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## Islamic Revolution of 1979: The Downfall of American-Iranian Relations

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## **Krysta Wise**

### **Islamic Revolution of 1979: The Downfall of American-Iranian Relations**

In the broad scope of history, one year is merely a vapor. Many single years are filled with “insignificant” people and events that do not have great effects on global or domestic relations. However, in some instances one year can mark a phenomenal transformation from the past to the present. Such is the case with Iran’s Islamic Revolution of 1979. Prior to this event, the United States had excessive power over the Iranian government. This western influence led to anti-American sentiment in Iran.<sup>1</sup> Because of unwanted American influence during the 1950s through the 1970s, the Islamic revolutionaries of 1979 not only resented western customs, but also American foreign diplomacy. Thus, they halted Iran’s peaceable relations with the United States of America.

#### **US-Iran Relations, 1953-1979**

Before the Iranian Revolution, the U.S. had gained extensive control over Iran by propelling Mohammad Reza Shah to a hegemonic power over Mohammad Mossadegh, a charismatic Iranian Premier.<sup>2</sup> Mossadegh nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1951, a company that Britain received billions of dollars from per year.<sup>3</sup> Nationalization enraged Britain’s leaders who then placed an embargo on Iran, impairing its economy. The U.S. was afraid Iran would fall to communism, which was considered a threat because of the ongoing cold war between America and the Soviet Union. British pressure and the fear of a communist takeover resulted in U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower authorizing a coup to remove Mossadegh. In 1953, British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) staged a successful coup, known as Operation Ajax, removing Mossadegh from power. Once he was gone, they strengthened the power of the Shah and replaced Mossadegh with a U.S. supported Iranian general, Fazlollah Zahedi. Thus, Britain and America established an Iranian government that they could control.<sup>4</sup>

In the post-coup era, American-Iranian relations flourished. These good terms were not created by the Iranian masses' contentment with the U.S., but from the Shah's relationship with America. Once the Shah's power had been restored by Britain and the U.S., these countries felt they had the right to direct his actions, which in turn controlled Iran. The U.S. propelled the Shah, who was also known as the "American puppet," into a domineering leader over the Iranian government and masses.<sup>5</sup> As a result, Iranian government officials and the public grew weary and developed hatred toward not only the Shah, but also toward the U.S.<sup>6</sup>

Mohammad Reza Shah led an extremely repressive regime, which was maintained by the Iranian National Intelligence and Security Organization (SAVAK). This organization, which was created and endorsed by the U.S., and employed 30,000 Iranians, 5,000 of which tortured, arrested, and killed thousands of the Shah's opponents.<sup>7</sup> Because of the Shah's dictatorial status, the political policies and mass opinion were not aligned. For example, most Iranians held anti-Israeli sentiments, but Iran was an ally to Israel because the U.S. maintained peaceful ties with Israel.<sup>8</sup> In the 1960s, inflation paralyzed Iran's economy. The majority of wealth was held by families that were somehow linked to the oil industry or the Shah. These families were few in number, whereas the mass population was poor.<sup>9</sup> The Shah reaped the benefits of oil wealth because of his deals with Britain and America. Therefore, he did not sympathize with his hurting nation.

Another aspect of the Shah's political agenda that did not coincide with the will of the people was the modernization of Iran through secularization. This agenda was primarily carried out with the unsuccessful American-inspired "White Revolution," which consisted of six parts: land reform, sale of government-owned factories to finance land reform, a new election law including women's suffrage, the nationalization of forests, a national literacy campaign, and a plan to give workers a share of industrial profits. Because of America's "paranoia" toward Islam, U.S. leaders have often approved of secular reforms such as this one in countries like Iran. U.S. leaders wanted this plan to succeed because it would help the Shah present images of liberalism and progressivism, which would in turn possibly make him more popular.<sup>10</sup>

Not only did the U.S. empower the Shah to reform and maintain his country by force, but it also helped him build and sustain his army. A series of American presidents passed bills and endorsed diplomatic measures that ensured peaceful relations with the

