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## Foreign Policy of Modern Persia (Iran) and the Middle East

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### **Abstract**

The following article discusses modern Iranian foreign relations in the Middle East and North Africa from the rise of the Safavid dynasty up to the fall of the Pahlavi dynasty. It looks at the interplay of nationalist and ultra-nationalist variables. The nationalist factors include the beliefs system of the policymakers, interests related to political survival, the political economy, the geopolitics of modern Persia and also the geographical realm. The transnational variables consist of the global order, symmetrical and asymmetrical interdependence, and the regional systemic status. These major components are vital in modern Persia's relationships with the regional and extra-regional players in the Middle East. Unlike the Iranian negative or conflictual dialectics, the Iranian positive or cooperative dialectics is the major consequence of the agent–structure's interactions in this region.

**Keywords:** Iran, Modern Persia, foreign policy, foreign relations, Middle East

Iran is a nation-state that until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was known to the world as Persia, a name that derives from an ancient Hellenized form, Persis. Reza Shah Pahlavi decreed in 1934 that the official name of the country is Iran (Morgan, 2016, p. 4). It has always been affected by its foreign relations, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

In the early 10<sup>th</sup> century AH/ 16<sup>th</sup> century AD, three powerful empires ruled MENA. The first was the Mamluks (AH 648-923 /AD 1250-1517) that had been ruling Egypt and Damascus since the fourth decade of the seventh century AH onwards. The second was the Ottoman Empire, which in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century had replaced the Mamluks and established its authority over Mecca and Medina. The establishment of Safavid Persia since 1501 caused shock in the Sunni capitals of Cairo, Damascus and Istanbul.

Only recently has the field of Iranian history and its foreign policy towards MENA matured, to some extent, in terms of monographic research and secondary literature in general, to be able to respond sufficiently to this hunger for explanation. Some of these accounts to date, such as Ervand Abrahamian's "A History of Modern Iran" (2008), have confined themselves to dealing with the emergence of modern Iran. Others, such as Richard Foltz's "Iran in World History" (2016), Touraj Daryaee's "The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History" (2012), and John Foran's "Fragile Resistance: Social Transformation in Iran from 1500 to the Revolution - A History" (1993), have attempted to produce grand narratives of Iranian history. The emphasis of "The Cambridge History of Iran; From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic, Volume 7" (1991) that was edited by Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly and Charles Melville is upon local and regional conditions in the Persian agent. David Morgan's "Medieval Persia 1040-1797" (2016) and Homa Katouzian's book, entitled "The Persians: Ancient, Medieval and Modern Iran" (2009) fall into this latter category. Nonetheless, Katouzian's account is a historical survey and an analytical as well as empirical interpretation of that history, encompassing not only political, but also economic, diplomatic, intellectual and cultural developments. David Morgan, moreover, argues that if there is a dividing line between the medieval and the modern history of Persia, the most plausible point at which to place it is at the beginning of the Qajar dynasty. Some have seen the Safavids as the founders of modern Persia, partly because of the great changes they did bring about, principally the definition of the borders and the imposition of Shiism as the official form of government.

The Middle Eastern political relationships in Willem Floor and Herzig Edmund's "Iran and the World in the Safavid Age" (2012), Rudi Matthee's "Persia in Crisis; Safavid Decline and the Fall of Isfahan" (2012) as well as Roxane Farmanfarmanian's "War and Peace in Qajar Persia; Implications past and present" (2008) begin and end mostly with wars and conflicts together with diplomacy. In their treatment of the early modern Muslim world, scholars, such as Rudi Matthee (2016), have categorized and treated the Ottoman and Safavid Empires in MENA under the so-called Gunpowder Empires.

Rouhollah Ramazani in his book, entitled "The Foreign Policy of Iran: A Developing Nation in World Affairs, 1500-1941" (1966) and the articles of "Iran's Changing Foreign Policy: A Preliminary Discussion" (1970) as well as "Ideology and Pragmatism in Iran's Foreign Policy" (2004) analyzes Persian foreign policy since the rise of Safavid up to downfall of the Reza Pahlavi. Ramazani's works are distinguished by awareness of and a serious attempt to cope with the methodological issue. As to the value of his study, he asserts that a single case study could provide a basis for generalizations on other nations due to similarities of matters and circumstances.

There is a need for academic research that attempts to elucidate the Iranian foreign relations in MENA from the establishment of the Safavid Empire until the fall of the Pahlavi dynasty theoretically. This is the first and foremost difference from other books and articles written on the history of Iranian foreign policy towards MENA. So, this article is thus a most welcome addition to previous works and expands the domain, the variables and the indicators in which the theories of foreign policy can be evaluated, based on the Iranian case study.

### **The Theoretical Framework**

Having represented as the consequent of foreign policy, foreign relations displays the agent's management in this arena within the international structure. Therefore, both structure and agency need to be brought into consideration. In describing the foreign relations of a state, for instance Iran, we must investigate both the situation that presents a challenge for the aims of a government and the policy viewed as a response to the former. The key elements in a state's international situation are its status, its relative power, and its ongoing interactions with other states. (Zabih, 1971, p. 525)

We can either explain state behavior as the consequence of the structure of the international system or observe it as the outcome of policy making within the state (Smith et al., 2016, p. 6). Some argue, e.g. Ruseau, Snyder, Hay (and Williams), that both agency and structure are involved in foreign policy with decisions being made (agency) but always within a set of constraints (structure). Epistemologically, the objectivist approach studies the subject (agent) being impressed by the object (structure) in foreign policy. Also, Evgeny Roshchin (2018) demonstrates that contextualism and conceptual history can address enquiries pertaining to foreign policy and international relations. He analyses how contextualist approach and contractual friendships among the agents has been practiced in pre-modern political order and modern systems of international relations.

James Rosenau in his "pre-theory of foreign policy" includes individual variables (agents) as one of his five sets of independent variables thought to be important in understanding and explaining foreign policy behavior. Moving toward a theory of "National-International Linkage," he defines linkage as "any recurrent sequence of behavior that originates in one national or international system and is reacted to the other one." Rosenau also underscored the need to integrate information at several levels of analysis, including individual policy makers, the national level, and the international system in understanding foreign policy (Rosenau, 1971, pp. 108-109). On this basis, existing orientations in the foreign policy of countries are not constant, because the realm of foreign policy is the product of interaction between changing domestic and foreign events.

"Foreign Policy Decision-Making," edited by Richard Snyder and his colleagues, is one of the foundational works of the subfield of foreign policy analysis emphasizing the agent-structure mutual effects. Snyder concentrated further on the effects on foreign policy of individuals and their preconceptions, organizations, their procedures, cultures and their values as well as the reciprocal interaction with the international structure (Snyder et al., 2002, pp. 65, 120-124)

Rouhollah Ramazani, moreover, argues that autonomy refers to optimizing freedom of action in the international system, meaning that countries' policy makers, apart from other states' influence and power, are able to administrate and pursue their own specified foreign policy strategies. According to Ramazani in his article titled "Dynamic Triangular Interaction," Iranian

foreign policy is defined as a sphere demonstrating dynamic interaction between domestic development, foreign policy, and the effects of the international system (Ramazani, 2009, pp. 17-31). For him, foreign policy contains the two main elements of objectives and actions, plus the techniques they utilize and their consequences. Therefore, Ramazani considers both internal and external situations pertaining to the political system, the identity and attitude of foreign policy makers, the policies of great regional and international powers, and that of neighboring states.

Now, the questions are asked in a slightly different dialect than that used by Rosenau, Ramazani, Snyder and others. They mostly emphasized the importance of the structure-level explanations of the agent behavior in foreign policy, at the expense of examining more micro-level explanatory levels that focus on how and why agents act in the international system. So, it could be perceived as a more independent factor mainly by Rosenau.

This theory is more inclined to comprehend foreign policy as a combination of inputs and outputs that apply to the behavior of a wide range of players, from international factors to influential regional and domestic elements. Posting and answering questions about main players as well as the inputs and outputs of foreign policy decisions means placing oneself first within a particular viewpoint of what foreign policy as a form of state behavior is, who makes it, how we judge its implementation, and the local and structural effects of those foreign relations. On this basis, possible responses to such questions can be found first in the realm of theory and theoretical framework and only subsequently in case studies (Smith et al., 2016, p. 2) that draw out the actors, context, tools to analyze conceptual change, and goals that constitute a particular decision (Roshchin, 2018, p. 64).

Our focus is on what might rightly be regarded as the main theoretical framework that studies the mutual interactions between the agent (state behavior) and the structure (international system) in both micro and macro levels, positively and negatively. Moreover, intellectual context of the historical developments could build up a more realistic picture of how political thinking in all its various forms was in fact conducted in the modern period (Roshchin, 2018, pp. 70-71).

This article is something of an exercise in bridge-building with a greater appreciation of the multilevel and multi-casual dynamics, as comprehensively studied by Snyder, Rosenau and others. In addition, theory and theoretical framework is of little interest unless one can utilize it in specific case studies. Accordingly, the unstudied relationship between agent and structure based on the above-mentioned form in Iranian foreign relations is undertaken by the current framework.

