

## **DIPLOMATIC, CONSULAR AND POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAN AND UNITED STATES**

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### **Abstract**

In this research the diplomatic, consular and political relations between Iran and U.S. will be studied. In order to reach our goal and present a clear picture of these two countries relation, we will analyze this relation from its establishment to the current situation.

The relation between Iran and the United States began in the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century; at the beginning U.S. was considered as a powerful and reliable supporter for Iran, this relation became better after the war and during the government of Mohammad Mosadegh. But, everything changed in this relation between Iran and the United States after Iran revolution. The only worthy negotiation between these two nations during this time resulted in the ill-fated Iran-Contra Hostage crises.

In other words, Iran and the United States have a complicated political relation and it is not easy for these two nations to negotiate with each other on a same topic in order to compromise and agree with each other.

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**Keywords:** Diplomatic and political relation, Iran, The United States, American embassy, hostage crises

### **Introduction**

Currently there is no formal diplomatic relation between Iran and U.S. So according to improper relation between these two countries, instead of exchanging ambassadors, Iran has an interests section at the Pakistani embassy in Washington, D.C., and the U.S. has maintained an interests section at the Swiss embassy in Tehran.

The Relation between these two nations began in the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the beginning, since Iran was very suspicious of British and Russian colonial interests during the period of the Great Game, U.S. was determined as a more reliable Western power, and

Morgan Shuster and Arthur Mill Spaugh were even selected as treasurers-general by the kings of those times. During the Second World War, Iran was occupied by the U.K and the Soviet Union, both US cronies, but the relations prolonged to be better after the war to the later years of Mohammad Mossadeq government, who was defeated by a coup managed by MI6 and helped by the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A). This was followed by an epoch of a close agreement between the regime of Mohammad Reza Shah e Pahlavi and the government of America, which was sequentially followed by a powerful exchange and opposition between the two countries after the revolution of Iran at 1979.

### **From Establishment to Terminating of the Relationship (at a glance)**

Iran descriptions contained everything from the natural and obligatory clash between the Islamic Revolution on the one hand, and apparent American superiority and aspiration for universal supremacy on the other. Other descriptions consist of the Iran government's requiring for an external bogeyman to hand over an excuse for domestic cruelty against pro-democratic services and to attach the government to its loyal community.

American and British benefits in Iran were answered; both aligned by the Shah and his pro-Western guidelines. Concessions of oil were discussed on terms constructive to the British-held Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, like those enjoyed by the US Arab-American Oil Company in adjacent to the Saudi Arabia.

In 1979, discontent with the Shah's autocracy, corruption, and Western loyalties erupted into a revolution.

With the toppling of the Shah and the attacking of the U.S. Embassy, the US was rendered powerless in the new Islamic Republic.

In response, The US sought to isolate Iran with sanctions; all formal diplomatic channels between the two countries were closed.

The only noteworthy negotiate between Iran and U.S. during this period resulted in the ill-fated Iran-Contra Hostage Crisis.

### **American Embassy in Iran**

The U.S. Embassy was established in 1951 in Tehran (Iran's capital). Direct mutual relations between Iran and U.S. do not recently subsist between these two governments, and since the hostage crisis of Iran in 1979, the building has not been used by U.S.

Since this crisis, the U.S. government has been embodied in Iran by the U.S. Interests Section of the Switzerland Embassy in Tehran. Currently the names which were given to the U.S. Embassy by many Iranians are differently translated as "nest of spies", "espionage den" and "den of espionage".

From that period, the properties of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, and those in Shiraz and Tabriz have remained by the people seized them. These people have ravaged the stores and credentials of both the diplomatic mission and its consular section. The personnel of the Embassy and the other persons were seized at the time of the attack and held as hostage. 13 persons of them were released on November 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> in 1979. The persons, who held the hostages, refused to release them, and they did not accept the U.S. various demands for releasing the hostages. They were frequently said to have been bound, blindfolded, and faced to serious irritations; they were completely isolated, threat, put on trial or even put to death. The U.S. Government announced that it had purposes to accept that some of these persons might have been transferred to other places of imprisonment.

