee on Evaluation, Staff Report, Iran: Evaluation of U.S. Intelligence Performance Prior to November 1978,” in *All Fall Down: America's Fateful Encounter with Iran*, Gray Sick (I.B.Tauris, 1985), 71.

¹⁷⁵ More on „Thinking the Unthinkable“ and related issues in Charles Kurzman, *The unthinkable revolution in Iran* (Harvard University Press, 2004), 1–11.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in Lawrence Freedman, *A Choice of Enemies: America Confronts the Middle East* (PublicAffairs, 2008), 69.

Conclusion

Not many countries of the world have experienced so turbulent relations as Iran and the United States of America since the mid-twentieth century. Until early fifties Washington was perceived as a credible ally, far different from the imperialist Brits and hostile Soviets. Only thirty years later, however, a massive wave of anti-Americanism spread all over the country and crowds demanded deposition of “American Shah”. The aim of this thesis was to analyze the U.S. foreign policy during these three electrifying decades and identify *what went wrong*.

Particular aspects of the U.S. foreign policy that had lead to the unpleasant American experience in 1979 are not, however, easy to identify. Of course, the manner in which the United States pursued the policy towards Iran was certainly sometimes far from ideal. The U.S. policy suffered from being inconsistent at certain periods of time, covert action that deposed Prime Minister Mosaddegh was in retrospect highly controversial, communication between the Department of State, Pentagon, White House, Embassy in Tehran and other agencies was from time to time very uneasy as opinions about the extent of the U.S economic and more importantly military involvement greatly differed. Moreover, United States had severe difficulties with understanding the nature of Iranian politics, culture and society which inevitably led to incorrect interpretations and misperceptions. But with respect to the zeitgeist at that time and the Cold War discourse when realist thinking reached its heights, the U.S. foreign policy towards Iran was relatively rational, pragmatic and predictable.

During the years of the Truman administration the U.S. policy towards Iran was in process of painful self-definition and remained uncoordinated until Dwight Eisenhower decided to intervene in Iranian affairs in 1953. Economic and military aid flowed to Tehran and with the exception of short tense break during the Kennedy Administration it increased steadily for next nearly two decades. Lyndon Johnson genuinely appreciated how the Shah handled the Iranian domestic and international politics; in light of Vietnam War he could not wish a better ally. Military transfers to Iran went wild after Nixon issued a “blank check” on arms sales in 1972 and Ford’s policy towards Tehran continued in unchanged fashion. Carter was somehow convinced how Iran was stable country and did not lend an ear to somebody else than his team of hard-line advisors – but after all, that was not his only foreign policy failure.

Many scholars argue that the Shah, overthrown in 1979, was a Western puppet who ruled Iran cruelly according to the interests of the United States of America and denounce Washington for pursuing policies not different from the empires of old. This research, framed in socio-cultural constructivist IR theory, indicates, however, that such hierarchical structure had not been created between the United States and Iran because since the overthrow of Prime Minister Mosaddegh by force, requests and commands were not present in the U.S. foreign policy. Expressions of directive nature were typical rather for British approach towards Iran than for the later American approach. Hegemonic structure was not created as well. Iran did not follow the U.S. assertive rules in the manner as they were presented.

The research of policy documents and policy as such showed that U.S.-Iranian relations operated in heteronomic structures. The United States created rules that determined Iran to be dependent on the U.S. The White House and the State Department policies involved promises, sometimes more, sometimes less explicit. The United States through its programs and projects made great commitments to the Iranian regime. With the economic aid concurrently direct U.S. investments flowed to Iran; with each armament purchase American advice, expertise and thousands of personnel had to come to Iran. The country under the Shah's rule undoubtedly became more developed and powerful, but apparently not independent. The perversity in this case is that Iranian regime made the dependency even deeper than Washington initially intended.

The assessment how imminent the communist threat to Iran actually was or what kind of social, political or economic circumstances brought the country to the Islamic revolution far exceeds the topic of this thesis. The result of the events in 1979 was the deposition of Shah's regime, unprecedentedly dependent on United States. Opposition forces that considered Mohammad Reza Shah as "Western evil" and wished his end, due to the extremely tight connection and dependence of Pahlavi dynasty on the United States, decided to overthrow them both. Excessive American reliance on Iran's ruling elite in the end boomeranged against the U.S. interests in Tehran. In 1979 the situation may had not been completely lost; but it was a failure to understand and come to terms with the new revolutionary setting of rule that closed the area for prospective relations.

Ludwig Wittgenstein in his quote from the first page of this thesis indicates that the narrowness and our own limitation also limit our understanding of the world around us. Mutual animosity arose largely because the United States and Iran had been constrained by the frame of their own view of the world and experience. Lack of

sensitive perception and keeping the minds open on both sides was something that was in apparently needed in U.S.-Iranian relations in double-dose.