Iran was defined and presented by both insiders and outsiders. The structure provides reproducing the agent's role, and mutually, the agent is subordinated to the international structure. Consequently, these two actors support survival of the other side and the state of quo. The Iranian cooperative or positive dialectics is the main consequence of these agent-structure's reciprocal interactions, in both regional and international levels. The Iranian conflictual or negative dialectics has been; on the other hand, the main outcome of direct and indirect confrontations between the Persian agent and the international structure, yet at times the revisionist agent has tried to change the status quo in the system.

The beliefs system of the leading policy makers (along with those of other key actors) is the first variable within the national area while concentrating on value orientations, ideological tendencies, personality traits, psychological predispositions, and well-defined preferences as well as perceptions of the dominant decision maker. Nonetheless, the leaders' beliefs system does not automatically lead to a decision. The interest in survival, as the second factor, could be prioritized to the survival of the state. The factor of political economy has been affecting a

Persian foreign policy that was dominated by the central powers in the Middle East. The geopolitics of Persia could be considered as the fourth factor, having been frequently threatening and in some cases advantageous. As the fifth factor, Iranian foreign relations have been influenced by the country's geographical realm.

The ultra-nationalist field consists of dominant world order and realities within the agent and the structure, followed by the systemic status. The second variable refers to the mutual interdependence between the agent and the structure that Ramazani and Rosenau have insisted on this parameter. What the existing framework adds is the realities of the agent-structure's interactions, as well as the dialectics between these two main players positively or negatively. As such, the agent-structure's interdependence could be symmetrical or asymmetrical leading to active or inactive confrontations.

The last variable is related to the structure, called the systemic status. As a matter of fact, orderly and disorderly international systems affects the symmetrical or asymmetrical interdependence between the agent and the structure. In this sense, the international system in transition could cause both to decline in interaction with and even invasion of the Iranian agent.

### **Iran's Foreign Policy in MENA (1501-1979)**

The modern era in Iranian foreign relations in MENA commenced with the rise of the Safavid dynasty and continued up to the fall of the second Pahlavi, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. So, Iran entered into global relationships by the Safavid establishing wide political relationships, in particular with the international powers.

#### **Safavid Dynasty (AH 906-7 to / AD 1501 to 1736)**

The ancient Persian Empire was restored by the Safavid as a Twelver Shia Muslim state (Rabie, 1978, p. 75). The Safavid Empire (1501 to 1722, experiencing a brief restoration from 1729 to 1736) was the first integrated and independent nation-state in Persia after the breakdown of the Sasanid Empire in AD 651 and ruled for more than two centuries, longer than any other dynasty since the rise of Islam. In truth, the Safavids attempted to revive the Sasanid Empire with pretensions to the universality and ideological foreign policy. (Ramazani, 2004, p. 552).

The Safavid kings played a significant role in giving the country many of its identity pillars by way of the overlapping religious, geopolitical and territorial boundaries it produced (Mathee, 2012, p. 243). Linguistically, Persian, the official language of the Safavid Empire, helped Iran to position itself as the cultural heartland of the region (Fragner, 2010, p. 23).

The first period of the Safavid dynasty started with the coronation of Ismail I in 1501, lasting until the fall of Abbas I in 1629. This was a period of the consolidation of power in Persia, from the Persian Gulf in the south to the Caspian Sea in the north, from the Euphrates in the west to Transoxania in the east (Babayan, 2012, p. 289).

More problematic for the Safavids was the powerful neighboring Sunni Ottoman Caliphate that arguably possessed the greatest empire in the world during the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Friedman, 2006, p. 181). For the Sunni Ottomans, the rise of the Safavids had presented a challenge in the Middle East and Anatolia with pro-Safavid tribal elements and proxy groups (Newman, 2006, p. 21). In fact, sectarianism, which is often adduced as the main motivation in Ottoman-Safavid relations, was behind the offensive policies in the case of the Ottomans, and defensive reactions in the case of the Safavids (Mathee, 2015, p. 125).

Sultan Selim by signing of peace treaties with European states and obtaining a fatwa from Istanbul Sheikholeslam provided the background for battle against Ismail I. On the other side, the Safavid shah sent delegations to the court of Hungary and Poland to encourage them to invade the Ottomans; this suggestion was denied.

The religious struggles and the deportation of a large number of Shia Turkmens by the Ottoman ruler Bayazid II in 1502, and then Shia revolt on the eastern Mediterranean coast in 1512 followed by geopolitical conflicts, eventually led to the Battle of Chaldiran on 23 August 1514 (Katouzian, 2009, p. 115). The Safavid's outdated style of warfare had faced a professional army put in the field by the greatest modern military technology that the world of Islam had yet seen. That was the focal reason why Shah Ismail lost this war (Morgan, 2016, p. 116). Consequently, the defeat stopped Safavid expansion (Jafarian, 2012, p. 66) and the Turks controlled the routes and the western outlets for Persian silkworms. Thus, the silk trade as the main national means of wealth came to a standstill (Faroghi, 2012, p. 237).

In the south, Shah Ismail was unable to prevent Portuguese control over the Persian Gulf islands of Hormuz, as he had no navy. Therefore, he signed a treaty in 1515 ceding control to Portugal in return for a military-commercial anti-Ottoman alliance (Newman, 2006, p. 21). It means the Safavids never developed a firm military connection with the Arab Persian Gulf.

With regard to the third government in MENA, Shah Ismail began to clash with the Mamluk sultan, Qansuh al-Ghuri, in AH 913/AD 1507, resulting in the seizure of Arab Iraq and Baghdad in AH 914/AD 1508. The Ottoman Sultan Murad attempted to take Baghdad back by alliance with the Mamluks; however, his suggestion was denied. In truth, the Ottoman Empire did not allow a Safavid defeat of the weakened Mamluk Sultanate because, if it happened, the Twelver Shia Safavids would become the guardian of the two holy cities of Islam in Hijaz, Mecca and Medina, as well as the masters of the Red Sea trade (Mitchell, 2011, p. 50). Nevertheless, the dispatch of envoys between the Safavids and Mamluks did take place since 1507, while the latter found out the Safavids lead a Muslim state, contrary to the Ottoman's propaganda (Jafarian, 2012, pp. 57-64).

After the Ottomans overcame the Safavids, Sultan Selim turned his attention to the Sunni Mamluks in 922/ 1516 in Syria, and this defeat was an end to the 260-year-old Mamluk sultanate, sealing the Ottoman dominance over Levant, North Africa and the southern Persian Gulf. The Ottoman's took over guardianship of the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina, which of course enhanced the legitimacy of the Caliphate (Rabie, 1978, p. 79).

The invasions, counter-invasions, sieges, and hostilities constituted the Ottoman-Safavid narrative between 1514 and 1555. Shah Tahmasp I seized power just in time to face the worst Safavid nightmare: a full-scale Ottoman invasion that happened three times during his reign. In the early 1532, following a European peace treaty, which settled challenges on their western borders, the Ottomans turned their strategic attention towards the eastern parts of the Middle East, mainly Persia (Newman, 2006, p. 27).

Notwithstanding that Shah Tahmasp conceived that his most dangerous enemy was the Ottomans, the Amasya Agreement of 1555 by the Safavid monarch, as the first official peace between the Safavids and the Ottomans, ended the religious disputes between the two empires for a while. Apart from the mutual competition in the Middle East, this agreement focused more on intra-dynastic diplomatic relations and confirmed the notion of Shiism in one country, making the Ottomans acknowledge the Safavid's sovereignty over Persia (Matthee, 2010, p. 256).

In 1578, the Ottomans violated the Amasya peace treaty by invading western Iran and the war was not brought to an end until 998/1590, while the weak rulers of Ismail II and

Khodabandah (1576-1587) presided over a semi-chaotic situation. Therefore, external enemies were in occupation of nearly half of what had been Şafavid territory in the time of Ismail I and Tahmasp I (Morgan, 2016, p. 129).

The Safavids were again keen to create an alliance with the European powers against the Ottomans, especially following the Ottoman defeat at Lepanto in 1571 (Newman, 2015, p. 56). However, the Safavids were either sidelined or exploited by the European powers (Ehteshami, 2017, p. 172).

Notably, the main contest between the Ottomans and Safavids was not only on the Shia/Sunni-related issues and territorial disputes, but also on the leadership of the Islamic world. Principally, the nature of Ottoman-Safavid relations of the 16<sup>th</sup> century is defined more by multiplicity and heterogeneity than simple division and orthodoxy.

The reign of Shah Abbas I (1587-1629) is considered the height of Safavid Iran as an empire. His reputation had been that of a ruler who brought his ambit to territorial greatness, economic prosperity, and international prominence through a set of policies designed to optimize military strength, centralize state control, and expand Persian internal and international commercial realm. Shah Abbas attempted to reorganize the Persian army based on the European model by hiring two English advisors and embedded them within the system of the Gunpowder Empires (Foltz, 2016, pp. 76-77). He replaced the Qezelbash tribal army with professional armed forces based on the employment of royal slaves that could be linked to the influence of the Ottoman military structure, a variant of the Mamluk system of Egypt under the Ottoman Empire (Fragner, 2010, pp. 23, 26).

At the outset of his reign, Shah Abbas I could not fight concurrently a two-front war against both the Ottomans and the Özbegs in the west and the east. To free his hands and ensure the survival of the Safavid, he pragmatically made a peace with the Ottomans in 998/1590; in the process, vast areas of western and northern Persia were lost.