Shah. In turn, Mohammad Reza complied with American wishes and forced legislation through parliament that would appease Washington. In 1964, the *Majles*, which contained the Shah's chosen parliament members, approved a plan for a \$200 million loan from the U.S. to purchase military supplies and equipment. Shah oppositionists across the globe saw this agreement as a symbol of bondage to the U.S.<sup>11</sup> The Shah, with U.S. aid, continued the advancement of his military. In 1971, American President Richard Nixon and his cabinet approved a plan for Mohammad Reza to purchase unlimited amounts of the best military equipment of the time with the exception of nuclear weapons. President Gerald Ford continued to shower Iran with military aid from 1974-1977. Consequently, by 1978, Iran had the most highly advanced, best-trained military in the Persian Gulf area. It had the fourth-largest air force and fifth-largest military on the globe. Iran's military spending went from \$293 million in 1963 to \$7.3 billion in 1977.<sup>12</sup> Their forces were a reflection of the American military. The Iranian Air Force spoke fluent English; military pay was often based on how well soldiers spoke English.<sup>13</sup>

During Jimmy Carter's first year as the American president, he hosted the Shah in the U.S. for the entire world to see his commitment to Mohammad Reza. According to the *New York Times*, Carter praised the Shah for upholding a "strong, stable, and progressive Iran."<sup>14</sup> However, during the Shah's reign, American foreign policy contradicted itself. U.S. leaders prided themselves on their abilities to intervene in global situations in the name of democracy and human rights. Yet at the same time, the U.S. endorsed, aided, and praised the Iranian government, which did not even remotely resemble democracy or a ground for human rights.<sup>15</sup>

### **Opposition to the Shah in the 1960s: Ayatollah Khomeini**

Because the United States aided, endorsed, and praised the Shah's repressive regime, he remained in control for thirty-eight year. During this time, government opposition groups developed frequently. Most of these movements were crushed by the Shah; however, one fierce revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Moosavi Khomeini, rose above the restraints placed by the American-approved Shah.<sup>16</sup>

Khomeini, an Islamic fundamentalist, was educated in Qom, which is the primary center for Shi'a scholarship in the world.<sup>17</sup> He opposed the Shah's regime for two major reasons: American influence and the secularization of Iranian society.<sup>18</sup> Khomeini

believed Israel was a center for western imperialism—primarily maintained by the U.S., and that Israel persecuted Muslims. Therefore, he believed that Israelis and Americans were in a war against Islam.<sup>19</sup> In 1962, under pressure from the Kennedy administration, the Shah issued a new election bill that allowed non-Muslims to be political candidates.<sup>20</sup> Khomeini capitalized on this legislation as his excuse to “save” Iran from the government threat to the Islamic world. Another 1962 action that enraged Khomeini was the fact that Shah had given Americans in Iran protection from prosecution in Iranian courts. According to Khomeini, this legislation was a prime example of American influence that was corrupting Iran<sup>21</sup>:

If any of them commits a crime in Iran, they are immune. If an American servant or cook terrorizes your source of religious authority in the middle of the bazaar, the Iranian police does not have the right to stop him. The Iranian courts cannot put him on trial or interrogate him. He should go to America where the masters would decide what to do. . . . We do not consider this government a government. These are traitors. They are traitors to the country.<sup>22</sup>

Because of his criticism of the Shah, Khomeini was jailed for two months in 1962. But Khomeini’s imprisonment did not stop him from attacking “America’s puppet.” Thus, in 1964, the Shah exiled Khomeini.<sup>23</sup> From Iraq, Khomeini eventually sparked an Islamic revolution in Iran that would alter this country forever.

### **Economic decline and revolutionary turmoil in the 1970s**

Even though the peak of the revolution was in 1979, key preliminary events occurred throughout the mid 1970s. During this era, Iran experienced a harsh economic downturn, urban overcrowding, monetary inflation, corrupt electoral processes and leaders, and a large gap in the distribution of wealth.<sup>24</sup> Because of the growing discontentment in Iran, three main revolutionary factions spoke out in opposition to the Shah: women, students, and religious reformers. The main goal of Iranian women was to overthrow the Shah’s repressive regime. Revolutionary women engaged in protests and guerrilla activities to undermine Mohammad Reza’s authority.<sup>25</sup>

Along with women’s groups, university students, domestic and abroad, participated in revolutionary activities as well. The largest student organization was the Confederation of Iranian Students.