Resumé

Málokteré země světa se mohou ve druhé polovině dvacátého století pochlubit tak bouřlivými vzájemnými vztahy jako Spojené státy americké a Írán. Až do padesátých let minulého století byl Washington v Teheránu na rozdíl od „vykořisťovatelského“ Londýna a nepřátelské Moskvy považován za důvěryhodného spojence. Po pouhých třiceti letech však rozsáhlé protiamerické nálady zaplavily zemi a Íránci žádali svrhnout „Amerického šáha“. Cílem této diplomové práce bylo analyzovat americkou zahraniční politiku vůči Íránu mezi lety 1953 až 1979 a identifikovat, kde se stala chyba.

Najít konkrétní kroky americké zahraniční politiky, které vedly k nepříjemné zkušenosti v roce 1979 v souvislosti s Islámskou revolucí, nebyly na první pohled patrné. Pochopitelně způsob vedení zahraniční politiky nebyl z Washingtonu vždy ideální. Spojeným státům je možné vyčíst v jistých obdobích značnou nekonzistentnost, tajná operace Ajax, která odstavila premiéra Mosaddeka, zůstává dodnes poměrně kontroverzní, komunikace mezi ministerstvem zahraničí, obrany, Bílým domem a americkým velvyslanectvím v Teheránu často vázla a názory ohledně ekonomické či vojenské pomoci Íránu se u těchto úřadů často velmi lišily. Kromě toho měly Spojené státy problémy v porozumění íránské politické reality, kultury a společnosti, což často vedlo k nesprávným interpretacím a nepochopení různých událostí. Nicméně v kontextu doby a období vrcholu studené války je možné americkou zahraniční politiku označit za relativně racionální, pragmatickou a předpokládanou.

Proces zdlouhavého a nekoordinovaného utváření zahraniční politiky za Trumanovy administrativy ukončilo až rozhodnutí prezidenta Eisenhowera zasáhnout do íránských domácích záležitostí v roce 1953. Vzápětí na to začala do Teheránu proudit ekonomická a vojenská pomoc a s výjimkou krátkého období Kennedyho administrativy každým rokem narůstala. Lyndon Johnson si šáha velmi vážil, v době, kdy se Spojené státy potýkaly s válkou ve Vietnamu, si nemohl přát na Blízkém východě lepšího spojence. Dodávky zbraní dosáhly nebývalých rozměrů poté, co Nixon

poskytl šáhovi „bianco šek“ na vojenské investice v roce 1972 a Fordova politika se nesla v podobném duchu. Prezident Carter se až do posledního dne šáhovy vlády domníval, jak je Írán stabilní zemí a spoléhal se pouze na své konzervativní poradce.

Mnoho autorů ve svých kriticky laděných pracích pokládá šáha, svrženého revolucí v roce 1979, za loutku Západu, vládnoucího v prospěch Spojených států. Výzkum této diplomové práce, zakotvený v socio-kulturní konstruktivistické teorii, však ukázal, že nedošlo k vytvoření hierarchických struktur. Od odstavení premiéra Mosaddeka nepřicházely z Washingtonu příkazy a nařízení. Těmi se vyznačovala spíše britská zahraniční politika vůči Íránu před státním převratem v roce 1953. Rovněž nedošlo k vytvoření hegemonického vztahu, Írán neakceptoval Spojenými státy nabízená pravidla tak, jak mu byla představena.

Analýzou zahraničně-politických dokumentů a zahraniční politiky jako takové vyšlo najevo, že se mezi Spojenými státy a Íránem časem vytvořily heteronomické struktury závislosti. Politika Bílého domu a ministerstva zahraničí totiž vždy obsahovala více či méně zjevné sliby a závazky. Spojené státy se skrze různé programy a projekty hlouběji zavazovaly šáhově režimu. S každou ekonomickou pomocí, přímou investicí nebo dodávkou vojenského materiálu do Íránu mířili i američtí poradci, zkušenosti a v neposlední řadě i pracovníci a další personál. Írán se za šáhovy vlády možná stal mocnějším a vyspělejším, ale nikoliv nezávislým. V tomto případě nutno dodat, že íránský režim závislost sám ještě více prohloubil. Události v roce 1979 měly na svědomí svržení režimu šáha Muhammada Rezy Pahlavího, režimu velmi blízkého Spojeným státům americkým. Opoziční síly pokládaly šáha za západní zlo a díky nebývalé úzkým kontaktům a závislosti dynastie Pahlaví na Washingtonu se rozhodly skoncovat s obojím zlem naráz. I když Spojené státy mohly alespoň částečně zamezit ztrátě všeho, nestalo se tak. Kvůli nesprávnému vyhodnocení situace a neochoty smířit se s novým revolučním pořádkem zůstaly dveře pro budoucí zlepšení zavřené.

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