With the eastern frontier stabilized by AH 1011/AD 1602-3, Abbas marched to the west and northwest Persia. The Ottomans suffered a crushing defeat in the Battle of Sufiyan in 1605, and by two years later Iran gained all the territory, which it had owned at the time of the 1555 Peace of Amasya. The inconclusive agreements of 1613-1619 pursued the stable border and eradicated the primary formal cause of religious enmity, while the text of the 1619 pact mentioned the protection of Shia pilgrims' rights to visit shrines in Iraq and Hejaz again.

The other aspect of the Shah Abbas I's foreign policy, the so-called Mediterranean policy, concentrated on the Iberian world, mostly with Spain and Portugal, in order to pressure the Ottomans in MENA and also may have included a plan to spread Shiism to North Africa (Matthee, 2015, p. 125).

The Safavids planned a new map of the Persian trading routes since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, influenced by political and economic factors of the new age of post-exploration (Ranjbar and Sehhat Manesh, 2016, p. 1). Commercially, Shah Abbas was keen to establish political and trade ties with the rising powers of Europe as potential allies against the Ottomans (Katouzian, 2009, p. 125). Persia was attractive as an additional ally against the Ottomans, while European traders considered Persian land as a proper route to, and an opportunity of trading with, the Orient (Fragner, 2010, p. 22).

Shah Abbas further promoted regional and international trade, mostly silk, which had begun to develop since Shah Tahmasp I (Katouzian, 2009, p. 124). Abbas first settled the Armenian community in Persia to deprive the Ottomans of, and to give the Safavids control over, the Armenian merchants' domination on the commercial routes and enlist their support in the



export of Persian silk to Europe and Russia (Newman, 2015, p. 55). It was less expensive than Ottoman silk in the Mediterranean ports, therefore the economic interests of the Safavids were contrasted with the interests of Ottomans, leading to more competition (Ranjbar and Sehhat Manesh, 2016, pp. 2, 4).

Since the early 17<sup>th</sup> century “trade revolution,” followed by the Industrial Revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the international commerce and maritime trade between Europe and the East flourished, which caused the decline of the Silk Road (Foran, 1992, pp. 282, 288). In fact, prior to the Persian Gulf sea-lane, raw commodities, such as silk, textiles, ceramics, cattle, etc., were traditionally exported to and traded by the Ottoman’s overland route to the Mediterranean coast, monopolizing the east-west trading (Ranjbar and Sehhat Manesh, 2016, p. 5). Therefore, the Safavid monarch transferred the commercial organization of Hurmuz to Bandar Abbas, as the Persian first trading center, (Curtis and Hooglund, 2008, p. 21) while the new overland trade shifted to a northwest-southeast axis, linking Persia with Russia and Europe on the one hand and India on the other (Foltz, 2016, p. 78). There was revenue to be obtained by Persia from the transit trade connecting Europe and Asia as well.

The southern trade in the Persian Gulf was controlled by the Portuguese during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which impacted international trading. Shah Abbas I was also able to take the Persian Gulf from the Portuguese in 1616 with the help of the British fleet in order to develop its maritime commerce, which encouraged trading by English and Dutch companies. He had already expelled the Portuguese from Bahrain (Fragner, 2010, pp. 22-23).

There were four other Safavid shahs between the death of Abbas I in 1629 and the conquest of Isfahan by the Afghans in 1722. His successors were unable to deal with the potential threats with the Arabs in the Persian Gulf, while the Sultan of Oman encroached on Persian territory by occupying the Persian Gulf islands (Jackson and Lockhart, 1986, pp. 318, 327). Therefore, in the later Safavid period, administrative and bureaucratic order in domestic and foreign policies simply degenerated into chaos and anarchy (Matthee, 1998, p. 486).

Sporadic clashes with the Ottomans continued until 1639 under Shah Safi I (1629-42), when the whole of Iraq was retaken by the Turks. The Treaty of Zuhab or Qasr-e Shirin (17 May 1639) pragmatically resulted in an equilibrium between the two empires and ended the conflicts. The Perso-Ottoman border was established, which has survived with little change into modern times; the division of the Middle East was preserved (Curtis and Hooglund, 2008, p. 20). Nonetheless, the frontier between the regional powers was not a line but a broad zone running through Armenia and as far south as the Persian Gulf (Williamson, 2008, p. 88).

During the late Safavid dynasty, the Ottomans were busy fighting in Europe. Westerners were confronted with Ottoman expansionism from the 1300s onward (Matthee, 2010, p. 236). Shah Safi did receive word from Europe to open an eastern front against the Turks and recover lost territory, but he wisely declined to violate the peace of 1639 (Katouzian, 2009, pp. 128-129).

In total, there was a period of relatively peaceful coexistence in the Middle East that survived beyond the end of the Safavid Empire (Axworthy, 2007, p. 636). This treaty could be viewed as the climax of a process of normalization that had begun with the treaty of Amasya.

Moreover, the 1648 treaty of Westphalia established a framework of international relations that evolved over subsequent centuries. It is true that the treaties of Westphalia and Zuhab concluded in such different contexts, nonetheless, the latter has similar importance in the history of Middle Eastern diplomacy as an important stage in the evolution of international Muslim relations.

In spite of frequent Persian-Turkish hostilities, the regional trade of Persia persisted during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, during the pre-Zuhab era, the Ottoman sultans and their commercial council had established a list of forbidden goods, mostly items of potential military significance, which could not be legally exported to Persia, such as metal and Ottoman coins (Faroghi, 2012, pp. 239-248). During the post-Zuhab period, coupled with the 1657 Ottoman-Safavid commercial agreement, Persia was no longer regarded as a probable enemy (Newman, 2006, pp. 77, 87, 95) and the overland route through Ottoman territory to the Levant ports was reopened for business, mostly for export of silk to Europe. In 1722 the Safavid Empire finally fell to a combination of an invading party of Afghan tribesmen and civil wars.

### **Afsharid Dynasty (AH 1148-1210 /AD 1736-1796)**

Eighteenth century Persia began with rising turmoil, resulting in the fall of the Safavids amidst catastrophic anarchy that offered opportunity for foreign interventions. The breakdown of the Safavids roughly coincided with the beginning of an era of decline among the Ottomans, which set in after their failure at Vienna in 1683.

In the absence of any kind of strong central authority, revolt gradually arose throughout Persia. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Afghan army in the east laid siege to the Safavid capital, Esfahan. In the west, the Ottomans took advantage of Iran's chaos to seize territory. Meanwhile in the north, the Russians under Peter the Great captured Iran's Caspian seaports. The Portuguese and Dutch controlled the Persian Gulf, both soon to be elbowed out by the British.

Simultaneously, the anarchical structure and the world in transition in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, caused by the European conflicts and rivalries in the periphery areas as well as the French Revolution, led to further insecurity in MENA.

Turko-Persian Nader was one of the most powerful Persian rulers in the history of his nation due to his military genius and personal characteristics, such as being conciliatory or even generous in victory as well as having a talent for war and diplomacy. He raised Iran from the lowest depths of degradation to the proud position of the foremost military power in Asia by 1729 by pushing back the Afghans, the Ottomans and Russians. However, he was harsh in his rule with a voracious appetite for wealth and did not effectively encourage agriculture, trade, manufacturing, or handicrafts (Aghaie, 2012, pp. 309, 312).

Nader Shah reunited the Persian realm and restored all the former borders of Persia by securing the withdrawal of the Russians in the north through negotiation and an anti-Ottoman alliance following the Russo-Persian War (1722-1723) (Morgan, 2016, p. 151) as well as the Afghans in the east in 1729. The Turks were a real threat to the Persian and Russian trading interests, (Jackson and Lockhart, 1986, p. 435) while defeating the Persian arch rival, the Ottomans, in 1735 led to withdrawal from all the occupied lands. At this date, he was not only the most powerful single force in MENA but possibly in the world (Axworthy, 2007, pp. 635-637). Ultimately, the Afsharid Empire emerged out of the anarchy that followed the collapse of the Safavid regime in AH 1148/AD 1736.

Nader Shah was aware of the menace to his own frontier people posed by the religious rivalry between the Shia and Sunni and sought some form of workable relationship with the upholder of the Sunni Order. The two powers, Ottoman and Iranian, were henceforth to accredit permanent ambassadors to each other. He suggested a religious settlement to the Ottomans in the Treaty of Constantinople of 1736 whereby Persia would remain Sunni and the Ottomans should accept the school of law of the Shia Jaafari, as valid as the four schools of the Sunni (Pickett,

2016, p. 497). This was no more acceptable to the Ottomans than the imposition of Sunnism to the Iranians.

