

Continuity and Change in the Construction of Enemy Image in Pre- Revolutionary Iran

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Abstract

What paved the way for the establishment of the foreign policy of the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran? This paper seeks to analyze the phenomenon of the construction of the enemy image in the diplomatic history of Iran from 1798 to 1921 and assess its historical roots as it can be useful for the understanding of the attitudes of Iranian policy makers towards the West. The authors' proposal is to explain the construction of enemy image in a historical context in the cognitive structure of Iranian political leaders towards the great powers in the 20th century until the advent of the Islamic Revolution in February 1979. In doing so, the authors have proposed the following hypothesis: With the continuation of Iran's diplomatic relations with Western powers (Great Britain and Russia) under the Qajar dynasty in 1798, a process took shape which gradually led to the construction of an enemy image in the cognitive structure of future Iranian statesmen in the Pahlavi era, underpinning their political relationships with contemporary powers. The authors' findings include the notion that the historical process in question under the Qajar Dynasty involved a combination of military domination, political influence and economic exploitation by the aforementioned powers.

Keywords: Iran, Diplomatic Relations, Qajars, Great Britain, Russia, Enemy Image

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Introduction

Today, Iranians have maintained their perception of great powers despite more than a decade having elapsed in the 21st century. This image, which is based on a cognitive structure, is represented throughout the 20th century in the ideas and actions of Iranian political leaders; this trend is traceable to the period following the February 1921 coup d'état which led to the rise of the Pahlavi dynasty in Iranian political history. Any discussion of image and cognitive structure leads students of Iranian diplomatic relations to focus on the category of cognition. There seems to be a significant deficiency in the research in this field, as most of it has been conducted from a structural and historical perspective. Although they have paid attention to the category of agency, they have failed to address cognitive and psychological aspects. It is noteworthy that the adoption of such an approach to the study of Iranian diplomatic relations is founded upon the basic assumption that in case studies such as Iran, as Tariq Esmael has suggested regarding Middle Eastern nations, the analysis of leadership is of tremendous importance (Esmael, 1985: 35-37).

This research seeks to explain how the Iranian leaders' image of the great powers took shape within the framework of diplomatic relations in the 20th century. It is worth noting that not only the Iranian leaders, but also all Iranian people have always been ambivalent about the West: On the one hand, they viewed it as an enemy and on the other; they were enchanted by Western civilization (Naghizadeh, 2002: 117). Indeed, as Fuller argues, the Iranian



perception of foreigners is based on a culture of passiveness towards them (Fuller, 1998: 22-25). Naturally, such a perception would lead to the creation of the enemy image towards the great foreign powers.

This paper begins with the reign of Fath-Ali Shah (1798-1834), because the first diplomatic contacts between Iran and the West under the Qajars took place at about the time when Fath-Ali Shah had overcome other domestic power aspirants and consolidated his rule (Amanat, 2001: 29). The use of such terms as ambassador and embassy, starting at this time, further demonstrates the beginning of regular diplomatic relations between Iran and European powers (Shiekhhol-eslami, 1990: 3). At the same time, colonial policies pursued by France under Napoleon and Russia under Alexander I, as well as decline of the Ottoman Empire paved the way for the entry of Imperialist powers into Iran in the early 19th century (Nasr, 1984: 277-8). Ehsan Yarshater considers the confrontation between Iran as a nation with ancient culture and the West as inevitably due to Western technology and expansionism at that time (Yarshater, 1993: 142).

Considering the above, an essential question is raised concerning how the construction of enemy image in Iranian political leaders' cognitive structure towards the great powers of the 20th century, till the advent of the Islamic Revolution in February 1979, can be explained in a historical framework. Undoubtedly answering this question from a pathological perspective can help rectify improper attitudes, which have been historically engrained, improving Iran's conduct in the international community at present and in the future. This article includes four sections. After an introduction, the second section deals briefly with the category of cognition in the analysis of foreign policy and Iranian leaders' perceptions including Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah from the February 1921 coup to the February 1979 Revolution. The third section analyzes Iranian diplomatic relations with great powers between March 1789 and February 1921. Finally, the fourth section is a conclusion.



