



THE FRENEMIES; THE GENESIS OF UNITED STATES – IRAN RELATIONS SINCE THEIR INCEPTION

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ABSTRACT

The United States (US) – Iran relations commenced their voyage through the tumultuous waters in the mid of the 19th century, one of the most defining spells in the modern history of International Relations when the Anglo – Russian power struggle in Asia was at its peak engulfing the Qajar Persia (Iran) which desperately sought a “Third Power” to counter these powers’ colonial pressures. But US opted to remain in a state of doldrums. Contrarily, there existed a “propagandised” perception that US – Iran relations have always been cordial except a short troubling period of Dr Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953. This study, in fact, is an endeavour to shrug-off this false perceptiveness prevalent among younger generations. Predominantly, this research encompasses the historical account coupled with divergent conceptual and operational aspects embraced by the US and Iran (diversely) in order to gain an insight about relations between both states, at best characterised as the “Frenemies”. As a matter of fact, this paper is nothing but a candid documented record of manipulations, exploitations and black-mailings by the US against Iran, a nemesis that ultimately paved the way for the rise of Iran.

Keywords: Genesis of the United States – Iran relations

Prelude

1. The American - Iranian relationship roots in the mid of the 19th century, when Iranians pursued for strong relations with the US as a geo-potential ally aimed at countering the British and Russian imperialist intervention in their internal affairs. A friendship treaty between the US and Iran was concluded at Constantinople in December 1856 (Government , 1857) . During the Second Anglo Iranian War (1856-57), the Irani government even explored the possibility of the Persian-American Treaty, a military alliance against Britain (Bell, 1966). But Americans were interested in commercial / trade relations instead of military pacts (Yeselson, 1956) . Moreover, Americans,



despite eagerness to enhance their influence at international level, were reluctant to confront the British in the Persian Gulf (Abbas , 1997). The Iranians did not succeed in their effort. Nevertheless, diplomatic relations between them progressed at a snail’s pace after signing the economic treaty of friendship in 1856. Formal relations between them were set about by establishing the US embassy in Iran in 1883 during President Arthur’s Government. In 1888, the first Iranian representative arrived in the United States.

2. By the mid of the 19th century; precisely in 1850s, British were confronting an unprecedented turmoil brewing up in India which culminated into a rebellion in 1857. At this juncture, the general public sentiment in the US was distinctly anti-British but, the government seemed reluctant in securing any advantage out of this geopolitical fiasco. During this period, the US administration focused their attention on American missionaries preaching Christianity in Iran (Yeselson, 1956). (Şalih, 1975). Conversely, Iran was considering the US as a potential competing power to counter British and Russian interests in Iran. In 1888, the Iranian representative in Washington conveyed his government’s earnest desire to President Cleveland for a US-Iran military alliance, apparently against the British and Russia meddling in their internal affairs (Yeselson, 1956) . Despite escalated American imperialistic designs in Latin America and Southeast Asia, Iranians especially the nationalists considered Americans as a benignant power which would be trustworthy. At that time, the US appeared disinclined in the Middle East, an approach which convinced Iranians that US would not encroach upon Iran’s sovereignty contrary to the British and Russian policies. After the Second Great War (1939-1945), the period of intense Cold War in 1950s, the Iranians followed the strategy of “positive equilibrium” or the “third power strategy,” when the US was being considered as the most suitable replacement (Ramazani, 1975) . This was the time when the US’ impression as a benevolent power in the eyes of Iranians fast receded. The US emerged as one of two great powers while the European powers were literally decimated by the Great War. In case of Iran, the actual competitor of the US was none but Britain which was subsequently to be replaced by the US (Farhang, 1981). But, in the meantime, the US had to prevent the Middle East from the Communist influence. Amidst this scenario, Iran based on its geographical proximity to the Soviet Union emerged as one of the top preferred states against Communism. Exactly at this moment, a peculiar situation developed which the US probably misevaluated. During the Cold War in 1953, various nationalist of contrasting ideological inclinations, opposed to the monarchy, unanimously considered the US as an imperialist power interfering in Iran’s domestic affairs. When Mohammad Mosaddegh became the prime minister, an era of confrontation between the forces demanding a change in social order and the Shah as the personification of the traditional political and social order (Farhang, 1981). He was opposed by conservatives and Communists alike. It is very important to note that the Communist ideology proponents in Iran (The Tudeh Party and the Stalinist Communist Party) were overwhelmingly supportive to the USSR, but the Soviet Union opposed the nationalisation of oil industry, rather sought concessions on oil prices. On the other hand, anticipating to circumvent the British influence in their country, Iranians desperate for alternative sources of revenue, incentivised highly lucrative economic investments for Americans. In this regard, oil was the most remunerative economic incentive that could be offered for