Nader's long absence from southern Persia encouraged revolts among the Arabs in the Persian Gulf. During the spring of 1741 Nader resumed promotion of his naval program and established a base at Bushehr (temporarily renamed Bandar-e Naderiya) which became the main port on the Persian Gulf (Avery et al., 1991, pp. 42, 44). With the Persian navy he proceeded to build, Nader Shah crossed the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf and was able not only to recapture Bahrain from the Arabs and conquer Oman and its capital Muscat in 1743, but also to reopen another war with the Ottomans between 1743 and 1746. Hence, he laid siege to Mosul demanding the surrender of Baghdad, which the Turks had recaptured in 1625 and 1638 respectively. However, the Peace Treaty of Kurdan in January 1747 confirmed the settlement of the 1639 peace treaty regarding the frontiers between the two Middle Eastern powers. The Ottomans, moreover, agreed to let the quasi-Sunni Nader occupy the holy city of Najaf, while the Persian pilgrims were guaranteed the right to free passage into the Ottoman lands, with only their trade goods being subject to taxation by the Ottoman customs officials (Masters, 1991, p. 9). In fact, this treaty shaped the Ottoman-Persian relations until the end of World War I.

Relationships between the Iranian authorities and the sheikhs of the Persian Gulf were contractual, with the sheikhs paying regular taxes to the state. Therefore, often a coalition of Arab and Persian forces engaged in the fighting (Potter, 2008, p. 128). This meant that Nader Shah Afshar concentrated his foreign policy on the Persian Gulf region more than ever. He was not able to decisively defeat the Ottomans, but was able to reestablish relatively stable borders between the two empires. These regional conflicts disrupted the southern trade route, so the merchants were quick to use the Black Sea-Caucasus routes as alternative (Avery et al., 1991, p. 33).

In summary, the transformative impact of the Afsharid Empire extended beyond geopolitics in the Middle East and Central Asia and its court called for settling the long-standing disagreements with Constantinople to restore the borders stipulated in the provisions of the AH 1049/AD 1639 Ottoman-Safavid Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin (Zuhab), exchange of prisoners of war, protection for all Persian Hajj pilgrims and designation of an official place (rokn) for Shia, as the fifth school, in the courtyard of the Kaaba in Mecca.

His numerous campaigns created a great empire that gradually turned into the pillar of the regional and even international orders. Nonetheless, Nader tended to initiate positive dialectics with the tsar, earning a Russian alliance against the Ottomans in the Middle East. On the other hand, the international structure encountered an anarchic or transitional period that was in favor of the Iranian agent in the Middle East.

The commander in chief, Nader Shah Afshar, had little talent for statesmanship or administration, and the Persian foreign relations in the Middle East were overshadowed by his personal character, as well as his idealistic, expansionist and militaristic approaches. Therefore, warfare is the most important tool in obtaining the targets of foreign policy, while the main shah of Afsharid dynasty took advantage of diplomacy in this respect.

### **Zand Dynasty (1751-1794)**

The mid-18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were a dark period in Iranian foreign relations in the regional and international spheres. The geographical extent of the Zand Empire at its zenith, from 1765 to 1779, was in practice about half that of the Safavids (Avery et al., 1991, p. 95).

While Karim Khan Zand, known as “the Vakil,” may not have been the great conqueror and military man that Nader Shah was, he has often been represented as the ideal ruler, exhibiting unselfish humility and unbiased humanity (Aghaie, 2012, p. 309).

Apart from two decades of relative peace in parts of Persia under Karim later in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was a period when on many occasions it looked as if the country would be broken up, especially as the Ottomans and the Russians took advantage of the situation and occupied parts of Persian territory. With the Russians’ arrival the stage was set for the Great Game, the Russo-British confrontation that would be fateful for Persia in the later 18<sup>th</sup> century and well into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Newman, 2015, p. 56).

Relations with the Ottoman Empire were fair until 1774 when a clash broke out in AH 1188-90/AD 1775-6 on two fronts, the Shatt al-Arab and the Kurdish provinces, from where Baghdad itself could be threatened. The major political cause of the combat was the interference of the Ottoman governor of Baghdad that tried to decrease Persian influence in a part of Kurdistan, now in Iraq, while ignoring repeated Persian complaints about the mistreatment of Iranian pilgrims of Shia Holy Shrines of Najaf and Karbala in Iraq (Katouzian, 2009, p. 138). In fact, these Shia holy cities had become semi-autonomous, while the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries witnessed a fall of central control from Istanbul (Williamson, 2008, p. 102). It was the Wahhabis and their Bedouin allies from Central Arabia, rather than the Iranians, who posed the main menace to Ottoman rule in Mesopotamia (Avery et al., 1991, p. 312). Consequently, Karim Khan sent armed forces to Kurdistan and Basra and captured the city after a long siege. In truth, the Vakil’s military enterprises were of a defensive and conservative nature. Finally, the Porte dismissed the Pasha on charges of provoking a needless war (Ibid., pp. 92, 103).

The third motive for this action on Karim’s part was the southward shift in trade away from the port of Basra towards the ports in Persian hands and Indian Ocean commerce with European companies (Morgan, 2016, p. 154). As such, he preserved an alliance with Sheikh of Bushehr, who could safeguard the trade, which was mostly raw materials like silk, wool, and opium, (Aghaie, 2012, p. 314) coming up the Persian Gulf, and with his help, Karim Khan ended Ottoman domination of Basra. He allowed the British East India Company a monopoly of foreign trade from Bushehr, where it moved from Bandar Abbas. The Vakil, moreover, permitted the Dutch East India Company to move to Kharg Island from Basra during the period between 1759 up to 1765 (Foltz, 2016, p. 83). However, due to lack of ample security, piratical operations and British pressure, the Dutch ultimately left the Persian Gulf forever and the French East India Company obtained an agreement to move from Basra to Kharg Island. As a matter of fact, the competition between the Dutch, Russians, French, and British during the 18<sup>th</sup> century was imperative in setting the stage for Russian and British domination of Persian foreign trade in the following century (Katouzian, 2009, p. 138; Newman, 2006, p. 61). As a result, the Persian connection to the global sea trade revived, while the pattern of trade had shifted to the advantage of the international traders and the disadvantage of Iranians (Aghaie, 2012, p. 315).

Seemingly, the nature of authority exercised by the Zands on the southern coast of the Persian Gulf and islands was, to some extent, tenuous (Potter, 2008, p. 127). For instance, the Omani Sheikh rejected Karim’s demands for tribute in 1769, as had been imposed by Nadir Shah Afshar. Therefore, an intermittent state of war, manifested in acts of piracy, subsisted between Iran and Oman for most of the Zand period (Avery et al., 1991, p. 89). This pattern intensified during the Qajar period.

Iran during the reign of Karim Khan Zand displayed a positive dialectics with the region, mainly the Ottoman Empire, and European powers and was a pillar of the MENA order. Due to

the mentioned interaction with the international structure, the Zand had relatively peaceful relations in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf for almost half a century. However, the rivalry between Persia and the Ottoman courts extended by the end of the Qajar Dynasty, focusing on long-standing disagreements, including the border disputes, religious-related issues, commercial routes, and the leadership of the Islamic world. Undeniably, the state that Karim created was disgraced by his unworthy successors between 1779 until 1794.

### **Qajar Dynasty (1794 -1925)**

The geopolitics of Qajar Persia turned this state into a strategic buffer zone between the ever-expanding Britain in the Persian Gulf, the north for Russia, Napoleonic France with tripartite rivalry, and the Ottomans (Farmanfarmanian, 2008, pp. 1, 5). Hence, the so-called “Great Game” continued in various forms for the next 150 years. For the Qajars, the focus of foreign relations, therefore, was on resistance to external penetration.

On this basis, fearful of Russia, the Ottomans, and Britain, the Qajar shah and his pragmatic bureaucrats, such as the chief minister Amir Kabir, sought to create an alliance with the third powers, notably France in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, Austria, and the United States in the middle of this century, to solicit military support in the Middle East and Caucasus (Ehteshami, 2017, p. 173). They have been credited with the policy of negative equilibrium, giving concessions to neither Britain nor Russia and tilted towards an independent course of foreign policy (Nezam-Mafi, 2012, p. 330).

While the politico-military Treaty of Finckenstein was concluded between France and Persia on 4 May 1807 against Britain and formalized the Franco-Persian alliance, an armistice between Russia and France, the Treaties of Tilsit in 1807, was followed by. Britain also signed a treaty with Persia forcing the French out of the country on 12 March 1809. British contact with Persian officials was intended mainly to contain Napoleon’s influence in MENA. As a result, Persia was made the scapegoat for the great powers’ interests in the region. Moreover, the fall of Amir Kabir demonstrated Qajar’s inability to steer an independent foreign policy away from of the conflicting demands of the main powers.

With the French out of the way and Britain’s power emerging in the Persian Gulf, British policy focused on the maintenance of the status quo in the region. In essence, Britain and Russia came to recognize the need for sustaining the stability and integrity of the Qajar state in order to maintain a fragile equilibrium, yet at times, they did not hesitate to undermine its sovereignty in domestic and regional affairs.

When war with Russia involved Persia in a diplomatic wrangle, the post of foreign minister was also created in Iran in 1821, but the foreign relations of the country remained mostly in the hands of the shah and the crown prince (Nezam-Mafi, 2012, p. 321).

At times, the Qajars supported the border chieftains, Bedouins and Baghdad Sunni Mamluks against the Ottomans. On other side, the Ottomans regarded the Shia people with suspicion and as potential fifth columnists for Persia that made efforts to draw the tribes to their side (Williamson, 2008, pp. 102, 104).