I- The Pahlavi Era

From the perspective of cognitive and psychological approaches to the analysis of foreign policy, cognition is a concept that defines the construction of a reality according to which foreign policy decisions are made (Herrmann, 1986: 843). On these grounds, understanding of the situation is the cognitive representation of conditions and grounds in which foreign policy decisions take shape (Herrmann and Shannon, 2001: 625). Thus, the element of cognition enjoys a pivotal place in the process of decision-making, because the majority of theorists, when discussing the nature of a situation, attach more importance to the perceptions of those making decisions than the objective realities (Pfaltzgraff and Dougherty, 1997: 721).

Given the aforementioned, leaders' perceptions can be analyzed in accordance with Image Theory. Michael D. Young and Mark Schaffer (1998) adequately enumerate four sets of theories concerning perceptions: Analysis of Operational Code, Cognitive Mapping, Image Theory, and Conceptual Complexity. According to the Image Theory, the understanding of reality becomes the reality itself in the decision-maker's mindset (Herrmann, 1986 and 1988). Here the article seeks to review works on Iranian diplomatic relations and foreign policy conduct in a historical context in order to explain why Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah's cognitive structure was based upon an enemy image of world powers.

The February 1921 coup, which gave way to the rise to power of the Pahlavi dynasty, opened a new chapter in Iran's development in the 20th century⁹. Reza Shah (1925-1941) always sought to relieve Iran of foreign encroachments of two greater powers, i.e. Great Britain and the Soviet Union – in other words, the new imperialist face of Russia. These encroachments were indeed a result of the great game played between the two powers in the Asian Continent in the 19th century (Yarshater, 2001: 187-8).

Reza Shah's xenophobia was largely focused on Great Britain;



thus, he terminated the 1919 agreement that had faced popular opposition; an agreement which would establish British colonialism over Iran and instead signed the February 1921 Friendship and Amity Pact with the Soviet Union in order to counter possible British intervention. Certainly, the Soviet presence in Iran's northern regions and the establishment of the Gilan Socialist Republic in June 1920 also played a role in the conclusion of the Pact (Abrahamian, 2010: 125 and Taher Ahmadi, 2005: 15-19).

On the other hand, since extensive British and Russian influence in Iran was derived from a delay in pursuing the process of reform and modernization in the country (Keddie, 2002: 157), Reza Shah made efforts to improve Iran's catastrophic situation, which had made British and Russian intervention possible, by adopting nationalist policies. By adopting such policies, he sought to counter imperialism and colonialism (Digard, Hourcade and Richard, 1999: 88, 460-3). In other words, intellectual and practical aspects of Reza Shah's nationalism should be considered in the context of understanding his xenophobic perceptions (Katouzian, 2000: 431-447).

Among the most salient acts undertaken by Reza Shah that depicts his perception of Britain is the unilateral termination of D'Arcy oil concession agreement in 1932 (Zargar, 1993: 279-326 and Sheikholeslami, 1990: 197-244) and the policy of friendship with Germany as a third power from the mid-1930s onward; a policy that finally brought about his removal from power with the assistance of Great Britain (Zargar, 1993: 351-460).

All of these cases indicate that Reza Shah's perception of Britain was founded upon suspicion and enemy image. It is also important to note, that Reza Shah's suspicions also affected his opinions of his confidantes. To the extent that, the architect of Iran's judiciary and then Minister of Finance Ali Akbar Davar committed suicide due to Reza Shah's pressure; Finance Minister Firouz Mirza was executed, and Minister of the Court Abdolhossein Teymourtash and Minister of



War Sardar Asad Bakhtiari died under suspicious conditions in prison (Foran, 2001: 333).

If Reza Shah's perceptions of Britain were founded upon the enemy image, the Soviet Union would have the same status for Mohammad Reza Shah (1941-1979). Given political-ideological equations of the Cold War era and Iran's proximity to the Soviet Union, one of the two world superpowers during the Cold War, the Shah was always concerned about the movements of leftist forces dependent on the Soviet Union against his own government; largely due to the fact that the young king had experienced the Azerbaijan crisis in 1946, which was encouraged if not caused by the Soviet Union⁶.