augmenting the US strategic interests. Prior to it, the British were exploiting major natural resource with only 16% return of the net revenues which, formed the most dominant cause of grievance among the entire Irani nation (Ferrier, 1982).

Aim

3. The aim of this study is to deliberate on US-Iran relations since their origin in the mid of the 19th century till the US-Israel-GCC attack on Iran in February 2026; an era during which both countries traversed through many vicissitudes.

Structure of the Study

4. The study will be unfolded in the following manner:
 - a. Literature Review – The US-Iran relations
 - b. Research Methodology
 - c. Theoretical Framework
 - d. Complex Nature of US-Iran Relations leading to a Series of Wars
 - e. Conclusion

Literature Review – The US-Iran Relations

5. Undoubtedly, the US-Iran relations since their inception are one of the most researched and documented subjects worldwide. There are innumerable folds of literature on these relations addressing almost every event particularly highlighting abrasions and aggressions that laid foundations for the lack of trust between both nations. However, there are some books which can serve as valuable sources of knowledge on the subject by credible authors.

- a. **The Strangling of Persia (1912).** This book was written by William Morgan Shuster III who assisted the Iranian revolutionaries in managing their finances against British and Russian involvement. The events have been extracted from the most authoritative sources / documents available, augmented with personal diary maintained by the author during the entire span of his sojourn in Persia. To this episode have been incorporated those historical references and explanations which seemed necessary to facilitate a thoroughly clear understanding of events along with opinionated comments as the writer thought justified in making (Shuster III , 1912). Shuster's book guides conscientious individuals who possess the democratic aspirations.
- b. **The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations.** Professor James A. Bill authored the book which is one of the authenticated histories of the US-Iran relations, encompassing the era from the 1940s to the 1980s. It significantly covers the period during Operation Ajax, a coup staged by the American CIA and British MI-6 coup against Iranians' democratic aspirations (Akhavi , 1990).
- c. **Palace of Solitude (1992).** It is an autobiography of Reza Shah's second wife, Princess Soraya Esfandiary Bakhtiary (1932-2001), that covers the Iranian