With the main Ottoman’s problems in the Balkans, the Qajar could be rather successful in two brief encounters. Iran’s relationship with the Turks deteriorated and war broke out in AH 1231/AD 1821, lasting two years, and shifting the balance of power in the Persian Gulf decisively in Persian favor (Williamson, 2008, p. 100). Iran was primarily victorious, but the Asian cholera pandemic of 1817-1823 was raging through its army, and therefore Iran opted for

peace, which was signed at Erzerum in July 1822. Therefore, in the Treaty of Erzerum, the borders were unchanged. In the meantime, the main preoccupation of the Qajar was with Russian instigation and defeats of the Persian forces by the Tsar Army, while the Russians had taken advantage of the hostilities between Persia and the Ottomans to invade further territories (Nezam-Mafi, 2012, p. 324).

War broke out on two more occasions, when the Pasha of Baghdad attacked Khuzestan in 1838, and again in 1843. The British and Russian missions intervened to prevent wars, and their good offices led to the opening of a conference at Erzerum in 1843, at which all four governments were represented and eventually a treaty was concluded in June 1847 (Avery et al., 1991, p. 170).

In effect, by the 1847 Treaty of Erzurum, the Peace Treaty of Kurdan in 1747 was restored and delineated the Middle East's first real negotiated borderline; in this, the Ottomans recognized that the lands east of the Shatt al-Arab belonged to Persia. Moreover, the right of navigation on the Shatt al-Arab for the two nations was recognized, and the Turks again permitted the Persian merchants and pilgrims to enter the Sultan's territory. On the other side, the Porte so urgently needed this compromise before turning to fight the Greek rebels, following the conflicts with the tsar of Russia that resulted in the Crimean War of 1853 to 1856 (Masters, 1991, p. 9-10).

When representatives of the European powers convened at Berlin in the summer of 1878 to discuss the fate of the Middle East, it was a different Ottoman Empire, dubbed "the sick man of Europe," that held their attention (Friedman, 2006, p. 184). As part of the European project, Persia became the first state in the Muslim world whose borders were defined. North Africa would have its frontiers delineated only later in the 19th century; the Persian Gulf states and the rest of the Middle East would not have their borders created until post-World War I (Farmanfarmaian, 2008, p. 7).

As was the case in the earlier Persian-Ottoman Treaties of 1639 and 1747, the Treaties of Erzurum in 1823 and 1848 sought primarily to reestablish the status quo in the Middle East. As a result, most of the Persian foreign policy was mainly influenced by British-Russian relations in the Middle East and Caucasus. These treaties were an instance of the structure's effect on the agent's foreign relations and the battleground of the policy and diplomacy between the regional states.

In the Persian Gulf region, the Qajar did not have a navy, which led to dependence on the British navy in order to control the Persian Gulf coastline in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. From the 1870s, the British opposed the Ottoman presence in eastern Arabia and Persian claims to the Arab principalities along the southern littoral, while imposing a maritime peace on the Trucial Coast in the late 1880s on the Persian Gulf. Tehran often took advantage of inter-Arab strife in the region. Britain sought to maintain peace by keeping the Persians and Arabs on their own side of the Persian Gulf and to prevent the Qajar from retaking Bahrain. Likewise, the British disallowed the Omani sultan from sending its forces to the Persian ports. In addition, Persian southern boundaries were settled by the British in order to facilitate expansion of the telegraph line from India to Europe, which began in 1858-9 (Potter, 2008, pp. 125-142).

Affected by the Ottoman Tanzimat and the role of the telegraph in communication, the outbreak of the 1905 revolution in Russia as well as the defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5, Iran's constitutional movement turned revolutionary during 1908-11. Since 1906, Iran had been a constitutional monarchy, with an elected Majlis, or parliament, and a cabinet

appointed by the Shah. The Constitutional Revolution destroyed the traditional center of despotic power in foreign policy.

During early World War I, Ahmad Shah Qajar declared Iran's neutrality in this comprehensive battle that had originated in Europe. Four months later, however, the Porte declared war on the side of Germany and Austria against the Allies, including Russia and Britain and France. This brought the actual combat inside Iran, as the Russians and Turks fought in the north and west of the country. The German plan was to pass through Iran, penetrate Afghanistan and the Indian subcontinent against Britain, and instigate unrest in these areas. Iranians were generally pro-German and thereby pro-Turk and saw the Russians and British as the aggressors (Katouzian, 2009, pp. 192-193).

Commercially, both Iran and the Ottoman Empire were seriously affected by 19<sup>th</sup> century European economic imperialism. Britain and Russia, to some extent, came to dominate Persian trade of raw materials, such as, silk, cotton, opium and then oil by monopolistic concessions (Curtis and Hooglund, 2008, p. 23). These privileges played a main role in growing imports; hence, the balance of trade went on deteriorating due to the growing gap between imports and exports (Friedman, 2006, p. 286). Since domestic handmade commodities, such as textile materials, were less fashionable than European machine-made products, there was a relative decline in Iran's role in the international markets (Katouzian, 2009, pp. 167-168). As such, there was political and economic collapse during the Qajar period, which had left Iran with little economic surplus in its foreign trade (Avery et al., 1991, p. 591).

The game-changing event in Qajar Iran's foreign policy was connected to the discovery of oil by British William Darcy on 26 May 1908 in southwestern Iran. So, for the next five decades, Iran's oil industry would be largely in the hands of Britain, along with a lion's share of its profits. Consequently, the Persian role in overseas trade increased when the European steam ships reached the Persian Gulf via the Suez Canal in 1869 and the rerouting of trade was part of the the political considerations of the Great Game (Farmanfarmaian, 2008, p. 9).

In summation, for much of the Qajar's reign, relations with the Ottoman Empire were strained to breaking point on account of border disputes, notably over Khuzestan and the Shatt al-Arab, as well as the treatment of Shia pilgrims passing through the Ottoman territory. Persia was in a state of anarchy during the First World War. As a result, the country was ripe for regime change with no supporters to include it in the community of nations that met at the Paris Peace Conference, also known as the Versailles Peace Conference, in 1919 to rethink the destiny of MENA.

### **Pahlavi Dynasty (1925-1979)**

The international structure had witnessed instability in the aftermath of the First World War, so that four empires collapsed, particularly the Ottoman. The Allies used Iranian territory for proxy struggles against the Ottomans throughout the war and occupied Constantinople (Istanbul) and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire became a milestone in the creation of the new MENA. Britain, together with France, was about to preside over the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and their involvement with the Arab world was increasing. Russia weakened subsequent to the Bolshevik Revolution; new countries were formed; boundaries were redrawn, mostly in MENA; and international organizations, most importantly the League of Nations, were established.

The coup d'état of AH 1299/AD 1921, led by the Cossack officer Reza Khan and his pro-British collaborator Sayed Zia-al-Din Tabatabai, was assisted by the British government, which wished to halt the Communists' penetration in the Middle East and Persia, particularly because of the threat it posed to the British possessions in the Indian subcontinent. This shows that unlike the Qajar period, the structure supported the new powerful government in the Persian agent. As a result, Reza Shah Pahlavi, as the agent, observed primarily his survival in connection with the structure's support.

Iran was an early member of the League of Nations that encouraged the peaceful settlement of disputes. Reza Shah now laid more emphasis on foreign policy and devoted himself to strengthening Iranian relations with its immediate neighbors; Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. In an era of regional pacts, his government created a system of alliances with the mentioned neighbors, leading to the Saadabad non-aggression Pact of 1937. On 4 July, a frontier agreement was signed between Iran and Iraq which defused a potential conflict between the two, and on 8 July, the four-power pact was concluded in the Saadabad Palace in Tehran. Nonetheless, Britain was in a hurry to complete drawing a belt around the Soviet Union to prevent the spread of communism in the Middle East, as well as against Russian expansion toward the Persian Gulf and oil wells of Southern Iran. The long-term consequences of this treaty were negligible, but in the short-term, it served a useful purpose for Reza Shah in increasing his international stature.

So also, in 1938, the marriage of the Crown Prince, Muhammad Reza, to Princess Fawzia, sister of King Faruq of Egypt, improved the Persian relationship with Egypt in North Africa. Reza Shah operated with awareness of Iran's geopolitical vulnerabilities and thus adopted a cautious foreign policy that aimed to frustrate Anglo-Russian pressure. Notwithstanding the earlier mutually beneficial cooperation with Britain, Reza Pahlavi had been inclined towards the third powers, notably Nazi Germany, traditionally regarded in the Middle East and Persia as non-imperialist and a counterweight to the mentioned powers (Zabih, 1971, p. 58). Nevertheless, Britain's first priority was to prevent the spread of communism in Iran and neighboring countries rather than the increasingly close relations between Iran and Germany.

In fact, the British Mandate for a number of the Middle Eastern countries, Britain's oil interests in Iran, the concern for the security of the Indian subcontinent, the threat of an imminent Bolshevik penetration and finally prevention of Nazi Germany's presence in MENA were the most influential factors in Iranian foreign relations with its newly independent regional states during the period of the two world wars.

The Great Depression in the world economy and trade during the late 1920s until the Second World War had adverse effects for Iran's political and commercial relations. The balance of trade, excluding oil, was in deficit during post-World War I, while oil was permanently in surplus. Germany, in effect, played the principal outsider's role in the economic development of Iran between the world wars. It acquired the right of direct flights from Germany to Iran as well as some internal links between Iranian cities, while a sea-link between Hamburg and the Persian Gulf at last broke the monopoly on communications with Iran, hitherto maintained by Britain and the Soviet Union.