What at last facilitated Iran's joining the Western bloc was the oil nationalization movement between March 1951 and August 1953⁶. After the American-British coup of August 1953 took place to oust Mosaddegh's government, the Shah replaced Mosaddegh's negative balance policy, which barred granting any concession to foreign entities, with a positive nationalism policy. This new policy was based on Iran's closeness to the West and integration into its defense and security policies. The nationalist policy advocated by the Shah in the 1970s was renamed the independent national policy, which increasingly relied upon the Shah's military and arms capabilities⁶.

Thus the process of Iran's dependence on the United States started in 1953, which led to the 1959 Defense and Security Pact with the United States, representing a turning point in Iranian foreign policy⁶. In fact, with the U.S.-UK collaboration in the 1953 coup that overthrew a nationalist government, a pattern took shape in Iran-U.S. diplomatic relations, in accordance with which American statesmen continued to support the Shah until 1979; a fact described by Goud (2003) as Mosaddegh's shadow over Iran-US relations⁶.

Therefore, considering the role played by the Shah's regime and considering he himself as U.S. agent in Iran, which was seen by critics



as a clear sign of the loss of the country's independence (Ramazani, 2001: 58), an enemy image towards the United States took shape in the post-revolutionary era in Iran, because in the Cold War atmosphere, Iran was understood by others as a U.S. ally; an image which contradicted the Soviet image.

II- Qajar Dynasty

The period between 1798 and 1921 has been undoubtedly one of the most important eras in Iran's modern history, as it was in this period that Iran encountered Western civilization extensively. Unfortunately for Iranians, this encounter occurred at a time when Western civilization was at a superior political, military and cultural position. From this point of view, Iranian diplomatic relations with the great powers played a major role in the establishment of Iranian cognitive structure towards the West. Ironically enough, in this period Fath-Ali Shah, as the highest political authority in the country, did not have a proper understanding and mentality towards world powers. His image of Tsarist Russia could be best exemplified by the following:

At the end of the Iran-Russia wars before the Turkmenchay peace treaty was signed and compensations were paid to the Russians, Fath-Ali Shah expressed his willingness to an armistice as follows: "He sat at the throne as the statesmen bowed to him in respect. The Shah addressed one of them and said if we ordered all the tribes in the south and north of Iran mobilize and attack the damned Russia, what would happen? They replied: Alas on Russia, Alas on Russia!

He continued to ask, what would happen if he ordered all the legions of Azerbaijan and the artillery of Zanjan to become united and attack the pagan territory of Russia? They all answered: Alas on Russia, Alas on Russia! FathAli Shah stood up angrily, pulled his sword slightly out of its scabbard and cited a poem which he himself had written: "If I take out my silver sword, Lion will escape from the bushes, I hit it at Paskevich's head, in a way that Peter will be offended."



A few statesmen kneeled at his feet, asking him to please not take out his sword, for it would disrupt the atmosphere (Complete Book of Fath-Ali Shah's Poems: 1991: 449-450).

The establishment of Qajar rule in Iran coincided with the increasing attention of great powers to the country at about the early 19th century. Indeed, Iran was entangled in imperialist and colonialist relationships in which Tsarist Russia, Great Britain and France under Napoleon played crucial roles. Each of these powers had certain considerations in their diplomatic relations with Iran, though with the end of the Napoleonic era, France withdrew from the competition for Iran, making Iran an arena for British and Russian colonialist rivalries.

French attention to Iran was a function of its competition with Great Britain as France was interested in gaining access to the British colony of India via Iran. In the meantime, Iran wished for alliance with one of these two powers against Russia which had threatened Iran's northern areas (Shamim, 1996: 54 & 60). To this purpose, and considering Britain failed to meet Fath-Ali Shah's demands for help, the Treaty of Finkenstein was signed between Iran and France in May 1807. It was intended to provide Iran with French security against Russia and oblige Iran to assist France vis-à-vis Great Britain (Mahdavi, 2009: 212 and Shamim, 1996: 61-69). With the conclusion of the Treaty of Tilsit between France and Russia in 1807, the Treaty of Finkenstein became null, forcing Iran to appease the British (Mahdavi, 2009: 214).