- monarch's departure from Iran when her homeland was passing through the tumultuous period.
- d. **All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror (2003).** This account authored by Stephen Kinzer, an investigative journalist, elaborates the CIA-MI6 coup (1953). The most significant nature of this book is its exploration followed by substantiation of the level of American imperialistic complacency proceeding from where the British imperialism crumbled. It covers a clandestine operation by intelligence agencies of US, UK and Iran to dismantle the democratic order.
 - e. **Guests of the Ayatollah: The First Battle in America's War with Militant Islam (2006).** The author Mark Bowden dilates on the crisis of American hostages taken by the Iranian students from the US perspective.
 - f. **Iran-Contra: Reagan's Scandal and the Unchecked Abuse of Presidential Power (2014).** The author Malcolm Byrne details the scandalous episode of President Reagan covertly supplying arms to Iran in exchange for American hostages in Beirut in the 1980s during the Iran-Iraq War. Revenue generated from transactions were funneled to Contra reactionaries in Nicaragua without the knowledge of US Congress. It is a thoroughly researched and highly documented episode exposes the treacherous dealings.
 - g. **The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the Roots of Modern US-Iranian Relations (2013).** The most eminent historian Ervand Abrahamian deliberates on Operation Ajax, toppling of Mosaddegh in order to re-install the monarchy. This diligently documented account is now invoked as the US, Israel and GCC are striving to install Reza Pahlavi, the self-exiled son of the ousted shah, to govern the Iranian nation in a manner conducive the US-Israel national interests. Abrahamian, extensively referring declassified CIA documents, dilates on the Cold War geopolitics and the US led western oil interests which led to the treacherous coup.
 - h. **Heroes to Hostages: America and Iran, 1800-1988 (2023).** Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet's exceedingly important book is based on spectacular primary material episodically divulged in our time. Professor Kashani-Sabet's seminal study outlines the expansion of US imperialism worldwide based on its strategic interests.
 - i. **The Long War on Iran: New Events, Old Questions (2026).** Behrooz Ghamari explores how Americans and Iranians reached a dire grid of lasting belligerence, a scenario that prevails regardless of who rules Iran. Apparent are predominant pretentious designs of the US in the Middle East which seeks determinedly but viciously to protect its sphere of influence. The author has traced and documented the escalated US structural warfare against Iran aimed at weakening and subjugating Iran's independent character.
 - j. **Axis of Empire: A History of Iran-US Relations (2026).** Afshin Matin-Asgari's book highlights the most significant aspect by dispensing with a false perception the



US and Iran relationship were based on a splendid mutual interest which now have turned bitter.

k.

Research Methodology

6. This study employs a mixed-methods comprising quantitative and qualitative research design aimed at exploring the Iranians relations with the US. It furnishes a comprehensive appreciation of truly labyrinthine relations. This design has been engaged for delving into the research question which cannot be adequately responded by utilising either qualitatively or quantitatively as a single research design. However, the mixed methods design is imperative to study these state-to-state relationships critically between different variables (US, Israel, GCC and Iran).

Theoretical Framework within the Context of US-Iran Relations

7. Iran's relations with the US, Israel and GCC can be predominantly analyzed through three main international relations paradigms:

- a. **Iranian Realism:** The predominant concept of realism is the truthfulness, factuality, materiality and existentiality; all persist independently of human perceptiveness or axiom. It concentrates on matters as they exist by means of categorising purposeful reality over abstract idealism. Within the domain of Realism, objectivity dominates the subjectivity. Based on this conception, Iranian foreign policy amalgamates with pragmatic national interests, especially nation's security strategies dominated by an anti-hegemonic ideology that steers through the structural distrust of western obligations and an attention to deterrent strengths. The Iranian realism posits that like all other nations, they have to operate in an anarchic world which is devoid of a central authority.
- b. **Iranian Structural Realism:** It examines Iran's foreign policy predominantly as defensive responses to systemic pressures and structural threats, rather than exclusive ideological expansionism; a subject of abstract nature. Iranians apply the neorealist logic of anarchy and self-indigenisation to dilate on nation's internal / external security related mechanism especially its nuclear programme coupled with regional security network. Iran concentrates on the quest for power by means of self-reliance and indigenisation. The west believes that Iran is pursuing the policy of regional hegemony. Iranians consider the US as an outside hegemon which is striving aggressively to claim favourable regional balance of power. In the wake of this geopolitical scenario, Iran pursues its nuclear programme and a number of proxy networks in the Middle East to blunt the US-Israeli-GCC military threats and ensure its status as a strong nation in the region.
- c. **Iranian Constructivism.** It explains that Iran's foreign policy is shepherded by Islamic-ideological identity strictly augmented by rationalism instead of material power. Iranian intelligentsia ascertains that their national behaviour is crafted by traditional / civilizational discourses coupled with anti-western norms which was



established by Imam Khomeini during the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Iranians highlight that the US interprets Iran as a rogue state which violates international norms, while contrarily Iran views the US as an imperialist power that inculcates distrust among the regional states by hindering diplomatic rapprochement in the Middle East.