These students held diverse political ideologies, but the majority of students belonged to two factions, the religious left or Marxism. They had many grievances against Mohammad Reza: low college acceptance rates, poor university education, insufficient housing and conditions, and political dissatisfaction. Consequently, there were many student-led protests and uprisings in university cities such as Tehran.<sup>26</sup> Many Iranians were killed while the Shah's military tried to suppress the crowds. Since Iranian cities were in such turmoil, the Shah banned public gatherings in a desperate attempt to stop the crisis. This act resulted in hundreds of thousands of rebels protesting in Tehran and surrounding cities because of the widespread disapproval of the ban.<sup>27</sup>

Revolutionaries from women and student organizations merged with the revolutionary religious opposition, which was led by Khomeini. Once this oppositional group became the leaders in the revolution, it housed many groups of Iranians: middle-class, former elderly of the National Front, workers, and guerillas. The revolutionaries wished to remove Mohammad Reza from power and establish a government that would benefit the Iranian public and Islam, not a shah.<sup>28</sup> Thus, Khomeini promised that he and the religious reformers would not rule Iran directly.<sup>29</sup> According to Khomeini, the government had four key jobs: enforce Muslim Law, destroy corruption and establish rights for the oppressed, eradicate laws that had been created by false governments, and prevent foreign nations from intervening in Islamic societies.<sup>30</sup>

The extensive pressure of Khomeini's movement placed Iran into a state of chaos. Since Iran was in extreme turmoil, the Shah declared martial law in Tehran and eleven other cities. During this period, the Shah's military continued to kill Iranians. On November 3, 1978, Khomeini stated, "The Shah must go."<sup>31</sup> Because of continual protests and strikes, Iran was paralyzed. Most businesses were closed: stores, media sources, banks, and many oil industries.<sup>32</sup> Iran's oil production decreased to the lowest rate seen in twenty-seven years. On December 29, 1978, Mohammad Reza consented to temporarily leave the country.<sup>33</sup>

### **The U.S. response: January 1979**

Throughout the 1978 commotion in Iran, America continued to support the Shah with military aid and equipment to keep him in power. The U.S. opposed Khomeini for many different reasons. First of all, if Khomeini came to power, he would limit or eradicate western influence in Iranian policies and relations because this

promise was one of his primary platforms.<sup>34</sup> This Iranian-U.S. relationship would be drastically different from the American relationship with the Shah. The U.S. was also concerned with a change in economic relations, mainly in regards to oil, if Iran fell to the revolutionaries. American leaders feared price increases and a lack of oil availability. Another reason the U.S. opposed a Khomeinian government was because the Communist party (Tudeh) in Iran supported the revolutionary movement. Tudeh had been banned by Mohammad Reza, but members were willing to work with Khomeini if he established a new Iranian government.<sup>35</sup> The U.S. saw this communist party as a potential threat that might spread the Soviet sphere of influence. Therefore, American leaders considered it their "duty" to contain Soviet influence and maintain control over Iran.<sup>36</sup>

During 1978 and early 1979, the U.S. State Department continually sent messages of support to Mohammad Reza. On January 4, 1979, the U.S. sent General Robert E. Huyser, Commander in Chief of the U.S.-European Command, to Iran. This joint military force was directed by the United States. The purpose of Huyser's four-week mission was to stabilize the Iranian military and encourage the Iranian military to support the Shah's government. The U.S. carefully chose Huyser for this mission because the Shah was in desperate need of reestablishing control over his country. Huyser was chosen for many reasons: he was a friend of the Shah, he had previously worked to strengthen the Iranian military, and he had been the overseer of the U.S. weaponry sales to Iran.<sup>37</sup>

After arriving in Iran, Huyser set up daily direct communication with the Secretary of State's office and occasionally the White House.<sup>38</sup> Huyser spent every day but one in meetings with the Shah, Iranian senior military advisors, and Ambassador Zahedi. Huyser declared American support for Iranian military action that would hopefully stabilize the government.<sup>39</sup> In the event the government crumbled and chaos ensued during his mission, he was required to aid the military in reinstating order. During his visit, the U.S. supplied the Iranian military with clothing and equipment. The revolutionaries continued to spread chaos among Iranian cities. Toward the end of Huyser's mission, he realized that Mohammad Reza Shah's government would fail and Khomeini's forces would take over Iran. As a result, Huyser, who feared for his safety, returned to Washington and advised U.S. leaders to positively communicate with Khomeini.<sup>40</sup> Along with Huyser, Henry Precht, Department of State desk officer in