The U.S. Government believed that not only Iran Government had failed to avoid the above events, but also there was an evident document of its involvement, and also support of these events.

The guys who were held hostage by the argument of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran include, based on the information given to the court, the other persons of U.S. nationality did not possess neither diplomatic nor consular status. The people with having member of the diplomatic staff, four of them were members of the Consular Section of the Embassy.

Besides the persons who were held hostage in the premises of the Tehran Embassy, the U.S. Charge of affairs in Iran and two other U.S. diplomatic agents were detained in the assertion of Iran Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in situations which the U.S. Government has not been able to make completely clear, but which evidently imposed restriction of their freedom of movement, and a threat to their blessedness as diplomats.

After the embassy fell, Revolutionary Guard used it as a training center. The brick walls that form the border feature a number of anti-American friezes commissioned by Iran government. The site has also built a bookstore and a museum (both are closed to foreigners and the general Iranian public). The Great Seal of the U.S. was defectively hurt but is still visible at the entryway.

### **The Diplomatic And Consular Staff Case Of U.S. in Iran in 1979-1981 Process of Emerging, escalation and negotiation**

On 29 November 1979, the Legal Adviser of the Department State of the U.S. handed to the Register a request which instituted proceedings against the Islamic Republic of Iran in respect to a quarrel concerned the seizure and holding as hostages of members of the U.S. diplomatic and consular workers and certain other US nationals. The US also asked for a temporary order to protect the hostages. But Iran refused to appeal or argue before the

International Court, because the goal of Iran, based on its plans could not be discussed in such way. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) distributed an order which was instructing Iran to release the hostages instantly, but Iran failed to fulfill. No pleadings were done by Iran Government. But the situation of it was embodied at the oral proceedings on 9 December 1979 at which the affairs of Iran foreign minister said: “Iran Government wishes to declare its respect to the International Court and respectfully draws the attention of the Court to the deep-rootedness and important character of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. Iran Government believed that the Court could not and should not take cognizance of the case which the U.S. Government had submitted to it and in the most essential fashion, a case detained to what is called the hostages of the American Embassy question in Tehran.” They mentioned 25 years of persistent intervention by the U.S. in the internal dealings of Iran, the shameless development, crimes perpetrated against the people of Iran, contrary to and against all humanitarian and international norms.

The U.S. claimed here in question concern supposed violations by Iran of its obligations under several articles of the Vienna Conventions of 1961 and 1963 with regard to the benefits and resistance of the personnel, the blessedness of the premises and archives, and the condition of facilities for the performance of the functions of the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Iran. The U.S. also presented claims in respect of supposed cruelty by Iran Articles II, Paragraph 4, XIII, XIX of the Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations and Consular Rights of 1955 between the U.S. and Iran, which came to force on 16 June 1957.

### **The insights of hostage crises**

Hostage: U.S. citizens, diplomatic & Consular staffs

444 days: 4 November 1979 until 20 January 1981

Algiers Accord: 19 January 1981

On November 4, 1979, the major Iranian students held the U.S. Embassy complex in the Iran capital, Tehran. The immediate cause of this invasion was the anger of many Iranians over the U.S. President Jimmy Carter allowing the removed former ruler of Iran, Reza Shah Pahlavi, to enter the U.S. for medical treatment. In Iran, this was considered as an opening move which caused an U.S.-backed return to power by the Shah. The crisis which followed this attack created a near state of war, broke Jimmy Carter's presidency, and began hostility environment between Iran and U.S. which continues up to now. Although fear of an American-backed return by the Shah was the publicly stated reason, the true cause of the seizure was the long-term U.S. support for the Shah's government.

Finally all of the Embassy premises were invaded. The personnel of Embassy, included consular and non-American staff, and visitors who were there in the Embassy at that time were seized. Shortly after that, based on the U.S. Government, its consulates in Shiraz and Tabriz, which had been attacked earlier in 1979, were seized too, without any act to do to prevent it.