8. In the meantime, it is equally pertinent to get familiarised with the theoretical framework within the context of US geopolitical aspirations in the Middle East where Iran's geographical position imposes global consequences.

- a. **The US Zero Sum Game Strategy.** The most fundamental concept that has crafted the US policies whether military or otherwise, is Professor Kenneth Waltz' vision of "The Self-Help World" in which a nation or state is the primary actor which is entire at its own with regard to social, economic and political stability, geographical and ideological security; all leading to the national / state survival (Waltz, Political Structures, 1979). According to Waltz a state is nonetheless, a rational actor which acts independently in the anarchic world for its ultimate survival through constant struggle for increasing its multifaceted power in the garb of maintaining the balance of power (Rumki, 2012).
- b. **The US Balance of Power Strategy.** The US policy makers draw inspiration from Professor Kenneth Waltz who is genuinely considered as a successor of Professor Hans Joachim Morgenthau who characterises the term "balance of power" within the domain of international relations as an indispensable stabilizing phenomenon which prevents any single state from acquiring hegemonic capability over other nations in the anarchic international political environment in which an inherent strive for power is entrenched in the human nature thus crafting the balance (of power), if not integral but crucial mechanism for global political order among sovereign nations. Similarly, Professor Kenneth N. Waltz's theory of balance of power articulates that in an anarchic global order, survival-driven nations function to deny any other nation's dominance of power. States resort to a two-pronged process; an internal balancing (strengthening themselves militarily and economically) and external balancing (formalising pacts, agreement and alliances) (Waltz, Anarchic Orders and Balance of Power, 1979). Waltz' seminal intellectual endeavour, Theory of International Politics explains this structural approach which shifts the focus from Morgenthau's elaborated human nature to systemic constraints.

9. **Nature of US-Iran Relations Since Their Inception (1856).** It is generally perceived that US maintained exemplary relations with Iran which is a misconstrued reality. Formal relations commenced when, on 13 December 1856, the US President James Buchanan formally published the presidential proclamation regarding the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between the United States and the Kingdom of Persia (Iran), signed in Constantinople by the US and Persian plenipotentiaries. It was merely a friendship treaty aimed at opening new markets for American



business community in the Middle East. It is pertinent to mention that Iranians, on the other hand, pressed for a geopolitical alliance especially a military alliance in order to counter / check the British and Russian coercive influence in Iran but Americans, at that particular time, straightforwardly clarified their policy of 'non-interventionism' in line with George Washington's announcement (Washington, 1793). However, later, the geopolitical scenario dominated by European powers colonial aspirations led to the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine that formally validated the US intervention in continents of North and South America with the objective of ensuring America's security (Adams, 1823). At that time, the US foreign policy sought to preclude any geopolitical engagement out of the Western (American) hemisphere especially military alliances with other states aimed at preventing itself from being dragged into conflicts which were not linked to the American territorial self-defense. Nevertheless, the American foreign policy of neutrality and non-interventionism commenced its voyage towards erosion which ultimately led to its abandonment as the 20th century dawned heralding the gradual decline of the British Empire and creating a void which was ultimately to be filled by the US to become one of two global powers along with the Union Soviet of Socialist Republics (USSR). The US harnessed itself to depart from George Washington's Neutrality Proclamation (1793). The US non-interventionist tendency gained ascendancy during the period between the World Wars (Blower, 2014). On 22nd June 1941, Adolf Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa by invading Russia, the European allies especially Britain and Russia required Iran's land route for logistics to support the Russian army but this would not have been materialised under the neutral Iran. They invaded Iran and suggested the Shah to vacate the monarchy in favour of his son. At that time, Americans had not joined the war but, still Britain and Russia requested them to maintain and operationalise the strategic line of communication which traversed through the entire stretches of Iran originating from the Persian Gulf to the Soviet Union. This is how, Americans were facilitated to establish their foothold on the Iranian soil, otherwise the history divulges that the American-Iranian relations remained of mean value, both from the American and the Iranian perspectives, until the launching of Operation Barbarossa (June 1941). Nevertheless, confronting the chaotic internal situation, the Iranians who always distrusted the British and Russians, tilted towards Americans for technical advice and political support, who were resorting to a traditional neutral policy towards Iranians. However, by the beginning of autumn of 1941, arrived the change in the US-Iran relations converging on deeper American strategic interest in the Iranian affairs. (Historian, 1945). After the World War II, the most strategic development is promulgation of the Truman Doctrine which heralded the commencement of Cold War with a mission to fight and subsequently defeat Communism in every part of the globe. It was to led by the US and its allies worldwide. Amidst this scenario, Iran emerged as one of the most important allies of the west against the USSR which had long history of belligerence with Iran (Truman, 1947).