Concerned about Napoleon's expansionism since the start of the 19th century, Britain stepped up its diplomacy with Iran. Hence, figures including Sir John Malcolm in 1800 and 1819, Sir Harford Jones Brydges in 1809 and Sir Gore Ouseley in 1811 engaged Iran as agents of the British government in promoting preventive diplomacy vis-à-vis France. The most important treaties negotiated between Iran and Great Britain against other states –which apart from France included Russia as well- included the 1801, 1809, 1812 and 1814 treaties. The provisions of these treaties involved British military,



arms, and financial aid to Iran, in exchange for Iran agreeing to avoid forging alliance with any other state (Mahdavi, 2009: 204-206, 218, 224-225; Shamim, 1996: 70-82; and Ahmadi 2000: 52-58).

Russian engagement with Iran is also of significance as this power sought territorial expansionism into Iran. The initial confrontation between Iran and Russia had taken place under Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar (1779-1797) (see: Mahdavi, 2009: 198-201 and Ghaziha, 2010: XI). The Russian idea of territorial expansion in Iran was originally developed by Peter the Great (1682-1725) based upon removing or diminishing British influence in Asia and using Iran as a corridor to access India and the Indian Ocean (Ekhtiar, 1996: 58).

Iran-Russia military hostilities in the Caucasus occurred in two rounds, in 1804-1813 and 1826-1828. At the end of the first round, the Golestan Treaty (1813) was imposed on Iran and at the end of the second round; Iran was forced to accept the Turkmenchay Treaty (1828). In accordance with these treaties, Iran lost sizeable parts of its northwestern territory. In addition, according to the Turkmenchay Treaty, Iran was required to pay compensations to Russia and the right to navigation in the Caspian Sea was exclusively granted to the Russians; the Aras River was also determined to be the common border between the two states (Mahdavi, 2009: 222-223 and Shamim, 1996: 83-109). Kelly argues that the Turkmenchay Treaty is of such importance to the history of Iran's diplomatic relations that it could be compared to the significance of the Vienna Congress in the relations between the European powers (Kelly, 2006: 3).

An important point regarding the aforementioned treaties is the mediatory role played by Great Britain as it had reached a secret understanding with Russia on its sphere of influence and concluded an alliance pact with Russia against France in 1812 (Shamim, 1996: 79 and Mahdavi, 2009: 222). For this reason, Britain had sought to play a mediatory role in the aforementioned treaties in order to halt the trend of Russian expansionist into Iran.



With the start of Nasser al-Din Shah's reign (1848-1896), a new chapter opened in Iranian history, mainly characterized by the formation of a kind of political culture in which Iranian statesmen took refuge in the Russian and British embassies to escape domestic persecution and formally accepted the protection of those states (Bagheri, 1992: 237-281). With the Russian victories in the Turkmenchay Treaty, Britain gradually came to the conclusion that it would not be able to use Iran as a buffer state for the protection of India's security and stability (Kelly, 2006: 224). When the first dispute over Herat broke out in 1837-8 under Mohammad Shah, Britain deployed its forces in Khark, occupying the island, threatening that it would occupy Iran's southern ports if the Herat dispute would continue, in spite of the provisions of its 1814 treaty with Iran, which barred Britain from interfering in the conflict between Iran and the Afghans (Nasr, 1985: 225-230).

Britain followed the same policy towards the second Herat dispute in 1856-7, though this time it officially removed Herat from Iran. According to the Paris Treaty signed between Iran and Britain in 1857, Britain pledged to withdraw its forces from southern Iran, and in return, Iran became obliged to withdraw its forces from Herat. Iran was also not to have any claim Afghanistan and refrain from intervening in its internal affairs. Thus, after the signing of the Paris Treaty, British political and economic influence expanded in Iran (Mahdavi, 2009: 272-7 and Shamim, 1996: 234-6).

With Afghanistan gaining independence, Russia also continued its expansionist policy between 1861 and 1881, capturing Turkistan region (Central Asia). Since Britain did not want any direct military engagement with Russia in the region, it reached an agreement with the Russians in 1873, according to which, Russia agreed not to interfere in Afghanistan. At last, with the signing of the Akhal Treaty between Iran and Russia in 1881, Iran recognized Russian dominance over Khorasan's northeastern borders, waiving all claims to Turkistan and Transoxiana; the Atrak River was also designated as the boundary



between Iran and Russia. Then, with British and Russian agreement, the border between Russia and Afghanistan was demarcated in 1885 (Mahdavi, 2009: 283-7; Shamim, 1996: 257-289; and Kazemzadeh, 1992: Ch. 1).