When Iran revolutionaries took over the U.S. Embassy in Iran, many observers thought it would just be a short objection, a symbolic action which was lasting for a few hours or a few days at most. By the time the U.S. hostages were freed 444 days later, President Jimmy Carter had been forced from the office, Ronald Reagan had begun his eight year term at the White House, and the relation of Iran and U.S. had entered a deep freeze from which there and appears to be no hope of recovery.

### **U.S. side request**

- Iran Government should immediately release all the U.S. hostages, nationals and facilitate prompt and safe departure from these person and all other U.S. officers with respect and humane.
- Iran Government should clear all the premises of the U.S. embassy and reinstate the embassy control.
- Iran Government must ensure the protection of diplomats, consuls and other U.S. personnel who were provided and full freedom for them to carry out their functions within Iran.
- Iran Government cannot place a trial to any person that attached the U.S. embassy and refrain from such trial that be implementing towards the U.S. Personnel.

Iran Government must also ensure no action taken by them in respect to the U.S. rights based on the decisions of Court which might threaten lives of the hostages

### **Iran's Reaction**

The militants and authorities of Iran have declared that the hostages have been well treated.

Besides, they let special visits from religious and International Red Cross representatives for the hostages.

### **Proceeding of the Court**

Iran Government *filed no insistent* and was not participated in the oral proceedings. By the way, the position that had been taken by Iran government was firm and defined in a *letter to the Court by its Minister of Foreign Affairs.*

This letter urged the Court not to pay attention to the case and attempted to *excuse* the

events as just: *“a marginal and secondary aspect of an overall problem involving more than 25 years of continual interferences by U.S.in internal affairs of Iran, the shameless exploitation of our country, which is against and in conflict with all international and humanitarian norms.”*

### **The case subject matters**

#### **The mission violations**

VCDR 1961 – Article 22

*“The receiving State is under a special responsibility to take all proper steps to support the premises of the mission against any intrusion or hurt and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its fame.”*

VCDR 1961 –ARTICLE27

*“Permit and protect free communication on the part of the mission for all official goals.”*

VCDR 1961 –ARTICLE 29

*“The person of a diplomatic agent should be inviolable. He shall not be liable to any form of arrest or confinement. The receiving State shall treat him with due respect and take all proper steps to prevent any attack on his person, dignity and freedom.*

### **Decisions of the Court**

On 24 May 1980, the International Court of Justice was managed to justify the dispute settlement for the both sides:

#### By thirteen votes to two:

- Iran Government has broken several aspects of its international obligations & the violation of the general rules of international law.
- The ICJ decided that Iran must return the possession of the U.S. Embassy and its related documents and release the hostages.
- Iran must make reparations to U.S., the form and amount thereof made by the Court parties. Iran did not obey the Court’s judgment at once, by the way that matter solved through negotiation between Iran and U.S. in Algiers Accord.

The U.S. President Carter had frozen the benefit of Iran government in U.S. which estimates more than \$13 billion. Hence, Iran and U.S. Claims Tribunal was established to set fund from portion of Iran frozen assets to resolve claim of reparations.

### **The failure of Iran and U.S. relation**

Iran was once a powerful supporter of the U.S. during the Cold War, the U.S. supported, in some cases "propped up," friendly governments as fortification against the

Soviet Union. And in some of those cases the United States found itself supporting very uncommon, oppressive regimes. Iran Shah fell into this category.

Iran Government was toppled in 1979 and was finally replaced by another oppressive regime, but this time the leadership was deeply anti-American. Ayatollah Khomeini became the ruler of Iran and he gave many Americans their first sight of radical Islam.

### **USS Vincennes**

In 1988 the USS Vincennes shot down an Iranian commercial flight over the Persian Gulf. 290 Iranians were killed, and the destiny of Iran and U.S. as mortal enemies seemed to be further stacked.

In a fall 2005 speech to students, president of Iran called for Israel to be wiped off the map. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, abandoning the less-provocative strategies of former president Mohammad Khatami, set he on oppose to a course with leaders around the world.

The U.S. Government 2007, report said Iran halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003.