In the first year of the Second World War, Iran was formally neutral but sentimentally pro-German. As the German armies pressed eastwards, Britain began to fear for the safety of the Iranian oil fields as well as the flow of oil.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the West guaranteed Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's survival in three periods of the Anglo-Russian occupation of Iran in 1941; the Iran



crisis of 1946, also known as the Azerbaijan Crisis; and the Iranian coup d'état in 1953. In fact, the Cold War catapulted the young monarch to the forefront of the geopolitical tussle between East and West. That resulted in America's rapidly growing interest in Iran as a strategic Cold War frontline state and its monarch as an ally in the Middle East.

During the first period of the Shah's foreign relations from his coronation until the coup, the non-governmental circles, including the leftist, nationalist and religious forces, were fortified and influenced on Iranian foreign policy to achieve a negative equilibrium in the East-West rivalry, yet at times the oil could be another influential element (Zabih, 1971, p. 531). The 1953 coup established the United States as a major player in the Middle East, with Iran as its principle ally (Foltz, 2016, p. 101). While seeking close relations with the West, the Shah viewed Israel as a regional ally. Tel Aviv, moreover, viewed Tehran as a natural ally as a non-Arab power on the edge of the Arab world, in accordance with David Ben Gurion's concept of the "Alliance of the Periphery."

The second phase of the Iranian foreign relations in MENA during the post-WW2 era was the period between early 1953 and the mid-1960s. The most important feature of the second period of the Shah's foreign policy was the attitude of the superpowers towards Iran and MENA under the Cold War atmosphere. The hostile relations between Iran and the USSR had followed Mohammed Reza Pahlavi's accession to the Baghdad Pact in 1955. As a result, Iran dropped its policy of non-alliance and joined the United Kingdom, Turkey, Pakistan, and Iraq in the Baghdad Pact, a Cold War alliance supported also by the United States. Following the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1957 and concurrent with the Arab Cold War in MENA, Iran alongside the other regional members of the pact sought to conclude a bilateral agreement with the United States against all kinds of aggression. On this basis, Washington continued its postwar support of Iran by its bilateral agreement of March 5, 1959. In this relationship, America acted as a "Patron Power," preserving Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's regime. Tehran was subjected to the role of a dependent ally that confirmed its friendship with the Middle Eastern states that shared opposition to communism and radical Arab states in MENA. Mohammed Reza Pahlavi attributed this to his regime's foreign policy of "positive nationalism" (Avery et al., 1991, pp. 445-446).

By the late 1950s, the Shah was facing serious problems. In 1958, the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown as a wave of military coups and popular unrest shook the pro-Western governments of the Middle East. This coup led to Iraq's withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact, which was renamed the 1955 military-economic treaty of CENTO or Central Treaty Organization. The Shah's joining of CENTO was motivated by a desire to use that alliance as a defensive instrument against President Nasir of Egypt (Zabih, 1971, p. 535). Afterwards, he hoped to expand the concept of the Organization for Regional Cooperation for Development (ORCD), which was created in 1964 in the wake of the crisis of confidence in CENTO, to form a common market in the region. Consequently, the revolution radicalized the Iraqi state during the 1960s and made Iran the linchpin of the anti-Soviet Baghdad Pact of 1955 and the defender of American growing energy and security-related interests in the Persian Gulf. This coincided with the worsening of Tehran's relations with the revolutionary Arab countries, particularly the Arab nationalist movement, led by President Nasir. This atmosphere reinforced the militaristic role of the Shah of Iran in MENA.

After the Suez crisis of 1956, Nasser's popularity surged in MENA and in the countries of the third world, where he was regarded as a non-aligned leader inspired by the ex-Prime Minister Mosaddegh. Thus, a clash between Iran and Egypt was almost inevitable, and when in 1960 the Shah reaffirmed Iran's de facto recognition of Israel, Egypt broke off diplomatic

relations with Iran. That resulted not only in the breakdown of diplomatic relations between Cairo and Tehran, but also in a reluctance on the part of the pro-Western Arab monarchies, led by Saudi Arabia, to strengthen their ties with Mohammed Reza Pahlavi for fear of possible reprisals. This growing regional isolation was complicated by the fact that the foreign policy of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi had always to be mindful of the desires of the United States.

The final phase of foreign relations for Mohammed Reza Pahlavi is the period from the mid-1960s up to 1979, when the détente in the international system had elevated interests in intraregional relations to a higher level. Subsequent of the new developments in the international system in the mid-1960s, comprising the United States failure in the Vietnam War (Nov 1, 1955-April 30, 1975); Britain's withdrawal from the east of the Suez Canal, including the Persian Gulf, between 1969 and 1971; and the lack of stabilizing power in MENA; Washington offered the "Twin Pillars Policy." On this basis, Iran had been entitled as the "gendarme of the region" to keep the peace in the Persian Gulf on behalf of America and maintain the status quo (F. Goode, 2014, pp. 443-444). These developments in the agent and the structure during the 1950s and 1960s reinforced the militaristic role of the Shah in the Middle East through the purchase of the most sophisticated American armaments. Remarkably, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi utilized the two main tools of the army and oil for consolidating his domestic and regional power.

Because of the new order in the international system, Iran attempted to settle its disputes with the USSR and its Arab proxies in MENA, as well as the littoral Sheikdoms in the Persian Gulf. In the first step, the Shah sought the normalization of Iran's relations with the ex-Soviet Union. The economic and military treaties of 1966 and 1967 marked a turning point in Iranian-Soviet relations. That provided the Shah with a new source of bargaining power with the West, strengthened his position against Arab monarchies and the new republic in MENA (Avery et al., 1991, p. 449).

In the second step after the Arab-Israeli war in 1967, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi tried to perform a tightrope act between the Arab states and Israel, considering its ties with Tel Aviv on the one hand, and its sympathy with the Palestinians on the other. Hence, relations improved after Egypt's defeat in the six-day war of June 1967 and in the 1970s became friendly under President Anwar Sadat, and also provided, or promised, aid to Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco and the Sudan. In other words, the Shah sought to settle some of Iran's disputes with its neighboring states and use oil wealth to offer capital aid. When Sadat came to power in October 1970, the post-Nasser Egypt adopted a more westward-looking foreign policy, which naturally brought it closer to the monarchy in Tehran. Virtually alone and isolated among Middle Eastern leaders, the Shah endorsed the Camp David Accords and denied the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) embassy status in Iran in the mid-1970s (Friedman, 2006, p. 289).

In the third step and simultaneously throughout the Persian Gulf region, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi tried to settle its age-old conflicts with Arab Sheikdoms and Iraq in the Persian Gulf and the Shatt al-Arab waterway. In this context, Bahrain declared its independence from Iran in the spring of 1971. In addition, dispatching of an Imperial Iranian Brigade Group to suppress and defeat the Soviet-backed rebellion in Oman's Southern province of Dhofar in 1973, as well as the 1975 Algiers Agreement with Iraq to settle the border conflicts and the Kurdish revolt, highlighted the new approach to foreign relations of the Shah of Iran in the region. As a result, the Shah began to play a larger role in Persian Gulf affairs (Curtis and Hooglund, 2008, p. 42). Thus by the time the mass street protest in Iran began in 1977, the Shah's regional and international policy had been so successful that his only enemy was Colonel Gaddafi of Libya.

This process represented a pragmatic-realistic transformation in the foreign policy of the Shah from positive nationalism to independent national policy (Ramazani, 1970, pp. 427-8, 437). That led to détente in Iran's balanced relations with all friendly or potentially friendly Arab states in MENA during the third period of the foreign policy of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi .

Economically, oil income grew dramatically due to price increases and production control during the second half of the 1960s until mid-1970, which marked Iran's transition to a state-directed market economy. This brought Mohammed Reza Pahlavi unprecedented wealth and diplomatic strength, with increasing influence in regional and world politics (Ehteshami, 2017, p. 21).

In addition, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was under the Shah's leadership during the early 1970s, and that dramatically altered Iranian economy and its foreign policy in MENA. For instance, OPEC declared an embargo on oil sales to the West as a protest against Western support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War against Egypt and Syria. The price of oil therefore increased fourfold and created a windfall for oil-producing countries like Iran.

In effect, post-WW2 Iranian foreign relations and policy have completed a full circle, from rejection of an alliance policy in the first phase to its acceptance in the second, and finally to the de facto non-alignment within the pro-Western alliance that characterizes Iran's contemporary regional and international posture. By the early 1970s, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi defined the Iranian foreign policy and relations well beyond the geographical perimeters of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf.