Iran, urged Carter and his cabinet to establish peaceful relations with Khomeini's forces. Precht felt that eventually Khomeini's radicalism would subside and his forces would enact moderate institutions and policies. Ambassador William Sullivan also sided with Huysler and Precht; however, Carter and his advisers continued to oppose Khomeini.<sup>41</sup>

On January 16, 1979, the Shah and his family left Iran; 4.5 million Iranian citizens flooded the city streets in celebration. On January 27, several million anti-government demonstrators marched throughout Iran in support for Khomeini and denounced the Shah. When Khomeini announced his return to Iran, a senior diplomat from America was beaten by a mob of revolutionaries. As a result, U.S. leaders urged American citizens in Iran to leave the country or remain in safety zones. On January 31, Khomeini returned to Iran after almost fifteen years of exile; on February 12, he officially took power.<sup>42</sup>

### **Deterioration of US-Iran Relations**

The Islamic Revolution led to ideological changes in Iran. Not only did Khomeini remain in power, but he and his Shiite clerics also ruled directly, which was not his original promise. They based their rule on divine right and ran Iran by their interpretation of Muslim law. The main principles of the clerical rule were military intervention for political problems, Iranian unity, the acknowledgment of selfish motives of foreign nations, and a goal of Iranian progress.<sup>43</sup> Khomeini and Iranian leaders identified the U.S. as a nation with selfish motives. Thus, after the conclusion of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, American-Iranian relations went downhill. Khomeini knew that the U.S. had opposed his revolution. Therefore, he ardently opposed most positive relations with America. Khomeini accused the U.S. of exploiting Iran's resources and money. He claimed that because of U.S. exploitation, Iranians were forced to engage in a revolution where Iranian blood was shed. He was willing to take economic risks in order to destroy western influence in Iran. Because of Khomeini's radical views, many U.S. leaders assumed that the passion of revolution would decrease and moderate reformers would rise to power. However, this scenario never occurred.<sup>44</sup>

When Khomeini was first establishing his government, U.S. officials concluded that they should attempt positive diplomatic measures toward him in order to prevent the Soviet Union from influencing or taking over Iran. Khomeini, however, wanted Iran

to engage in isolationism and did not wish to strengthen ties with America. In fact, he gave fiery anti-American speeches to allies and the Iranian media. In May of 1979, the U.S. Congress passed decrees that criticized the Iranian government for its current actions. As a result, masses of Anti-American protesters and media showed their discontent with the United States. The U.S. proposed a nominee for an ambassador to be sent to Iran, but Iran declined the nominee.<sup>45</sup>

According to Khomeini, "All the problems of the East stem from those foreigners from the west, and from America at the moment. All our problems come from America."<sup>46</sup> Since Khomeini believed that the U.S. was to blame for the Iranian problems and revolution, the remaining part of 1979 was a pivotal shift in American-Iranian relations. Attitudes and actions between these two nations continually got worse.<sup>47</sup> This declining relationship was best proven through six major events in 1979: the removal of U.S. "containment," the alteration of oil policies, a change in U.S.-Iranian arms sale agreement, U.S. disapproval for Iran's "lack" of human rights, the Iranian hostage crisis, and the U.S. embargo on Iran.<sup>48</sup>

### **"Containment"**

Prior to the Islamic revolution, Iran was an ally against communism, which was the key "evil" of America's cold war enemy, the Soviet Union. After the Islamic revolution, Khomeini removed Iran from the American sphere of influence. Unlike Mohammad Reza, Khomeini initially allowed the Tudeh party to exist. Not only did he allow this pro-Moscow party to re-emerge in Iran, but he also took measures that benefitted the Soviet Union. Iran was a strategic place for the U.S. to gather intelligence on the Soviets. A result of the Islamic revolution was the decline of American intelligence seeking in Iran. After Khomeini took over the government, he closed two American operated intelligence collection centers. One adjoined the border of the Soviet Union near Bandar Shah. The other was in an isolated location in Kabkam. Because Khomeini shut down these facilities, U.S. leaders were not able to spy on the Soviet nuclear and missile testing site in Soviet Central Asia. During this shift in Iran's foreign political policies, Soviet leaders gained important information on U.S. military advancements that they might not have otherwise learned about. For example, Soviet leaders obtained booklets and visuals of the F-14 Tomcat fighter aircraft, and samples of the AIM-54A Phoenix air-to-air missile and the Hawk anti-aircraft missile. At this point in history, America's primary concern was with the Soviet Union. Thus, Khomeini's actions to prohibit the