Mozaffar al-Din Shah's (1896-1907) signing the Constitution in August 1906, opened a new chapter in Britain-Russia relations with respect to Iran. Britain appeared to be supporting the Constitutionalists and Russia supported despotism as a result of its opposition to the spirit of democracy. British support for the Constitutional movement was motivated by efforts at reducing Russian influence for its own benefits, but the triumph of Constitutionalists made Britain concerned about the possible advent of a similar movement in its colonies including India which brought the two colonialist powers closer together again (Haeri, 2008: 55 and Shamim, 1996: 483).

Concerns about the rising German expansionism made Britain and Russia reach an agreement in August 1907 in Saint Petersburg, according to which their spheres of influence in Iran, Afghanistan and Tibet were determined (Zoghi, 1989: 37-67). Consequently, Iran was divided into three spheres of the north under Russian control, the neutral center and the south under British control (On the provisions of the Agreement, see: Velayati, 1995: 14-16).

According to the British Ambassador to Tehran at the time, with this Agreement, "Iranians are more skeptical about us than about the Russians, considering us as implicated in all Russian crimes ..." (Zoghi, 1989: 58). After Mohammad Ali Shah's coup (1907-1909) against the Constitutionalists in June 1908, and the suppression of freedom-fighters by the Cossack Brigade, Britain declined to react to these events as a result of its obligations according to the 1907 Agreement (Zoghi, 1989: 67-72). Kamyar Abdi views the reaching of this Agreement as planting the seeds of xenophobia in Iranian nationalism (Abdi, 2001: 55-56).

The 1907 Agreement was completed by the 1915 Anglo-Persian



Agreement signed a year after the start of the First World War in light of Iran's strategic significance for Britain and Russia, and the Iranian government's failure under Ahmad Shah (1909-1925). Britain and Russia decided to resolve their difference in West Asia; thus, they agreed, within the framework of the Constantinople Agreement in 1915, that the Black Sea straits would be under Russian control and Iran's neutral area be added to the British sphere of influence. This Agreement gave a free hand to the two powers in their respective spheres of influence (Cronin, 2008: 72).

Although Iran declared neutrality during the First World War⁷⁾, this neutrality was violated by the entry of Ottoman forces to the Iranian territory under the pretext of challenging Russian military presence in Azerbaijan. Also, British forces entered Iranian soil from south. It should be added that German agents were active in Iran during the war and were extremely popular among the merchants, democrats, nationalists, and the nomads (Rahmani, 2001: 128-142). This led Germany to become closer to Iran which led to the secret agreement of November 1915, in which Germany took on the military obligation to stand against Britain and Russia in Iranian territory (Velayati, 1995: 31-37). As a result, Britain and Russia threatened Iran's territorial integrity and independence by the establishing of the North Police by Russia and the South Police by Britain to control northern and southern Iran (Kavoosi Araghi, 2001: 34-41).

With the October 1917 revolution and the ensuing Russian decision to withdraw from the First World War in accordance with the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with Germany, Britain became the only remaining power in Iran. As such, Britain went on to bar the Iranian delegation, which was already in Paris, from participating in the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919, behaving as a colonialist power (Ettihadieh-Nezam Mafi, 2001: 462). This pattern by Britain continued with the August 1919 Agreement with Iran, as they exploited the Russian power vacuum. The Agreement, which indeed



would have represented an act of colonialism and brought Iranian financial and military affairs fully under the British control, was faced with significant domestic opposition⁸⁾. Then American ambassador to Tehran commented on the Agreement by stating that "... Many Iranians believe that the acceptance of the Agreement would mean an end to Iran's independence" (Zoghi, 1989: 307).

Based on what was mentioned in this section, we can conclude that after the Golestan, Turkmenchay and Paris treaties, Iran contended with two large imperialist and colonialist powers; Russia and Britain as 'northern' and 'southern' neighbors (Abrahimian, 2010: 76). The result of this sinister geostrategic situation was the loss of significant portions of Iranian territory, due to war, treaties, or actions undertaken in order to demarcate the boundaries in the Caucasus and the eastern regions (Kashani Sabet, 2000: 1189).