### Conclusion

In the national area, the first variable refers to the beliefs system of the policy-makers. This factor is, nevertheless, linked to personal values, personality and psychological traits, and ideological preferences, and the individual's perceptions of them. The Safavid charismatic ruler, Shah Ismail I, could be primarily the remarkable sample as an ideological governor. Some of the Shahs, such as Shah Ismail I and Shah Tahmasp, are often accused of religious bigotry in the area of foreign relations between the Sunni Ottoman and Shia Safavid dominions. So, the Shiafication and Iranization of the Safavid Empire resulted in a regional split. That is because the Ottoman sultans which were Sunni in faith declared war against the Shia Safavid. Since the mid-fifteenth century with the Peace Treaty of Amasya under Shah Tahmasp and then Shah Abbas I, political, religious and economic pragmatism enabled the Safavid elites to replace the early radical faith. The Safavid shahs stayed on top of competing bureaucratic interests and foreign decision making. Shah Abbas I was succeeded by a series of weak rulers, while the administrative and bureaucratic order in foreign policy simply degenerated into chaos.

Nader was an absolute monarch in Afsharid creating his domain based on religious tolerance. Actually, the militaristic approach of Nader Shah affected regional and international foreign relations with his territorial ambitions. In other words, the foreign policy and relations had been generally militarized under the reign of Afsharid.

While Karim Khan Zand may not have been the great conqueror and military man that Nader Shah was, he has often been represented as a capable and humble ruler. In truth, the charismatic governors made impressions on the Persian foreign relations in the Middle East during the Safavid, Afsharid and Zand's reigns. As such, Shah Ismail I, Shah Abbas I, Nader Shah and Karim Khan Zand were the major rulers in this respect.

The decline of the Persian position in the Middle East and foreign dependence since the early nineteenth century was simply due to lack of intelligence on the part of the Qajar monarchs and their inability to secure territorial integrity. The Qajar kings, moreover, did not possess the charisma enjoyed by their predecessors.

Pahlavi I, Reza Shah, exercised ruthless, dictatorial powers, turning Iran into a despotic state. Mohammed Reza Pahlavi entered his state the era of the new authoritarianism during the post-1953 period and became dependent on the West.

The rulers' interest in political survival has been the second national variable. The Shahs' principal concern from the Safavid until the Pahlavi dynasties had been to maintain their own power and survival in the face of danger by internal disloyalty and external raids. Survival of an independent Iran during the ideological rulers, such as Shah Ismail I, was directly due to the intense rivalry with the Ottomans or the other competitors, while ideology could be the main instrument for political survival and internal unity. This ideological foreign policy gave the Persian governors room for maneuver in the region, but to play the game required hostility between the two rivals on a broader stage.

Political, religious and economic pragmatism enabled the monarchs to moderate the previous ideological faith. As such, the peace treaties, commercial ties and negotiations in political disputes could result in more survival of the political establishment. Shah Tahmasp I, apart from his religious bias, and Shah Abbas I of the Safavid, Nader Shah Afsahr, and Karim Khan Zand were the main pragmatic kings during the early modern Persia era in their foreign relations. Nader Shah utilized his expansionist and militaristic approaches for internal unity and royal survival.

As is often the case in Iranian history, when the central government became weak there was a trend toward local chaos. The autocratic and incapable rulers, pragmatically, resorted to the structure, mainly the western powers or the third powers, by granting concessions, mostly trade and military ones, to secure their governance against the internal oppositions and the invasions of the other external powers. The Qajar was facing foreign powers, which it could not overcome, compete with or neutralize, and could only try to play one against the other in the hope of moderating their power and influence. The two Shahs of the Pahlavi gradually consolidated their own power under the shadow of the structure's support, in particular Britain and the United States. Domestically, when the last Shah of Iran encountered the crisis of domestic legitimacy and a deep gap with non-governmental circles, such as what happened following the coup of 1953 and the uprising on 4 June 1963, he attempted to resort to the structure for his crown and survival. In return for Iran's dependence on the United States and alliance with the West, the Shah expected the survival of his rule. However, extensive foreign support enabled the Shah to manipulate the nation more tyrannically and centralized politics to an unprecedented degree around the monarchy, which repressed domestic opposition.

Political economy could be considered as the third internal variable. Regional political relations were somewhat overshadowed by economic and commercial ties. Persian economy was part of the world economy since the reign of the Safavid up to the Pahlavi, and silk, textiles, carpet, and pearls as well as oil were the main natural commodities, which constituted Persian principal supplies.

In addition, the importance of Persia was as a transit trade and distribution center that shared this feature, to a lesser extent, with the Ottoman Empire. However, production had declined because of the regional conflicts, such as the Persian-Turkish battles and the world wars. As another example, the Ottoman Empire imposed sanctions banning the supply of

military-related materials, such as metal, on Persia. On the other side, during the Perso-Ottoman peaceful relationships; e.g. the post-1555 Peace Treaty of Amasya, the post-1639 Peace Treaty of Zuhab and the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century after the Treaties of Erzurum in 1823 and 1848; it is possible to discuss peaceable communications in MENA.

Regarding the new trade routes, Shah Abbas I promoted international trade, mostly silk, which had begun to develop since Shah Tahmasp I. Shah Abbas I, Nader Shah Afshar and Karim Khan Zand allowed the European companies to pursue foreign trade in the Persian Gulf and an alliance with the third powers in order to shift trade routes and end the Ottoman domination of Basra as well as its overland monopoly. Notably, prior to Persian Gulf sea-lane, Persian commodities were traded by the Ottoman overland route. The traditional routes to the Levant via Iran, Anatolia and Mesopotamia continued well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the era of sea trade, maritime transportation played a critical role in international trade and the Persian role in transcontinental commerce connections opened up in advance by the Europeans via the Persian Gulf and the Cape of Good Hope at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, mounting by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.

Moreover, the lack of complementary products between Iran and the Middle Eastern states has resulted in further rivalry. For instance, Persian silk was cheaper than the Ottoman silk in Mediterranean ports between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, while oil had the same situation during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Iran shared another feature with the Ottoman Empire, both of which saw a strong transit trade use their territory on its way to European markets. Consequently, economic interests of the Persians were, to some extent, contrasted with the interests of the Ottomans leading to more Persian-Turkish competitions and hostilities.

The role of Iran in international trade organizations altered its foreign relations in MENA, such as leadership of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi on OPEC during the third phase of his foreign policy. The Persian and the Ottoman states were affected by European economic imperialism during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, predominantly that of Britain and Russia, which attempted to dominate Persian trade of raw materials, such as, silk, cotton, opium and then oil by monopolistic concessions. There was the economic collapse during the Qajar, which had left Persia with little economic surplus in its foreign trade. The world wars together with the Great Depression in the world economy during the two wars had adverse effects for the Iranian economy, its balance of trade and its foreign relations.

Since the discovery of oil in Iran and the beginning of the age of oil in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was by far the country's largest modern industry, and Britain, as a main pillar in the international structure, relied on Iranian oil supplies to fuel the Royal Navy. The oil industry during the Pahlavi has played a notable role in the economy of modern Iran, especially as a source of foreign exchange within the international markets.

The geopolitics of Persia, as the fourth national variable, has been historically both threatening and advantageous. As the gateway between Europe and Asia, Iran has been a geopolitically significant country for centuries, whose landmass has acted as a barrier, bridge, or container for major overseas powers. The geopolitical position of Qajar Persia turned it into a strategic buffer state both for Britain, as the non-resident power, in the Persian Gulf and the north from Russia. Napoleonic France was a rival with the Ottomans in the west. Eventually, the United States and Russia during the Cold War were deeply distrustful of each other's motives in MENA. The biggest help to the Allies' World War II effort was the so-called Persian Corridor. Nevertheless, due to the location of Iran in the Middle East at what was still a strategic and

geopolitical crossroads of commercial exchange, Safavid Iran took advantage of its position in its extra-regional relations in order to contain the Ottomans.

Furthermore, Iran has always been a heterogeneous state and in its modern form is an amalgam of nationalities, religions and ethnicities, crisscrossed by various communities of different sizes and significance. On this basis, proxy tribes based in the frontier areas were one of the main sources of the Persian-Turkish conflicts since the Safavid until the end of Qajar dynasties and WWI. Unlike the Qajars, the Safavid kings played a significant role in giving the country many of its identity pillars by the overlapping religious, geopolitical and territorial boundaries it produced, and its status as the first Iranian nation-state. On the other hand, the physical geography (territorial boundaries) of Persia did not correspond with the political geography (geopolitics) during the Afsharid, which resulted in domestic anarchy after Nader Shah. This trend represents that the agent declined, for instance in the arena of foreign policy.

The Geographical Realm of the agent, as the fifth variable, affects the decision-making in the area of foreign policy that has been more advantageous in the history of Persia. Geography has already prevented the Persians from breaking out of the country by way of military conquest, while the Iranian Plateau and heartland was also protected by mountain ranges and oceans. This parameter has been historically threatening as well. Nader Shah ultimately lost his control of the remote areas of the Persian plateau which resulted in turmoil in the east and the same event was happening during the Qajar in the south. The power of the central government during the late Safavid and Afsharid had gradually decreased in the eastern boundaries. The death of Nader also led to civil war due to geographical realm of the Afsharid. Yet it proved difficult for the Qajars to hold their distant outposts in the northern and eastern sections of their domains, so Persia lost its aforementioned integral territories.

The first influential ultra-nationalist variable accounts for the dominant world order and its mutual relations with the Middle Eastern system. It must pay due attention to the sub-systematic changes that the whole region has been undergoing in relation to the international order. The Ottoman and Safavid Empires formed the two great Muslim empires of the so-called early modern Middle East. For Muslims the empires were the last era of Muslim worldly greatness, which was overwhelmed by the onset from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century of Western power.

