

Historical Committee

The Ongoing Situation in The Iran Revolution

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Introduction

The Iranian Revolution, which ended in February of 1979, witness the end of Shah Pahlavi's rule and the rise of the leadership of Khomeini. Through the revolution came a republic but came at the cost of countless human lives and further economic and political instability, riddled with corruption and economic stability which was inherited from the Shah's reforms. The resolution crafted will be taken at the end of 1979, dealing with the aftermath of the revolution. Furthermore, delegates will have to take Iran's international relations as a consideration along with a focus on revitalizing Iran after the months of violence, particularly the oil industry while still allowing them to develop independently and free from Western's influence.

Definition of Key Terms

SAVAK

SAVAK (Sāzmān-e Ettlā'āt va Amniyat-e Keshvar) also known as the "Bureau for Intelligence and Security of the State was considered as the "secret police" for the Shah and was highly controversial for their responsibility in Iranian's political and religious repression. One report even stated that during the height of Iran's tension, there were up to 100 political prisoners that were executed by the SAVAK

White Revolution

The White Revolution refers to the series of reforms made by the Shah Pahlavi in the hopes to legitimize his rule which in turn backlashed on him as his much-needed peasantry population grew to despise his shutdowns of their organizations and incompetent land reforms.

Westernization

Westernization is a concept of adapting into Western culture. In this case, the Shah, who was educated in Switzerland, was fond of steering Iran into a more Westernized society. However, the involvement of the United Kingdom in the overthrow of the Prime Minister in 1953 and the mass US presence soured public opinions on the concept of Westernization.

Islamic Republican Party

The Islamic Republican Party was formed 2 weeks after the end of the Revolution and was aimed to help Khomeini reach his goal of making a more theocratic Iran. The party, which was defined by close ties to the clergy, allegiance to Khomeini, hostility towards liberal movements, and support for revolutionary groups, was in favor of state takeovers, Islamic educational and cultural institutions, and initiatives to alleviate poverty.

Revolutionary Tribunals

Dadgahha-e Enqelab, also known as the Revolutionary Tribunal, is a unique judicial system in the Islamic Republic of Iran that is intended to judge those who are suspected of crimes like blaspheming, smuggling, inciting violence, or attempting to topple the Islamic regime. After the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the court began operations. The group came under heavy fire after concerns over its vagueness of sentencing as well as its lack of morality by major figures within the party

Background Information

Tensions were fueling the second Shah Mohamed Reza Pahlavi came to power as he overthrew the elected government in 1953, with the help of the United Kingdom, souring the relationship between the Iranian people and the Western powers. This was further worsened when the Shah was keen to strengthen his ties with Western nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom in the hopes to steer Iran to a more Western governance. However, his plans and desire were met with controversy as his own oppressive single-leader rule was the stark contrast to the political systems of the West, further deepening the people's resentment to the Shah,

The 1979 Iranian Revolution, inspired by past governmental uproars of Vietnam and Nicaragua, was rooted in the people's hatred toward the incompetent monarchy, one that is led by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi who failed to reform the recessing economy and allowing excessive Western influence which rots out Iran's sense of independence and nationalism. This angered the people, who felt their voices were not heard and their religious and political freedoms were brutally suppressed.

The Iranian economy under Pahlavi rule was one that was biased for those who are loyal to the government in which the White Revolution from 1963 to 1978 have led to further economic inequality. What the Shah has failed to consider is the fact that the organizations that were formerly representing them were dissolved, leaving the peasantry class jobless with no secure opportunities with any trade unions to assist them. The newly independent farmers were considered as "loose political cannons" within the system, causing loyalty for the monarchy at an all-time low, especially considering that Pahlavi's reforms have also led to an increase in the intellectual class and the urban working class, the two main opposition parties against the Shah.

The public turmoil can also be attributed by the mass political oppression, carried out by the SAVAK in which its prime goal ever since its establishment is to censor the media and hunt down dissidents of the states and was responsible to the thousands of the political opponents being tortured and assassinated. The SAVAK's influence and operations were extended internationally, with heavy surveillances on college students in the US on stipends, and in 1976, the Shah admitted that there were around 3000 political inmates in his cells.

Current situation:

On November 4, 1979, young Islamists attacked the building of the American embassy in Tehran and took over its staff. The purpose of the occupation was to demand the return of the Shah to justice in exchange for the hostages and the removal of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, who they believed was planning to normalize relations with the United States.