Although Iran's military defeats in the aforementioned cases had to accelerate the process of reform and modernization in the army and increasing military capacity (Bakhash, 1971: 148), the process was disrupted by the dependence of Qajar statesmen. The problem might be traced back to the Turkmenchay Treaty in which Russia promised to support Abbas Mirza and his descendents as heirs to the Persian throne after the death of Fath Ali Shah and continued reign of the Qajar dynasty was certified and supported by a foreign power (Amanat, 1993: 36). As such, Qajar statesmen and premiers were either dependent on Russia or Britain⁹⁾. Certainly, the despotic nature of the Qajar dynasty contributed to this situation as well (Sheikholeslami, 1990: 3-24).

Another important issue with regards to the Qajar court was the granting of a series of concessions on exploitation of or monopoly over raw materials and development of infrastructure from the Iranian government to British and Russian nationals since Nasser al-Din Shah's reign (Foran, 2001: 172). Some of the important concessions granted to foreigners include: establishment of a loan bank in 1870, extraction of all metal mines and oil, creation of



railroads from Tehran to Rasht and from Tehran to the Persian Gulf (Reuters) in 1872, establishment of the Cossack Brigade in 1879, granting the right to navigation in Karun in 1888, creation of the Royal Bank in 1889, monopoly in sales of tobacco in 1890 (Regie), extraction of oil in 1901 (D'Arcy), exploitation of fisheries in 1906⁽⁹⁾.

In spite of all of the aforementioned problems, it should be noted that given the network of conspiracies and interventions by Russia and Britain in Iranian internal affairs, the Qajar kings and premiers consistently acted to create a balance between those powers, seeking to protect Iranian territorial integrity and independence by trying to make those powers counterbalance one another (Yarshater, 2001: 192). As Abrahamian (1995) has noted, this policy might be considered executing a 'politics of equilibrium' inside Iran. According to this policy, by implementing the behavioral pattern of 'divide and rule' among the various strata and social groups, the Qajar king continued to rule Iran⁽¹⁰⁾.

Protection of Iran's territorial integrity and independence was largely the result of external factors rather than internal factors like the aforementioned politics of equilibrium, Britain and Russia did not want to colonize Iran in the context of 19th century imperialism, because this would lead to a military confrontation between these two powers. For this reason, they were willing to recognize and ensure Iran's territorial integrity and independence. In fact, Iran's diplomatic relations with Britain and Russia between 1798 and 1921, with all the factors discussed in this section, shaped a cognitive structure for the next periods, reflecting the enemy image towards the great powers.

Conclusion

Iran experienced the reign of Pahlavi between February 1921 and February 1979. The foreign policy dynamics under Pahlavi rule were affected by Iran's diplomatic relations under the Qajar reign. From the beginning, Reza Shah, who always harbored suspicion toward Britain, sought to protect Iran against British intervention and the



disadvantages of dependence by pursuing reforms and modernization. Reza Shah, indeed, viewed British interference in Iran's affairs as one of the obstacles to Iran's progress under the Qajar rule. This policy was clearly manifested in Iran's establishing closer ties with Germany as a third power in the region starting in the mid-1930s. Hence, Reza Shah's blueprint was a xenophobic nationalism. Significant in understanding the foreign policy of Reza Shah is that despite the fact that he did not establish strong ties with the nascent Soviet regime; he mainly targeted Britain as his archenemy, and distanced himself from Britain as he continued to consolidate his rule. In fact, the British encouraged the Allied Forces to occupy Iran during the Second World War in 1941 and to depose him from power.

After Reza Shah, his son, Mohammad Reza Shah who consolidated his power after the British-American orchestrated coup of August 1953 against Mosaddegh's nationalist government, replaced Mosaddegh's negative balance policy with his own positive nationalism policy. The positive nationalism policy involved partnership with the United States and forging alliance with the Western bloc in the Cold War era. Therefore, the Shah's approach was based upon an ally image towards the United States in response to a counter-image towards the Soviet Union. The Shah transformed the positive nationalism policy into a 'national independent policy' in the 1970s, which reflected growing military and arms transactions with the United States. In fact, under the second Pahlavi king, though the Soviet Union maintained a constructive economic and trade relations with Iran, the Shah always stressed the Soviet threat to Iran for Americans in order to protect his own regime while keeping the alliance with the West.