U.S. from gathering information on the Soviets and allowing key information to get into Soviet hands were huge blows to American officials and intelligence officers. These moves caused anxiety and anger among U.S. leaders.<sup>49</sup>

## **Oil policy**

In the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution, America not only feared the spread of communist sympathizers, but also what would come of the oil industry in Iran. Khomeini declined any western influence. Thus, no western countries would be able to control or even manipulate the running of this industry. These concerns proved to be correct because the Iranian revolution resulted in the curbing of one-fifth of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) production capability. This Iranian oil cutoff strained the oil market immediately.<sup>50</sup> American media automatically began speculating on how high oil prices would rise because of Iran's policies.<sup>51</sup> The U.S. bought approximately 200 million fewer barrels of oil during 1979.<sup>52</sup> By December, world oil prices were approximately fifty percent higher than when Iran first cut back the oil supply. U.S. oil refining companies paid nearly thirty dollars per barrel for OPEC's crude oil. This price was double what it had been one year prior and approximately ten times the price that was paid in 1970. These new oil policies marked an economic shift for both Iran and the U.S. Iran began reaping more profits from its oil industry; America was required to pay more for foreign oil. As a result, American leaders attempted to decrease reliance on foreign oil and conserve energy more efficiently.<sup>53</sup>

## **Arms sales**

Along with curtailing the oil capacity, Khomeini also tried to hurt the U.S. economy by cancelling the U.S. sale of arms to Iran. This transfer of arms from the U.S. to Iran had taken place for many decades while the Shah was in power. It resulted in billions of dollars that boosted the U.S. economy. However, Khomeini wanted to sever Iranian reliance on America. In 1979, he officially cancelled seven billion dollars worth of U.S. arms purchases. Khomeini's actions mark an extreme change in economic policies between the two countries.<sup>54</sup> U.S. arms sales to Iran peaked in 1978 during Mohammad Reza's reign at \$4,500,000,000. The following year, it dropped to zero and the exchange remained very low throughout the 1980s.<sup>55</sup> The U.S. had to find new buyers for the arms to prevent the U.S. economy from weakening.<sup>56</sup>

## Human Rights

Throughout 1979, U.S.-Iranian relations continued to spiral downward. Previously, U.S. leaders had supported the Shah's repressive actions because they kept him in power. However, after the Islamic revolution, the U.S. repealed its support for such activities. Not only did American leaders remove their support, but they actually criticized Khomeini and his government officials for acts that Americans deemed inhumane. For example, when Khomeini's men started executions for oppositionists, the U.S. Senate unanimously supported a resolution of condemnation for these actions. American leaders also expressed discontent toward Khomeini and the Islamic clerical rulers for sentencing Mohammad Reza to death. These U.S. reactions further prove that America had endorsed the Shah far more than it would ever support the new Islamic government.<sup>57</sup>

## The Hostage Crisis

These souring relations between Iran and the U.S. culminated at the end of 1979. On November 4, Iranians seized the American embassy in Tehran and took nearly seventy U.S. citizens captive.<sup>58</sup> This act was a response to American President Jimmy Carter admitting Reza Shah into the U.S. for cancer treatment. This hostage crisis lasted 444 days and tainted Carter's presidency. Khomeini's support was the main reason this crisis lasted so long. He endorsed the act against the U.S. for four reasons. First of all, he and his clerics believed that America was trying to bring down his regime through the U.S. embassy in Tehran. Khomeini backed the hostage situation because he felt it would hinder amends being made between the United States and Iran.<sup>59</sup> According to one contemporary observer, "since American opposition to the Islamic revolution was deemed to be an immutable fact, any easing of relations by Iranian leaders would show them to be traitors to the cause."<sup>60</sup> Khomeini and his men also believed the moderate reformers were attempting to liberalize the government. By storming the embassy, the clerics could eliminate the moderate political forces and create an impasse between the U.S. and Iran. Although Jimmy Carter made efforts to make peace with Iran in 1979, Khomeini continued to allow the militants to hold the Americans because it showed Iran's "independence and opposition to American power."<sup>61</sup> Khomeini's first proposal of peace required the U.S. to apologize for past exploitation, hand over the Shah, and return his money. However, American leaders declined this offer.<sup>62</sup>