10. The US-Iran Relations During the Cold War and Post-Cold War Period. After World War II, global balance of power altered decisively from multipolar system designed by Europe to bipolar system dominated by the US and the Soviet Union. Traditional empires in Europe, Asia and Africa faded away. Great colonial powers especially Britain and France were financially depleted and physically exhausted to a level where they were incapable of maintaining their



overseas possessions. In the meantime, a massive wave of decolonization paved the way for independence of colonies in Asia and Africa. This was the precise rather the most opportune moment when the US replaced Britain. Americans would have preferred to evacuate from the Middle East and the Persian Gulf region after the Second World War II, but the postwar British exhaustion and retrenchment “East of Suez” created a void that could not be circumvented but the US. Britain had already declared its inability to supply military and economic assistance to Türkiye and Greece. This scenario led to the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine announcing that the United States would bear the responsibility to support free peoples everywhere with the objective of resisting attempted subjugation by minorities or by outside elements (Koch , Chapter 1 - The Roots of TPAJAX, 1998).

- a. **The Azerbaijan Crisis (1946).** By the culminating days of the World War II (1939-1945) Iran turned into an epicentre of the international diplomacy due to the Azerbaijan crisis of 1945-1946 which originated in the form of the USSR threat to Iran’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Soviets were reluctant to vacate the Iranian territory which they occupied along with British on 25th August 1941 in order to secure allies line of communication / logistics (Ward, 2009) . The Soviet military was stationed in Iran’s northern provinces. Both occupying powers committed to pull out their forces from the Iranian territories about six months after the war ends. However, exploiting the Iranian weakness during the war and taking full advantage of post-war disorders in Iran, the Soviet Union launched efforts to instigate the population of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan to float their demands for complete autonomy (Eshraghi, 1984). The Soviets manoeuvred to convert people of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan to become their satellites. Then the Soviets adopted a firm stance on their evacuation from these territories and declined to withdraw their troops from these provinces for economic, geo-strategic and military reasons. Iranians hastened to dispatch their troops to restore order over these provinces, but did not succeed amidst the Soviet threat (Pohl , 2017). Experiencing a sure setback, Iranians approached the US to resolve the issue which posed an existential threat to their sovereignty. Ultimately, the crisis was resolved by the forward-looking American diplomacy. The prompt engagement of Americans coupled with an energy agreement between the USSR and Iran resolved the crisis (Azad , 2018).
- b. **Operation Ajax – Mossadeq’s Ouster (1953).** In 1950, the oil concessions to Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), renewed by Reza Shah in 1949, emerged as an aching issue between Britain and Iran. In March 1951, Mossadeq, member of the Majlis (the Iranian Parliament) presented a bill to nationalize AIOC which was passed spontaneously. On 1 May 1951, he signed the bill into a law just three days after Reza Shah appointed him Prime Minister. Nationalization of AIOC came into effect on 2 May 1951 but declared retroactive to 20 March 1951 (Elwell-Sutton, 1955) . In 1952, Mossadeq severed diplomatic relations with British administration which was fully convinced that no covert operation against Mossadeq could succeed with the US support (Woodhouse, Something ventured, 1982). At this particular point