As per the 1979 Iranian Constitution, the Islamic government bears the responsibility of ensuring that all citizens have access to fair and suitable opportunities, employment, and necessities to guarantee their advancement.

Khomeini's rule in Iran thus far was characterized by his overwhelming ideological, political, and organizational hegemony, and his movement was never seriously challenged by non-theocratic groups. The revolution was led by Khomeini and his loyalists, who exploited temporary allies such as Mehdi Bazargan and the Provisional Government of Iran. The most important organs of the revolution were the Revolutionary Council, the Revolutionary Guard, the Revolutionary Courts, the Islamic Republican Party, and the Revolutionary Committees (komitehs). The overlapping powers of the Revolutionary Council and the Bazargan government created conflicts, although Khomeini accepted both.

The interim government fell shortly after the hostage-taking of American embassy officials on November 4, 1979. Khomeini later described Bazargan's appointment as a mistake. On May 5, 1979, Khomeini established the Revolutionary Guard, or Pasdaran-e Enqelab, as a counterweight to the leftist and Shahand army. The map later grew into a full-fledged military force that became the strongest institution of the revolution. Thousands of committees or revolutionary committees served “eyes and ears; and many arbitrary arrests, executions, and confiscation of property were attributed to them.” Hezbollah (Party of God) also emphasized the will of the government. The two main political groups that emerged after the fall of the Shah were the moderate religious Islamic People's Republican Party (MPRP) and the secular leftist National Democratic Front (NDF). Marxist guerrillas and federal parties rebelled in some areas, causing fighting between them and the revolutionary forces.

Major Parties involved:

Pahlavi Dynasty

The former monarchy was ruled by Shah Mohamed Reza Pahlavi who overthrown the elected government in 1953 with the assistance of the United Kingdom. The monarchy was focused predominantly on Westernization, believing that it is the key for Iran's development economically. The Shah's rule was also described as authoritarian & centralized with only the upper class being able to benefit from his oppressive rule. His reign was infamously known to be oppressive and were constantly quelling protests and shutting political parties that went against the Shah and his rule. When the Shah leave Iran during the heights of the protests, which were escalating to a full-blown revolution, he did leave his power to a prime minister, but his incompetence carried on within the legacy of the premiership as they were dissolved shortly after in the same year.

The Islamic Republic:

In the Iranian revolution, there were many factions and parties that were revolting against the Shah which includes parties such as the Islamic Republic Party, Free Movement of Iran along with military forces such as the Organization of Iranian People's Fedayeen Guerrilla. Though Khomeini's return in February have led to a rapid rise of the figure to the first leader of the Islamic Republic, there were still many parties that are still active after the revolution such as the Tudeh Party of Iran who were prosecuted after the conflicts. The main points of these parties' ideology, however, they have a similar characteristic which is their embracement of communism and Islamic values while condemning Western powers for being capitalist oppressors that have led Iran to such brutality.

The United States of America

While being one of the Western nations that were involved in the revolution both directly and indirectly, they had the most presence within post-Revolution Iran especially after the hostage crisis of November 4th, leaving the ties between the US and Iran strained. Furthermore, they were also aiding the Shah heavily during this rule and were providing intellectual aid and advisory boards even during the revolution even extending to military aid with nuclear possession in Iran. Their prominent and controversial aid to the Shah made their presence associated with oppression and the support of the Shah's failing reforms, souring Iranian's public opinion.

Timeline of Relevant Events

Date	Description
November 1964	<p>Exile of Khomeini Khomeini was a prominent leader within the fight against the Shah, calling him a “wretched man.” He led protests against the ruler in 1963 and openly condemn Iran's ties with Israel along with their close relations with the US. He was exiled for 15 years, in which he stayed in Iraq until his return in 1979.</p>
12-16 October 1971	<p>2500 Anniversary of the Persian Empire The celebration was the prime opportunity for the Shah to prove to the people that he is a charismatic and inclusive leader, the two traits that he failed to show during his entire reign. And yet, this opportunity was wasted as the Shah focused more on the international publicity and reputation than his own people, who has been long distained the family's lavish spendings amidst a series of fatal economic downturns</p>