As discussed in section 4 above and considering the historical context, it can be argued that Iran's diplomatic relations with two great imperialist powers, i.e. Britain and Russia, between 1798 and 1921 played a crucial role in the orientation of the cognitive structure of Iranian leaders in the period covering 1921 to 1979 and the design



of their blueprints regarding Iranian interactions with global powers. Indeed, this cognitive structure explains the construction of the enemy image in the period in question.

Iran's history with Britain and Russia between 1798 and 1921, have created negative attitudes towards foreign powers in the mindsets of Iranian political leaders and people. The establishment of the Golestan and Turkmenchay treaties in 1813 and 1828 between Iran and Russia –albeit with British consent- which resulted from Iran's consecutive military defeats against Russia, as well as the Paris Treaty between Iran and Britain in 1857, and the Treaty of Akhal between Iran and Russia in 1881 which formalized the secession of Afghanistan, Turkistan and Transoxiana from Iran, marked the first stage in the construction of the enemy image towards foreign powers in Iran.

The second stage however, in the construction of this image is related to early 20th century developments. The signing of the 1907 treaty between Russia and Britain, providing for the division of Iran into spheres of influence for those two powers as completed by the 1915 treaty, the murdering of Iranian Constitutional leaders by Russians and with the acquiescence of the British, not respecting Iran's neutrality during the First World War by Russian and British forces which led to the looting of Iran by those troops, Britain's hindering Iran's participation in the Versailles Peace Conference as a country damaged by the war, and British efforts at securing the 1919 agreement which could have led to Iran becoming a British protectorate are episodes that contributed to the construction of the enemy image towards the foreign powers in the second stage.

Along with the above, the dependence of the Qajar Court's statesmen on Britain and Russia should also be considered. This trend began with Mohammad Shah's reign and the granting of infrastructural concessions and raw materials contracts to British and Russian nationals and continued in the reign of Nasser al-Din Shah. This dependence, occurring during both stages, also contributed to



the creation of the enemy image towards those foreign powers in the course of Iran's relations with Britain and Russia from 1798-1921.

Now we can answer the main question raised in the introduction of the article by stating that in a historical context, the construction of the enemy image in Iranian leaders' cognitive structure during the 20th century between 1921 and 1979 was a result of Iran's diplomatic relations with two imperialist powers - i.e. Britain and Russia - from 1798 to 1921. Due to the aforementioned developments in Iran's interactions and diplomatic relations with those powers in the period under study, a trend incrementally took shape that resulted in Western military intervention, political influence and economic exploitation in Iran. This process within a century shaped the mindsets of the Pahlavi kings towards the foreign powers, creating the enemy image in certain occasions.

We can conclude that attention to the roots of cognitive structure and construction of enemy image can challenge the predominant Iranian viewpoint, which includes belief in conspiracy theory and the presence of covert hands, and the dominant opinion in the Western world that sees Iran as an actor challenging the principles, norms, and rules of the international community. In doing so, it can pave the way for continued dialogue between these two different players.

Notes

1. On Reza Shah's rise to power, see: Ghani, 1998 and Rahmanian 2000.
2. Concerning the Azerbaijan Crisis, see: Faust, 1995 and Cottom, Yegura and Robertson, 2000.
3. On the oil nationalization movement, see: Zoghi, 1997: 247-288
4. On positive nationalism, see: Azghandi, 2002: 41-57 and Cottom, 1992: 363-394
5. Regarding the trend of Iran's dependence on the United States, see: Mahdavi, 2010: 221-282 and Mohammadi, 1998: 107-132
6. Also on U.S. political behavior towards oil nationalization in Iran, see: Zoghi, 2001
7. On Iran's position in the First World War, see: Atabaki, 2010: 13-19
8. Concerning the 1919 Agreement, see: Shamim, 1996: 583-9; Velayati, 1995: 57-60; Zoghi, 1989: 277-354; Katouzian, 2010: 219-226; and Safaei, 1974: 200-226
9. On Qajar premiers, see: Afsahri, 1997
10. On these concessions, see: Shamim, 1996: 257-9, 237-246, 291-312; Nasr, 1984: 357-379; Taymouri, 1953; and Vahidnia, 1983
11. Also for a discussion of the Qajar political system, see: Ejlali 1994 and Bagheri Kabouragh, 1992

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