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Iran-United States Relations

Abstract

This paper is on the topic of relation between the global superpower the United States of America and the Islamic republic of Iran. This paper will discuss the various events and their timeline in the history of this relation. The paper will identify the sources of conflict between these countries and the impact of these conflicts on these countries. The paper will cover events from 1953 to present and the role played by the United States in the development and changes in Iran in past 60 years. Finally, the paper will summarize the events with information in brief about the events of past decades.

Iran-United States Relations

Introduction

The United States and Iran have had a bumpy relationship for past thirty years, in which Iran has been given many sanctions and embargos due to their ignorance towards the international disapprovals for developing their nuclear program. Many historians have suggested that close ties of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi with the United States is the main reason for the start of long lasting domestic trouble that led to the Iranian Revolution of 1979. The striking transformation made new Islamic heads for the nation and led to changes in their administrative structure. After 1979, rise of conflict the between the United States and Iran has led to long lasting turbulent relationship and war with Iraq. Additionally, there are concerns regarding nuclear program of Iran that has played major role in the past decade to

pressure both the American and Iranian representatives to reach to a conclusion. Although, the United States have failed steadily to persuade the Iranian government to limit or end their development of the nuclear energy even in present tenure of Obama's administration.

The final monarch of Iran was Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi who ruled from 16th September 1941 until the revolutionaries seized his powers. Reza Pahlavi rose to power at the time of World War II, after his father Reza Shah abandoned his family. He took the throne and title of Shahanshah on 26th October 1967 and was known as the second and also the last monarch of House of Pahlavi in the Iranian monarchy. Throughout his reign, the Shah maintained close relations with the United States until 1979's Islamic Revolution overthrew him. Yet, as the leader, he represented the White Revolution and led to series of social, economic and political improvements with intention to transform Iran into one of the global powers and modernizing the country with nationalization of some industries. The oil industry was nationalized temporarily with efforts and helps the Prime Minister Mossadeq, was one of the biggest achievements for Iran at the time of Shah's leadership. Reza Pahlavi desired of westernizing and developing their economic strategy to duplicate the Western lifestyle in Iran.

Unfortunately, profane Muslim slowly started to lose support of the Iranian Shi'a priesthood and their working class, mainly because of his plan of modernization and rising conflict with traditional merchants called bazaaris, and the corruption issues that surrounded himself, the ruling elite and his family.

Iran's geographical position having long borders with Cold War enemy of

America, the Soviet Union, and their position as the most powerful, largest country in the Persian Gulf, has made Iran the "pillar" of the United States foreign policy in Middle East. In 1953, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) deposed their Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq in the organized takeover, what was called "a crucial turning point both in Iran's modern history and in U. S. Iran relations." Many Iranians have argued that the 1953 coup and extensive support of U. S. for the Shah in future years were dependable on uninformed rule of shah that led to deeply anti-American nature of the Iranian revolution in 1979.

Until World War II's outbreak, the United States used to have no active policy for Iran. After the start of cold war, the United States were alarmed of the attempt to be made by the Soviet Union to set-up separatist states in the Iranian Kurdistan and Azerbaijan, in addition to their demand for martial rights to Dardanelles in the year 1946. This fear was further enhanced by losing China to communism, uncovering of many Soviet spy rings and start of war in Korea.

In 1953, the Prime Minister Mossadeq was overthrown with a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)-organized coup. This event has been termed as crucial turning point in modern history of Iran and the U. S.-Iran relations. Following this coup, The United States was responsible in helping to build the Pahlavi's regime. In first three weeks, American government gave \$68 million to Iran in emergency aid and additional \$1. 2 billion was further given in the next decade. Iran had huge oil reserves in the Persian gulf area and with time Iranian government started to bank on it. In the 60s and 70s, the

oil revenues of Iran started growing considerably. The new President of the United States of America, Jimmy Carter started to show concerns over policies of Shah in Iran. In the late 1970s, Jimmy Carter emphasized the role of human rights in foreign policy and included the Shah's regime that by 1977 had started garnering unfavourable publicity and hatred in the Western countries for their human rights record.

Iranian Revolution

Ayatollah Khoemini first rose to political fame in 1963 when he guided opposition against the Shah. Khomeini accused the Shah for his actions and corruption charges and started to plant the thought in the mind of people about the idea that Iranian people should overthrow Shah's rule. After the Iranian revolution, he wanted Shah who fled the country to be sent to Iran to face the consequences of his actions. The 1979 Iranian hostage crisis became a diplomatic disaster to bring Shah Pahlavi back from his exile. Group of Iranian students in support of the Iranian Revolution entered the United States Embassy in Tehran and made hostage of fifty-two Americans working in the embassy. After the seizure of 1979 of the American Embassy, the United States government froze around \$12 billion of Iranian assets that had negative impact on the Iranian economy. The seizure of assets included bank deposits, commodities, gold and many other properties. This conflict further rose at the time of the U. S. during President Reagan administration after American hostage crisis in Iran. This was a ploy by the American government to bring negative financial consequences to the Iranian economy.