<p>23 October 1977</p>	<p>Death of Mostafa Khomeini The son of Ayatollah Khomeini died with official government reports stating that he died of a heart attack. However, this does not bode well with his followers who, following the mysterious death of another influential theorist Ali Shariati, suspect foul play with the SAVAK being the prime party responsible. These chains of deaths would prove to exacerbate the tension between the people and the government.</p>
<p>4-8th September 1978</p>	<p>Martial law and the Jaleh Square Massacre The 4th of December marks the end of Ramadan : Eid al Fitr in which over 200,000 people flocked to the streets, directed by the clergy on a long march which calls for Khomeini's return. The Shah then announces martial law in 12 major cities including Tehran with the ruthless commander , General Gholam-Ali Oveissi, in the hopes to quell down the protests. These reforms would lead to mass protests with 89 civilians dead, who were all shot by the army on a day known as Black Friday.</p>
<p>1 February 1979</p>	<p>Khomeini returns to Tehran There was jubilation across the nations as any signs of the monarchy were torn down to make way for Khomeini's return. Bakhtiar, now the new prime minister after the departure of the Shah allows freedom of demonstrations across the country. After his return, Khomeini created his own revolutionary government with Mehdi Bazargan as its leader and instructing over to view him as a semi-divine figure, simultaneously denouncing Bakhtiar's premiership.</p>
<p>30-31 March 1979</p>	<p>Referendum of 12 Farvardin A referendum was held on the 30th and 31st of March (Farvardin 10,11) to vote on the establishment of the Islamic Republic to replace the Pahlavi monarchy. With 98.2% in favor with the opposition the National Democratic Front and the Fadayan, the Islamic Republic was born.</p>

<p>April 1979</p>	<p>Ethnic Uprising In the regions of Khuzistan, Kurdish-inhabited areas and Gonbad-e-Qabus, Marxist guerillas and federalist parties revolted against the new republic. The regions of Khuzistan and Gonbad-e-Qabus were suppressed within months with Khuzistan only ending in December. However, Kurdistan’s revolt is the strongest out of the three with the KPDI remaining to be a troublesome matter for Khomeini.</p>
<p>August 1979</p>	<p>National Democratic Front Banned As one of the major parties that opposed Khomeini's new constitution, the National Democratic Front was banned due to the leader’s distain for the concept of democracy, saying that it is “Western.” Their banning was followed by dissolvment of the provisional government in November, further consolidating Khomeini’s power and swaying public opinion on the West.</p>
<p>4th November 1979</p>	<p>Hostage Crisis A group of Islamists, self-proclaimed as the Muslim Student Followers of the Imam’s Line invaded the US embassy in Tehran and held 52 US diplomats as hostage. The group also took the chance to release official documents, exposing moderate party leaders to visit with US officials. This radicalized the revolution and was used by Khomeini to pass the constitution and eliminate the moderates as a party.</p>
<p>December 1979</p>	<p>The New Constitution The draft constitution was released by the Freedom Movement in which Khomeini initially was in favor of it but ordered a redraft after the Assembly of Experts, aimed to approve the constitution, was criticized for vote-rigging and falsifying information. The new constitution in December gave Khomeini a guardian jurist leader and more power to clerics to pass laws.</p>

Related UN Treaties and Events

United Nations Security Council Resolution 457 – 4th December 1979

The ongoing Iran hostage issue was addressed in UN Security Council Resolution 457, which was unanimously voted on December 4, 1979. After expressing worry about the level of tensions between Iran and the United States as a potential danger to international security, the Council demanded that Iran free all hostages detained at the American embassy in Tehran and enable them to leave the country immediately. The resolution reminded all Member States to follow the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, which urged countries to protect diplomatic staff and diplomatic missions' facilities.

Previous Attempts to solve the issue

Khomeini established Iran as a theocratic republic when the monarchy fell. This resulted in a referendum in March 1979 declaring Iran an Islamic Republic and establishing a constitution based on Islamic Jurist Guardianship. Khomeini, Iran's Supreme Leader, was a Sharia law specialist who thought that his reign was equivalent to religious allegiance.

The revolution opened municipal, provincial, and national positions to the Iranian people, with elected bodies of government wielding more authority than the Shah's regime. The Supreme Leader and his Guardian Council, on the other hand, strictly regulated every office, with elections held for various seats.

Following the 1979 revolution, French relations with Iran deteriorated rapidly, owing to events such as the Iran Hostage Crisis and Khomeini's dislike for Western countries. Relations were terminated with countries such as the United States and Canada, while the United Kingdom severed diplomatic connections with Iran. Iran adopted an anti-Zionist stance and cut ties with Israel.