In 1980, Carter made two attempts at reconciliation and a rescue mission, but all failed. As the crisis continued, Khomeini made a second offer for reconciliation: the U.S. had to give back Iran's frozen assets and the royal family's wealth, declare that America would not intervene in Iranian affairs, and drop law suits filed against Iran. The U.S. declined this offer. In September of 1980, Iraq invaded Iran. Khomeini blamed the United States for this invasion even though the U.S. claimed to be neutral in the conflict.<sup>63</sup> On a radio broadcast, Mohammad Musavi Kho'ini, a member of the *Majles* hostage committee said, "How can one meet a criminal who for long years exploited our Muslim nation and imposed the Pahlavi dictatorship on it? As for now, the United States is actually in a state of war with us."<sup>64</sup>

Khomeini continued his hardnosed policies toward the U.S. In December of 1980, he made a third proposal to end the crisis. Its conditions were steep: America would have to give Iran \$24 billion dollars in place of its frozen assets and royal family's money. The U.S. refused and this crisis hurt Carter's campaign for reelection. On January 20, 1981, Carter left office and an agreement was reached; the hostages were freed. The terms of this agreement were that the U.S. returned \$11 billion of Iran's frozen assets, American leaders declared they would not intervene in Iran's affairs, the royal family's money would be frozen, and Iran would be permitted to attempt to regain this wealth through the U.S. court system. Most of the money Iran received from this crisis was used to pay off debt owed to the U.S. This crisis deepened the rift between the two countries. Americans were upset at how the hostages were mistreated and Khomeini's followers reinforced their anti-American sentiment.<sup>65</sup>

### **U.S. Embargo**

During the hostage crisis in 1980, the United States severed political relations with Iran. Carter passed Executive Order No. 12170, which stated

I hereby order blocked all property and interests in property of the Government of Iran, its instrumentalities and controlled entities and the Central Bank of Iran which are or become subject to the jurisdiction of the United States or which are in or come within the possession of control of persons subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.<sup>66</sup>

The Islamic revolution's immediate effects on U.S.-Iranian relations foreshadowed diplomacy between the two nations for the next few decades. Every American president since Carter has continued this trade embargo on Iran.<sup>67</sup>

### Conclusion

Along with the trade embargo, bad American-Iranian relations have continued since the revolution and its aftermath. Many instances illustrate this downturn. In 1983, Khomeini supported Shi'a Muslims who bombed western embassies in Kuwait. Throughout the late 1980s, Iranians expressed their anti-American sentiment through rioting and propaganda. In 1996, Iranian leaders helped train supply men for the bombardment of the U.S. military housing facility in Saudi Arabia. This attack resulted in nineteen dead and over 500 wounded, 240 of whom were American military staff. In the new millennium, the U.S. and other leading United Nations (U.N.) actors have been trying to explore Iran's nuclear program because Iran will not provide the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) a statement or design on their program.<sup>68</sup>

Today, the U.S. and Iran exchange ambassadors, but diplomacy between the two is not as smooth as it was during Mohammad Reza's era. American presidents and legislation still forbid almost all trade with Iran. President Barack Obama not only continued the embargo against Iran, but also enacted individual sanctions on certain Iranians.<sup>69</sup> According to U.S. officials, these trade restrictions are meant to harm not the Iranian public, but the Iranian leaders because of their failure to comply with certain standards: Iran will not withdraw its sponsorship of terrorism, recognize Israel's independence, raise human rights standards, or reveal substantial information on its nuclear program.<sup>70</sup>

In the historical realm of U.S.-Iranian relations, many years are important. However, 1979 marks the greatest change in diplomatic and economic exchanges between these two nations. Khomeini's rise to power halted good relations. Not only did he remove American influence from Iran, but he also supported, endorsed, and praised any anti-American sentiment, protests, or terrorist acts. This standpoint is very contrary to Iran's previous leader, Mohammad Reza. Khomeini's anti-Americanism was proven many times throughout his term; he removed Iran from the American sphere of "containment," he reduced the amount of oil sold to the U.S., cancelled the U.S. arms purchase agreement, and approved the Iranian hostage crisis. His legacy has remained evident in

the leaders that followed him. In response to Iran's policies and actions, the U.S. has participated in a continuing embargo against Iran. These sanctions have affected Iranian politics and economic system.<sup>71</sup> Only time will tell just how long the 1979 Islamic revolution's impact will be seen in U.S.-Iranian relations.

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