### **“Iran is outpost of tyranny and axis of evil”:**

When Condoleezza Rice appeared at her Senate verification hearings to become Secretary of State she said, “To be sure, in our world there remain colonies of tyranny – and America stands with oppressed people on every continent – in Cuba, North Korea, Burma, Iran, Belarus and Zimbabwe.”

Iran with North Korea is one of only two states to be named both an “Axis of Evil” (in President George Bush’s 2002 State of the Union address) and an “Outpost of Tyranny.”

### **Iran’s nuclear development**

Nowadays, Iran is openly progressing nuclear power capability. They claim this is for peaceful energy goals, but many are cynical. And they have been firmly challenging on whether or not they might use their nuclear capabilities to create weapons.

### **Challenges for creating Iran and U.S. diplomatic and political relations**

With the U.S and presidential elections settled, space has opened for progress on the Iran nuclear issue and broader the relation of Iran and U.S. However, the policy options on the table for the United States range from the disastrous to the auspicious. Each the paths from full-scale war to diplomatic appointment, rest on different suppositions about the regime in Tehran and its behavior. Though engaging Iran presents many confronts, it is the best way for the Obama administration. While an imperative exists for engagement, the U.S. policy is at risk of going astray by emphasizing sectarian Sunni-Shia conflicts and siding with fundamental Islamists, repeating the pitfalls of Afghanistan in the 1980s. The most disastrous choice, argued for by neoconservatives, is a military attack on Iran. This policy rests on the

supposition that sanctions will never work, that the Iranian regime is warningly pursuing a nuclear weapon, and that a nuclear-armed Iran would be unruly and dangerous.

Though some claim that an ‘embattled’ strike on Iran's nuclear services could be limited in period and would not create a broader war, this can verify to be a myth. It is clear that any military participation by U.S. or Israel would be retaliated by Iran’s diverse asymmetric arsenal in the area. This policy will fail since it will not prevent Iran from building a nuclear capability if it aims to do so. Iran’s nuclear facilities are extending across a huge geography, equipped underground, and are shielded by human and defense forces. Beyond that, it will cause catastrophic consequences including casualties on both sides, destabilization of the Strait of Hormuz, skyrocketing prices of oil, a surge in anti-Americanism, and complications in the pending withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The second method took up by militant Democrats and Republicans as well as their Iranian oppositional allies, is to use sanctions and pressure to foster regime change. This view is based on the arguments that the Islamic Republic is not capable of reform, is corrupt, and that there is no hope to work with it. Certainly, they argue that the problem is the regime’s nature not its nuclear program. So destroying the nuclear facilities and communications is not proper to meet American goals. According to this approach, it is best to destabilize and overthrow the regime by creating economic and diplomatic pressure as well as stimulating minority ethnic groups and the opposition. However, the historical record shows that achieving regime change by this course is very dubious. The case of Iraq declares that in the absence of the war, Saddam’s regime could have stayed alive for many more years even under the strict of international sanctions.

Paradoxically, isolationism and sanctions often grows the staying power of anti-American regimes, as they can use ‘American meddling’ as a scapegoat for their domestic problems.

The third path, which has been chosen by the Obama administration since 2008, centers the using of sanctions as a means to bring the regime to the bargaining table. The source for this 'dual track' policy, which formerly emphasized carrots and sticks but has now become completely sticks, is the idea that pressure works with Iran leaders and that it is still probable to mend relations with Tehran. This group is divided between those who quarrel for ‘blanket sanctions’ on the Iran economy and those who quarrel for so-called discriminate sanctions, ‘targeted sanctions’ or ‘smart sanctions’. This policy will fail because it misjudges Iran’s national pride and the Islamic philosophies of resistance to Western pressure.

Fourth, there is the oppression option argued for by former National Security Advisor



Zbigniew Brzezinski, which suggests treating the Islamic Republic much like the Soviet Union.