Despite its political estrangement from most Western countries, Iran maintained close ties with Switzerland, which was neither a member of the European Economic Community or NATO. Switzerland was in a unique situation in that it could do business with Iran while maintaining its embassy in Tehran and acting as a go-between between the US and Iran.

Possible Solutions

Since the wounds of revolution are still fresh within the grounds of Iranian politics and economy, the members of Historical Council must tread into this matter with caution with the risks of further severing international ties with Iran. Solutions suggested must put Iran independence at a priority and allowing them to develop economically and socially. However, there are still concerns over the safety of foreign presence within Iran themselves especially with the ongoing hostage crisis, with 52 U.S diplomats remaining to be a troublesome predicament that sees no solution soon.

The UN has failed to make substantial resolutions or significant efforts to try and mitigate the issues that arise such as the refugee that left Iran during and after the revolution or the heavily severed ties between Iran and international bodies. The UN's lack of action means that this issue is a new playing field for all members involved, which in turn allows a wider range of reforms and plans to be implemented.

With the aforementioned conditions in mind, the resolution crafted should call for a more collaborative Iran but not at the cost of their self-development or public opinion, out of fear that any Western involvement may escalate the situation even further. It is highly recommended that nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom avoid have a direct involvement in the regime, politically and economically, and cooperate with neutral authorities such as Switzerland to as transactional nations for any matters that may relate to Western nations.

One of the main concerns that should be emphasized on is the humanitarian issue that was caused by The Iranian Revolution. Many Iranians fled the country during and after the war due to fear of persecution and danger, with neighboring nations such as Turkey and Pakistan. There were also minorities such as the Baha'is who are targeted and persecuted, threatening their freedom to practice religion and their existence on Iranian soil. Due to this, it is recommended that there are clauses that help support and construct asylums for these refugees in host countries through resources such as necessities (food, water, housing) as well as a provision of job opportunities along with education for a wide variety of demographics from children to adults to help them settle into the country culturally and linguistically. This can be done through monetary investments and/or the provisions of UN staff, particularly in collaboration with the UNHCR, to help facilitate these refugee camps and ensure all needs are met. Along with education and financial stability, there should also be a provision of health care facilities and trained staff members with collaboration with not only UNHCR but also the WHO, ensuring that the refugees can have affordable and accessible healthcare in these times of strife.

The dissolution of SAVAK did not result in the freedom of press that many may expect. Khomeini informally established the Revolutionary Guards which aims to combat internal or external threat to the new republic. However, these new police forces were becoming like the SAVAK forces from the Shah's regime. They were used to repress and intimidate rival parties to Khomeini, with many of their actions considered more brutal and violent than the SAVAK. Due to this, member nations should focus on the surveillance of civilians too, predominantly ensuring that the people have the rights of press and freedom of expression, especially for marginalized communities such as women and religious minorities. However, member nations should be treading on this issue very carefully, at the risk to further severing ties between Western nations and Iran. Diplomatic ties need to be established through the collaboration of humanitarian projects and economical plans that can help boost Iran economy. Major western nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom are recommended again to avoid any direct involvement and rather act as an advisory body for other nations that are trading and working with Iran such as Switzerland or other Asian nations.

Suggested Reading

Guests of the Ayatollah: The Iran Hostage Crisis: The First Battle in America's War with Militant Islam by Mark Bowden

This book is a perfect read if you want to dive deeper into America's relations with Iran as well as their relationship with international powers. Though going into the 1980s, it still provides a very insightful story about the US negotiations with Iranian officials to ensure the safety of the hostages, which could be helping with the making of the resolution.

Iran's Last Monarch: The Events That Led to The Islamic Revolution

This documentary gives a very detailed analysis of Pahlavi's reforms and policies which makes his reign a brutal and much despised one. Amongst a violent backdrop in Iranian society, the documentary covers multiple aspects of society and its political systems which could be a point of reflection for many member nations on what to avoid when trying to resolve the tension.

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/g6VMmWZDufg?si=PMm28AYuKNcx6uq1>

The Reign of the Ayatollahs: Iran and the Islamic Revolution by Shaul Bakhash,

One of the most helpful books is research about the immediate aftermath of the revolution. Bakhash, using his journalism expertise, provides an in-depth novel that helps encapsulate the chaos of the revolution as well as deep historical contexts that many delegates may find to be helpful when making their clauses.

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