Iran and Iraq War

American logistical and intelligence support had played a major role in the arming Iraq for the Iran-Iraq War, although according to Bob Woodward the United States shared information with both sides as they were hoping to engineer stalemate between both parties. The Iran-Iraq War culminated with both countries agreeing to ceasefire in the year 1988, but The United States has contended that Hezbollah were involved in many anti-American terrorist attacks. In 2003, one American district court judge ruled that the bombing of United States Embassy in April 1983 has performed with Iranian support. Another American court had also found details about Ali Khomeini and the Ayatollah Khomeini authorized the bombing of Khobar Towers. In 1988, The United States launched operation praying Mantis, this was the biggest naval combat operation by America since the World War II. American action started with several coordinated strikes with two surface groups, which neutralized the the Sirri oil and Sassan oil platform in Iran that became first steps of the embargo that initiated when President Bush rose to power in The United States.

Bush administration

Since 2003, the United States has alleged that Iran has a program to develop nuclear weapons, however Iran had said that their nuclear program was only a source for electricity. Due to safety reasons, the U. S. thought it necessary to have military forces in the country that was about to get hands on nuclear power. In March 2006, the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan (PEJAK), an opposition group closely linked to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) killed 24

members of the Iranian security forces. Due to the irrelevant negotiations with the United States, Iran was placed with certain sanctions that started the Cold War between both countries. In 2006 sanctions were started against the Iranian institutions because of their nuclear program. The position of United States in this case is that a country like Iran having nuclear war power is unsafe for the world and unacceptable. The American government then imposed sanctions on the Iranian bank on September, 2006, barring them from indirect or direct dealings with any American financial institutions. This is mainly the reason for the United States pushing for sanctions against the Iranian government.

Obama Administration

When Barak Obama assumed the duty of President of the United States among his main goals was solving nuclear problem with Iran and their government, however this problem is remains one of the most commonly discussed issues between The United States and Iran. In June 2009, Obama was optimistically looking forward to Iranian elections, but he received little encouragement from the United States due to the landslide in of Ahmadinejad that led to widespread protests and fraud allegations against Ahmafinejad. In order attain his people's trust and remain their leader, Ahmadinejad started building up the idea about Iran should get the right of building and maintain their nuclear power just like other countries. The Nuclear program of Iran remains one of the major issues between U. S.-Iran relations in present Obama Administration. The US government do not recognize the right of Iran to their nuclear power, they have tried

persistently to stop advancement of the program with use of sanctions by isolating the Iranian economy and stopping the monetary flow. However, the Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani and their former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have been denying to cooperate with the United states. Beside their nuclear program that is an old issue now, the Iranians government has now claimed their right to Gulf of Persia. The Iranian navy chief was reported to claim that it can be easy job for the Iranian navy to shut the Straits of Hormuz. On Jan 3, 2012 the army chief of Iran Ayatollah Salehi warned " we recommend to the American warship that passed through the Strait of Hormuz and went to Gulf of Oman not to return to the Persian Gulf" (Goodman, 2012). These two topics that have the United States and Iran arguing over have been negative for the business and economy of Iran. Economic wise, the United States has placed Iran under immense pressure for developing a peaceful nuclear program.

Summary

The ruler of Iran, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi used to maintain close relations with the United States in his reign that lasted from the years 1941 until Islamic Revolution in the year 1979 that overthrew his rule. Long border of Iran with America's rival, the Soviet Union, and their position as most powerful, largest country in oil-rich Persian Gulf, helped Iran become the " pillar" of the United States foreign policy for the Middle-East. Before the Iranian Revolution in the year 1979, several Iranian students used to reside in the U. S. The Iranian Revolution were events that involved overthrowing of the ruler, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, who had support from the United

States, and his eventual replacement Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini with the Islamic republic supported by several Islamic and leftist organizations.

The Iran-Iraq War, also called the First Persian Gulf War, was the armed conflict between the Republic of Iraq and Islamic Republic of Iran and lasted from 1980 to 1988, making this was as the longest war of the 20th century. The United States was backing Iraq with their military support had intentions to gain part of the Iran's resources, which included the Persian Gulf and get their hands on the Iranian oil reserve. Also, an United States District Court Judge declared the Islamic Republic of Iran responsible for 1983 attack in the 2003 case that brought the families of victims to justice.

In August 2005, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad rose to prominence and became the President of Iran. It was under him that Iran's nuclear program was launched and brought many economic problems to the Islamic country by embargos and sanctions that were led by the United States. In 2006, sanctions were started against the Iranian institutions because of their nuclear program. The position of United States in case of Iran developing nuclear power is their unacceptable and the officials of U. S. have denied that they are preparing for a looming strike.

Ahmadinejad's victory in the 2009 elections that has led to several widespread protests and fraud allegations, and has received limited attention from the United States. The U. S. government do not recognize the right of Iran to develop and hold nuclear power; ad they have been trying to block and stop advancement of their program using the sanctions to cut-off the Iranian economy and stopping the monetary flow.

Conclusion

Relations between the countries of Iran and the U. S have seen many ups and downs since Iranian Revolution of 1979. With change in the governmental system, the two nations have had many complications as the United States couldn't get cooperation from the new government in the case of the Shah. Additionally, the United States supported and allied Iraq military wise in their battle with Iran, since they wanted their name not involved in the act of war. The United States accused Iran of several anti-American terrorist attacks to ensure they can give reasons for several disagreements. The intense demand of Iran for nuclear power affects their citizens and it has caused several other problems with the United States like the war over the Gulf of Persia.

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