This policy assumes that Iran is persistently pursuing a nuclear capability and that war and sanctions cannot stop this fait accompli. Supporters argue that the best approach is to avoid war by building an international union against Iran and to limit its power by cutting its relations with Hamas, Hezbollah and the Assad dictatorship. This equivalence is inapposite to Iran Containment might have helped destroy the Soviet Union, but the essential reason was the communist system's inherent contradiction and fixed nature. The system failed to supply the people with their growing targets for a better life, while at the same time the Soviet Empire enlarged globally, incorporating people and geography by force. In contrast, Iran is a nation state of diverse ethnic groups in a voluntary union, and is a relatively small capitalist country without global ambitions.

The final path, which has been espoused by the American Iranian Council (AIC) for more than two decades, elaborated in the *White Paper*<sup>1</sup> for the AIC, is to engage Iran in a meaningful and sustained dialogue to build mutual confidence and trust.

This engagement could include discussions on a range of regional issues where they share common ground from Afghanistan, to Iraq, to drug trafficking. Importantly, the two nations must engage with mutual respect and within a win-win framework, requiring courageous compromises. For this option to succeed, the current “no war no peace” status quo must be removed and replaced by a clear peace or war option. The US should then offer Iran a grand peace that the Islamic Republic must take as otherwise it would be choosing the war option – which it cannot. This option is certainly more productive than a policy that emphasizes war, sanctions, and destabilization, which has so far produced nothing but more spinning centrifuges.

Opponents of this approach have maintained that engagement leading to diplomatic ties, economic interactions, and the like will indeed legitimize the regime and will strengthen its staying power. The historic experience in the last two hundred years disproves this argument as it shows that while sanctions and isolation fatten undemocratic states, trade and diplomacy melt them. In fact, the experience also shows that anti-American governments that have no diplomatic ties with the US have a stronger staying power than those with such relations. What the opponents also do not recognize is the fact that the more the Islamic Republic is de-legitimized, the harder it becomes for Washington to engage Tehran, leading

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<sup>1</sup>A white paper is an authoritative report or guide helping readers to understand an issue, solve a problem, or make a decision. White papers are used in two main spheres: government and B2B marketing, *Wikipedia*

to a complete breakdown of communication, leaving the conflict unresolved. “From my perspective, a US policy that focuses on gradual establishment of relations within a framework of trade and diplomacy would work better.”<sup>2</sup>

### **American view on Iranian nuclear ambition**

Time and again Washington has adjusted its policy on Iran based on Tehran’s Technological achievements. President Clinton played an important role of his own by denying the Iranians access to nuclear technology. In 2006, President George W. Bush threw the Clinton doctrine overboard and backed UN Security Council Resolution 1696. On the one hand, this resolution provided Iran the right to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes, but, on the other, demanded “that Iran shall suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, to be verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).” Bush’s red line accepted the existence of civil nuclear facilities but excluded weapons-related technologies.

In September 2009, the Obama administration stretched the limits of this line and supported a proposal that accepts uranium enrichment up to 5 percent if Iran ships some of its enriched materials abroad to be used in the production of fuel rods for its research reactor. The scope of this concession was remarkable: Whoever is able to enrich uranium to just 5 percent has already mastered almost 70 percent of the technical effort required for the production of weapons-grade uranium. Obama’s red line accepted Iranian enrichment of up to 5 percent but no more. Tehran promptly began to enrich uranium up to 20 percent. With the mastery of this technique, the mullahs raised their capability to 87 per cent of what is required for the production of weapon-graded-uranium. President Obama’s latest line accepts the enrichment of up to 20 percent or more but excludes the actual construction of a bomb.<sup>3</sup>

### **United States and Iran – opponent ideologies**

Transformational diplomacy aims to alter — in whole or in part — elements of a foreign government's structure, policies or laws, while traditional methods of diplomacy have more concrete political aims. Transformational diplomacy no longer works merely for the sake of bettering international relations through practical cooperative aims. Although coercion and diplomacy do not appear to be logically related, transformational diplomacy is essentially synonymous with coercive diplomacy. Without coercion, at least to some degree, the policies that aim for transformation would not succeed. The primary goal of

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<sup>2</sup>Prof. Amirahmadi’s latest book on *The Political Economy of the Qajars: Society, Politics, Economics and Foreign Relations, 1796-1921* was published by I.B. Tauris (London and New York) in 2012.