in time, it is very important to comprehend that Americans were not at all displaying any interest in the Anglo-Iran oil dispute. But, then, on 26th February 1953, Allen Welsh Dulles was appointed the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) who, at the first moment, apprised newly elected President Dwight David Eisenhower about the precarious situation in Iran which could be exploited by Communists. Mossadeq with highly enthusiastic support of Tudeh Party had acquired the capacity to defeat Reza Shah even in an armed conflict. In fact, it was a British juncture furthered by Montague Woodhouse who manipulated to convince Americans especially Allen Dulles (Woodhouse, 1982). “He (Woodhouse) did not stress the oil issue” (Koch, 1998). Finally, British managed to secure American support to depose Mossadeq. But both had divergent perceptions. For British, “Mossadeq’s policies damaged British prestige, influence and vital commercial interests”. Conversely, for Americans, “Mossadeq represented a weakened Iran and its increasing vulnerability to Soviet domination” (Cottam, 1988). So, after extensive deliberations, President Eisenhower “turned to CIA for covert political operation; the National Security Council had decided that covert action was a legitimate instrument of US policy” (Warner, 1998). At the same time, on 11 August 1953, the New York Times published a news about ongoing Iranian-Soviet negotiations which caused concerns among the US administration. In fact, these negotiations were never held (Koch, 1998). These multipronged moves were being carried out to trap the Eisenhower administration which was deeply obsessed with the communist expansion in the Middle East thus threatening the economies of the west. The unfolding events of Operation Ajax amply prove that Mossadeq’s popularity among public was declining which ultimately could have led to his removal from power (Axworthy, 2013). But, CIA’s conduct of operation ensured the return of Reza Shah’s authority which was eroded by Mossadeq (Matherly, 2013).

- c. **The Return and Departure of Reza Shah Pahlavi (1953-1979).** The Shah was facilitated by the Anglo-US alliance to return in August 1953, when Mossadeq’s fate had been seized. The monarch’s administration adopted a policy of autocracy that advocated intolerance towards the difference of opinion (Saikal, 2009). The room for independent political parties and media was ruthlessly eliminated. The parliament was filled with loyalists to shower praises for the Shah (Randjbar-Daemi, 2017). The Americans blinded by the Communist blaze around the world, at that moment strangled by the tsunami of decolonisation, deliberately turned deaf towards the Iranian population which was one of the most pragmatic and congenial towards other nations, especially the Americans (Lindsay, 2026). The most disastrous constricted American geopolitical thinking during that era, driven by John Foster Dulles and Allen Welsh Dulles, led to unconditional multifaceted support to the Shah despite knowing its adverse effects (Kinzer, 2003). Probably, the US was capitalising on two distinct perceptions. On the one hand, the opposition including Mossadeq’s National Front continued to believe that anti-colonialist mindset would revert Americans