<sup>3</sup>America’s Shifting “Red Lines” on Iran’s Nuclear Ambitions: A Wedge Issue in US–Israeli Relations, *Matthias Küntzel*

transformational diplomacy is the enactment of change in a target country. However, the actual implementation methods may vary considerably, leading to divergent and varying consequences. A transformational strategy may cover an entire spectrum — from methods relating to cultural diplomacy to the violent overthrow of governments. Arguing that US policy towards Iran from 2004-2006 was an example of transformational diplomacy; this article presents an analysis of the general policy formulation that existed behind the US rhetoric during those years — with specific analysis of the role of the US Congress in contrast to the President

American and Iranian foreign policy objectives stand in sharp opposition to each other on multiple levels. The United States sees Iran as a rogue state that is a source of instability in the region and a direct threat to American allies and US interests. This is signified by Iran's relentless pursuit of its nuclear program and by its actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, which the United States blames for the death of its service people. At the same time, although deeply factionalized and at times paralyzed by internal discord, Iranian policymakers consider the United States to be a regional and global hegemonic power, having established itself in places like the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq in order to secure access to the region's vast resources, not the least of which is oil. The risks of war between the two sides have been considerable, backed by tough rhetoric from Washington and Tehran and also by occasional provocative and bellicose actions.

Despite the danger of warfare between the United States and Iran, however, neither side is likely to deliberately launch a military attack on the other and initiate open hostilities. The United States, in particular, which has taken an especially bellicose attitude toward Iran during the presidency of George W. Bush, is unlikely to translate that into military action. The consequences of an attack would undermine the interests of the side initiating the hostilities. In the process of attacking, each side is likely to inflict even greater harm to its own interests. Interest-preservation is an important restraining factor, particularly for the United States, which is by far the more superior military power and which has on multiple occasions threatened war on Iran. For the foreseeable future, the conflict between the two sides — rooted as it is in their clashing policy objectives — will remain dangerously unstable. But this will be kept in check. Motivated by self-interest, both sides will pursue the conflict, while at the same time each side will strive to keep it relatively managed. The root causes of the current American-Iranian conflict lie in the broader policy objectives of the United States in relation to the larger Middle East.

For both the Clinton and Bush administrations, Iran has been perceived as a major threat to America's regional interests and policy objectives in the Middle East and elsewhere. In fact, the Bush White House has identified Iran as "a major threat" to the United States and its allies, aggressively seeking to isolate it and to bring about "soft" regime change. Meanwhile, Iranian foreign policy, its internal factionalism notwithstanding, has featured populist, and at times belligerent, rhetoric. At the same time, it has entailed a persistent strand of pragmatism. Nevertheless, the ensuing rivalry between Iran and the United States has placed the Persian Gulf region and the larger Middle East in a dangerous predicament, and the risks of warfare have been considerable.

But the very fact that the stakes are so high has served as a source of restraint, each side quite aware of its inability to afford a protracted, and no doubt costly, conflict with the other. This posturing, this article stipulates, is the extent of it. At present, US policy toward Iran and Iran's policy toward the United States is driven largely by the ideological agendas of policymakers in each capital and by their respective needs to enhance their legitimacy before domestic constituents. Although the options open to American and Iranian policymakers for moving forward beyond their current, largely intractable positions are rather limited, a few do exist. The future is not nearly as bleak as the current level of tensions would lead us to believe.

President Barack Obama's choice of toughened sanctions as the means to prevent Iran achieving nuclear weapons status is discussed. It is argued that that choice is explained less by any belief in their likely effectiveness than by the unattractive and risky nature of the alternatives. The use of force would not eliminate Iran's nuclear program and risks pitching the region into even deeper disorder; the 'Grand Bargain' with Iran advocated by others would alienate allies and domestic interests and undermine the administration's wider objectives in the Middle East. The attraction of sanctions, in contrast, is that though unlikely to work they pose little threat to US interests while allowing the Obama administration to stave off demands to adopt high risk alternatives and creating a breathing space for the administration to consider the future evolution of its Iran policy.