towards genuine democratic forces. On the other hand, the US was recognised as the custodian of the Iranian national interests, a thought which emerged out of Americans' active engagement favourable to Iran against its territorial dispute with Russia. These views persisted even during 1960s and 70s when the royal autocracy spiked unprecedentedly, thus causing an ever-escalating political strain among one of the most educated and geopolitically aware population with one of the greatest living civilisations which Americans ignored. During this span of the US-Iran relations, Iran's foreign policy dictated by the US foreign policy of anti-Communism escalated Russian rivalry towards Iran (Saikal, 2008). At the same time, the Middle East and Asia were under the firm grip of revolutionary military regimes especially Egypt, Iraq and Syria which exerted a frightening impact on the US and its western allies (International , 2009) . India, Egypt, Ghana, Yugoslavia and Indonesia founded the Non-Aligned Movement which the USSR supported but perturbed the US and its colonial allies. The US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles termed neutrality (non-alignment) as "immoral and shortsighted" (Pant & Super , 2015) . Amidst this scenario, the Shah's closeness to the Americans led to Iran's virtual isolation from the socialist Arab world which caused a deep geopolitical friction and an era of great divide in the Middle East (Little , 2011) . During the same period, Reza Shah established 'very close' relations with Israel with the objective of countering his opponent states in the Arab world which had been divided into distinct segments; weak monarchies completely dependent on the Americans and strong radicals predominantly allied to the Soviet Union (Menashri & Parsi , 2016) . The Shah probably, followed the proverb, "the enemy of your enemy is your friend"; a geopolitical conception floated by the Indian philosopher Vishnugupta Chanakya Kautilya Acharya in his treatise Arthashastra (the 4th century BC). The Iran-Israel relations formed one of the most unpopular foreign policy ventures during Reza Shah's era. In 1964, Iran was publicly coerced into signing the most controversial 'Status of Forces Agreement' (SOFA) by the US which covered the American military presence on the Iranian soil. This arrangement aroused bitter memories of colonial-era capitulations. It is very important to mention that Ayatollah Khomeini was expelled from Iran for publicly opposing the US military boots on the Iranian soil (Power, 2010) . At the same time, Nixon Doctrine came into being which presented 'The Twin-Pillars Policy', a conception that regional powers allied to the US should be responsible for the regional security instead of relying on the US. The Shah visualized it notoriously as an escape from the American tutelage. In the meantime, in 1973-74, Iran oil revenue quadrupled. It secured enormous economic clout and subsequently offered itself as the largest market for technology, industrial development in the Middle East.

- d. **The Return of Ayatollah Khomeini.** At this time, the US-Iran diplomatic relations were severed. The most pivotal component of Khomeini's ideologically oriented Islamic movement was anti-American. Although, Khomeini campaigned



against Reza Shah’s autocratic rule, the elite forming an integral part of the Shah’s administration and, the most importantly the Shah’s domestic policies which had subjugated the general public. But the actual cause of the Shah’s ruthlessness was attributed to the US which had supported the shah’s autocracy and manipulating for the SOFA. Khomeini led and subsequently stabilized the revolution by capitalising on anti-American sentiment, a theme of post-revolutionary Iran as well. In the meantime, (Rezaie-Yazdi, 2016) . Then, occurred the seizure of the American embassy along with 50 American diplomats as hostages from November 1979 until January 1981. After that, there was the Iran-Iraq war in which the US formally adopted a neutral stance. Americans anticipated that both warring nations would exhaust each other. But once Iran looked winning the war to bring Saddam down, the Americans supported Saddam despite the fact that he deployed chemical weapons against Iranian civilians (Regencia, 2018) . The US left nothing unturned in sanctioning, isolating and demonizing Iran.

- e. **U.S. Policy toward Iran, 1978-2015.** Undoubtedly, this is the most crucial phase of the US-Iran relations which ultimately culminated into a full-fledged armed conflict between both nations. The disappointing state of relations have been extensively covered in a publication, “US Policy toward Iran: From the Revolution to the Nuclear Accord; 1978-2015” published on 12th December 2019 that contains 1760 de-classified documents of approximately 14,000 pages (Archive , 2024). This collection complements the previously compiled record on the time-span of the Islamic revolution which has been covered in a publication; “Iran: The Making of U.S. Policy, 1977-1980” (Hooglund. , 1990) and “The Iran-Contra Affair: The Making of a Scandal, 1983-1988”. There are innumerable publications by a number of authors on the subject of the US policy on Iran that dilate upon extensive diplomatic ventures initiated by each US administration for reproachment but with mixed outcome. But there is a very important aspect which misled the US policy makers during the span of 1980s and 90s. They were fed with either false or chaotic assessments. A number of declassified documents of CIA and various national security agencies expose this disastrous error of judgement. There is hardly any document written during that period which highlights anti-American sentiments among the Iranian population (McFarlane, 1985).
- f. **US – Iran Relations under President Donald Trump.** President Trump’s foreign policy towards Iran is indisputably, the most befitting episode of self-crippling injuries and insults to the US nation exacerbated by the collateral damage, almost to the whole world in the entire diplomatic history of the US since the presidentship of George Washington. His most unwise decision was the abandonment of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) popularly known as “the Iran Nuclear Deal – 2015”. His Iran policy has tremendously eroded the American credibility in upholding commitments. His administration resorted to a policy of utmost pressure