### **Future of USA and Iran's relations**

The relationship between Iran and the United States is a long and complicated one. There are many issues and much history that needs to be understood to truly grasp the reality of the current situation and be able to make a fair assessment of what the future may have in store for their relationship. To truly analyze the many aspects of this interesting relationship will be briefly investigated the past, present and potential future of this dynamic political

relationship.

Of all the tension and political missteps that have taken place the two most prominent in recent history would have to be the coup in Iran, led by the United States, in 1953 and the hostage crisis in Iran in 1979-81. These two events weigh heavy, even today, with the general population and thus influence political maneuvering. After the coup and the return of Mohammad Reza Shah and his heavy handed politics the people of Iran were thrust into a government far different then the democratically elected one that the United States overthrew. This period of time also represented a huge change to the people of Iran, as they were thrust into the modern world rather abruptly which also helped to shape their opinions; “Perhaps the Iranians could have coped better if the engine of modernization chosen by Muhammad Reza Shah had not been the American superpower.”

Moving forward to current time we can see that the actions of the past have truly worked into the present level of mistrust and misunderstanding that exists between these two countries. While history has certainly worked to shape the current situation, there are also inherent differences between them that only add to the problem.

The differences between the current regime in Iran and the United States in terms of the base political structure are so different so as to make a large gap to cross to reach each other. Also the political unrest in Iran has influenced their position in the worldwide economic structure; “Internal political conditions in Iran seem so unstable to the outside world that no reasonable business concern wants to commit itself to long-term arrangements”.<sup>4</sup>

Another current consideration that will affect the future relations between these two countries is the current Green Movement and political unrest in Iran due to the recent elections. There is some discussion in the United States as to what, if anything, the government reaction should be. While some feel that this is the time for the US to step in and institute a regime change in Iran, it cannot be seen how this would be of an advantage to the United States considering how well that worked the last time. “The bottom line is that although governmental change in Iran will inevitably result in the removal of Khamenei from power, the opposite is not true. Directly removing Khamenei from power will not bring about Iranian regime change; indeed, it will strengthen the religious hard-liners”<sup>5</sup>. We can see how with the difference in Iran’s views on government it would not benefit us, as directly as it

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<sup>4</sup>Columbus Webster Bee man 81, Newspapers

<sup>5</sup>Columbus Webster Bee man 195, Newspapers

may seem to the Western view, to instigate a regime change in Iran.

The other critical issue between the countries is the nuclear program in Iran, for years the United States has been against this program. They fear that should Iran develop nuclear weapons it will change the political dynamics of the gulf region and move the power towards the one country that they do not have open relations with. As Bee man explains, the true problem that the United States has with nuclear technology in Iran is the fear that should Iran develop Nuclear weapons at some point, which goes against the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Iran has signed, it might infringe on the United States nuclear superiority<sup>6</sup>. While there is certainly some justification for concern over the development of Nuclear weapons in any country, there has yet to be any confirmation that Iran is working on this technology outside of the realm of generating power. We must also remember that it was the United States itself that provided Iran with the initial information on this technology. To the Iranians this is likely to be viewed as another example of the Western politics that it has come to distrust.

### **Conclusion**

When analyzing the relationship between Iran and the United States we must look at the whole picture of past and present issues to truly understand where they are in regards to each other as well as where their interactions are likely to lead. As we have seen Iran has a troubled past filled with political turmoil with the West which has only served to drive the wedge between these powers even deeper. The more recent past of the US led coup and the Iran hostage crisis only served to separate the countries and their populations even further apart, leaving us with images of “The Great Satan” and the “Mad Mullahs”. We can only hope that these two countries can finally find a way to bridge the gap of politics, culture, and religion to find some common ground upon which they can stand. Ideally they will be able to do so without the need for violence. Truly Iran and the United States have a complicated, intriguing relationship that is neither easy to navigate or understand, but one that must be overcome if they are to improve relations.

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