on the Iranians but they refused to cave-in (Kaiser, 2019) . Amidst this policy of choking Iran, President has isolated the American nation while he himself has become the most unpopular President of all times in the US political history. There must not be any doubt that the US grand strategy of face of Iranian offensive defence (Kahalzadeh, 2026).

11. **Analytical View – The US-Iran Relations since their Inception.** Analysing the US foreign policy towards Iran since 1856 critically, there emerge revelations of dramatic evolutionary stages of the US-Iran relations. During the initial phase of relations with Iran, Americans projected themselves as the standard bearer of anti-colonialism, custodian of democracy, benevolent to colonized nations and, disinterested altruists. Sooner rather than later, these self-promoted false images drowned into the decades of blood-soaking covert and overt aggressions, regime changes through even through armed interventions, coercive psychological campaigns and economic warfare.

- a. The Treaty of Friendship and Commerce signed in December 1856 in Constantinople led Iran to consider the Americans as a counter-weight to Britain and Russia; two imperialist powers interfering in Iran’s internal affairs. Instead, the US almost at every instance, succumbed to the British and Russian imperialist demands at the cost of Iranians’ sovereignty; a short-sighted foreign policy of betrayal towards Iran.
- b. During the Cold War period (1945-1979), the US “factually” subjugated Iran converting it into a satellite state like an imperialist power which had replaced the British Empire. Operation Ajax is the most glaring example in the history of the US-Iran chaotic relations. Under their tutelage, Reza Shah reigned his nation with unprecedented repression through the infamous security apparatus whose raising was assisted by the CIA. There exists no ambiguity that Americans created a space for the clergy to reach at the helm when secular and democratic elements were decimated by the CIA in order to secure the British economic interests.
- c. After the Islamic Revolution in 1979 which, in fact, was brought by the shortsightedness of American policy makers especially the visionless Russo-phobic John Foster Dulles, the US Secretary of State and Allen Welsh Dulles, the Director of CIA, the US foreign policy under President Carter further drifted towards aggressive postures of sanctions, isolation, containment and covert operations against the so-called regime in which the Iranian nation became the main sufferer.
- d. Despite experiencing upheavals of unprecedented magnitude, the US foreign policy makers blatantly refuse to learn from the history. Their diplomatic relations toward Iran since their advent in 1856, is suffering from persistent discrepancies, contradictions, disparities incongruities and instabilities. In this particular context, the most prominent episode is their unilateral withdrawal for the Iran Nuclear Deal which totally destroyed the American credibility worldwide. Today, the US has self-isolated itself at one of the most historical junctures facing the strategic defeat by Iran and, indeed, relinquishing its status as the strongest global power.



11. **Conclusion.** Adhering to George Washington's foreign policy principles which he spelled out in his 1796 Farewell Address, the US policy makers must adopt robust and resilient non-interventionism, upholding democratic order, strategic neutrality and autonomy, independent foreign policy pivoted on national goals and free trade based on mutual / collective benefits for peace and harmony among nations. The revival of the glorious past is possible by abandoning the US policy of Zero-Sum Game and coercive strategy.



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