Safavid Iran, from the early 16<sup>th</sup> up to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the Afsharid under the reign of Nader Shah, was firmly embedded within an Islamicate structure surrounded by the triangle of the Sunni Ottomans in MENA, the Uzbeks of Transoxiana and the Mughal India, which together with the European powers formed an interrelated kind of world system. Accordingly, the two major successive dynasties of the Safavid and the Afsharid since the early 16<sup>th</sup> up to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, predominantly until the fall of Shah Abbas I and the rule of Nader Shah Afshar, Persia was a cornerstone of the regional and international order during these terms. This trend, after the first two generations of Shah Abbas I, changed and caused the Safavids to turn from the pillar of the structure into the subordinate of the system. Likewise, Persia was not an international agent since the Zand until the fall of the Pahlavi.

However, subsequent of the interference of the Europeans and decline of the Ottoman sultans and the Persian shahs, the regional and the international order changed, leading to the demise of the bipolar order in MENA. The Persian agent, nonetheless, was subordinated to the mentioned structure and order during the Qajar and it was still considered as the periphery state in the global system. The international system encountered a transitional period during the post-WWI era until the outset of WWII when Pahlavi I ruled Iran. The Cold War atmosphere and the

bipolar system had strong effects on the foundations of the foreign relations of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi .

The second ultra-nationalist variable comprises the realities within the agent-structure arena and their mutual interactions. This concept has influenced Persian foreign relations in MENA in the form of regional cooperation, competition and conflict. The Ottoman Empire was the only empire in MENA bordering on Persia from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century up to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which could be considered two equal and rival political systems. Accordingly, bilateral relationships between Persia and the Ottoman states were overshadowed by the attitudes of diplomacy and conflicts. Strategic attempts were made against the Persian dynasties or the Ottoman Empire to eliminate the other regional competitor, for instance under the revisionist Shah Ismail I. Centrifugal forces and rivalry amongst the domestic ethnic minorities politically and ideologically, however, weakened the authority of the Ottomans and Persians. Therefore, a state of competition was considered to be the normal relationship amongst the leading Middle Eastern powers and the balance of power continued to swing.

Karim Khan Zand, like Shah Abbas I and Nader Shah Afshar, displayed a positive dialectics with the Ottoman Empire and European powers. Due to these interactions, the Zand Persia had the relatively peaceful relations in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf based on the status quo. However, the long-standing rivalry between Persia and the Ottomans extended by the end of the Qajar dynasty. This monarchy and the Ottomans, in truth, reestablished the status quo in the Middle East during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the Treaties of Erzurum was mainly influenced by the main international powers.

Reza Pahlavi reinforced Iranian relations with its immediate neighbors and enjoyed substantial success in his foreign policy in the Middle East. So, in an era of regional pacts, his government formed a system of alliances with its neighbors. During the post-WW II era, Iranian foreign relations in MENA completed a circle, from negative equilibrium and de facto non-alignment during the pre-coup to the pro-Western alliance and regional competition after 1953, followed by the regional cooperation and détente from the international détente in the mid-1960s and the post-Vietnam War.

The agent-structure interdependence also is divided into symmetrical and asymmetrical forms. Foreign relations of Shah Ismail I with the Ottoman Turks was asymmetrical based on active confrontation until 1515, while the same situations happened in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and the early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Just during the post-Amasya and post-Zuhab Safavid as well as the reign of Nader Shah Afshar, excluding the pre-1733 conflicts, symmetrical interdependence with inactive confrontation in foreign relations with the Porte was determined. On this basis, Iranian dialectics during the Safavid and Afsharid dynasties was predominantly positive interaction with the regional and international structures.

Foreign relations of the Zand government and the Ottoman Empire represented symmetrical interdependence on the basis of the regional status quo. Likewise, the Qajar dynasty's mutual interactions with the Porte post-1848, the regional foreign relations of Pahlavi I between the World Wars, as well as Mohammed Reza Pahlavi throughout the Cold War, were mostly overshadowed by the penetrating powers in MENA and the international atmosphere based on status quo and inactive confrontation. However, the foreign relations of Qajar Persia with the Turks was symmetrical based on active confrontation from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the Treaties of Erzurum. Moreover, the internal and external developments led to positive dialectics in the pro-Western Mohammed Reza Pahlavi 's foreign relations while excluding, to some extent, the quasi-negative Mosaddegh's government.

Another factor refers to the agent's non-governmental circles affecting decision making in foreign policy and relations. The administration of the Safavid Empire had been centralized in the hands of the shah with the help of Ulema (Shia clerical class) and Qizilbash during the reign of Shah Ismail I and Shah Tahmasp. The system of military slavery, instead of Qizilbash, during the reign of Shah Abbas I, in addition to Ulema and Harem, was extended to the administration and policy-making system directly subordinated to the king himself that conducted foreign relations. After him a rapid decline set in, caused by the irresponsibility of the rulers, permitting a several-sided struggle between the non-governmental circles. Most important among these were the Shia clerical class, who came to dominate court politics. Thereafter, the non-governmental circles did not advocate the agent during the late Safavid era and this trend weakened the central authority and led to civil war and foreign invasions.

Nader Shah Afshar, the same as the other dynasties, was the ultimate arbiter and decision maker in foreign policy, and non-governmental circles were not powerful in policy-making in that time. During the reign of the Zand dynasty, the Vakil was able to build a measure of trust and a new balance amongst the non-governmental elements, including Ulema, and the bureaucrats.

The administrative system during the Qajar dynasty was decentralized, while the provincial governors had a free hand in their seats of power so long as they observed the requirements of the central authority. The viziers in the Qajar court influenced Persian foreign policy, such as the policy of negative equilibrium by Chief Minister Amir Kabir. Nonetheless, some degree of European influence would permeate a circle of Iranians, mainly members of the royal family, bureaucrats, and senior officials.

Due to the autonomy of the Shia cities and seminaries primarily under the Ottoman Empire, the oppositional role of the Ulema in Qajar Iran is well documented; however, many of them admitted the status quo and worked with the agents of government. The Iranian parliament became the major focus of the foreign policy-making process from the time of the late Qajar dynasty and during the Pahlavi dynasty. However, Reza Khan and his successor curtailed the power of the non-governmental forces, specifically, the religious leaders and the leftists.

Finally, the last ultra-nationalist variable refers to the regional systemic status. In fact, orderly international system during the wars and a world in transition influenced the Iranian dialectics in MENA. Regional disorder and chaos occurred during the period between the Safavid and the Afsharid dynasties, as well as between the Qajar and the Pahlavi dynasties. That led to Western powers beginning to penetrate in the MENA region during the early Safavid dynasty, reaching its climax during the Qajar and the Pahlavi monarchies.

The downfall of the Safavids approximately coincided with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the beginning of an era of decline among the Ottomans, mostly following their failure at Vienna in 1683. As a result, during the crisis in the international system in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the Industrial Revolution in the period from about 1760 to sometime between 1820 and 1840, the international structure went through a period of transition.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and in the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, MENA and the peripheral Persia sandwiched between the Western powers that collapsed the regional structure. The close of WWI and WWII found MENA and also Iran respectively in a state of anarchy.

The early 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were a period of a world in transition, while the rise of the Western powers and decline of the Ottoman Empire in some ways parallels that of the Afsharid and Qajar dynasties in Persia. A picture could be painted of a region that was politically



fractured with fragile order in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, during the post-1823 Qajar dynasty up to WWI, as well as under the Cold War.

In conclusion, the national and ultra-nationalist variables have demonstrated that the Iranian dialectics in MENA since the rise of the Safavid dynasty until the fall of Pahlavi dynasty was positive and cooperative, while it was quasi-negative under the first phase of the foreign relations of Reza Pahlavi. In other words, the cooperative dialectics amongst the Persian agent and the international structure in MENA is the main feature of this era.

<b>Theoretical Framework of the Iranian Dialectics in the Modern Middle East (1501-1979)</b>					
<b>Variables/Indicators</b>	<b>Safavid</b>	<b>Afsharid</b>	<b>Zand</b>	<b>Qajar</b>	<b>Pahlavi</b>
<b>Beliefs System</b>	-Shiafication and Iranization of foreign policy -Early Shahs with religious bigotry -Pragmatic Shahs, mid-16 <sup>th</sup> -mid-17 <sup>th</sup> centuries -Charismatic Ismail I and Abbas I	-Charismatic Nader -Military man -Religious tolerance -Territorial ambitions	-Charismatic Karim -Humble ruler -Not conqueror	-Lack of intelligence	-Reza Pahlavi: ruthless & dictatorial power -Mohammed Reza Pahlavi : new authoritarian shah -Dependent on the West
<b>Political Survival</b>	-Ideology during the pre-1514 era -Third Power after 1514 -Pragmatism during the post-1555 era	-Expansionism & militaristic approaches -Pragmatism	-Pragmatism	-Resort to Europe & third power	-Reza Pahlavi : Resort to the third power of Nazi Germany - Mohammed Reza Pahlavi : Alliance with the West
<b>Political Economy</b>	-Transit trade & distribution center -Lack of complementary products between Iran and the Middle Eastern states				
	-Silk, textile and pearls as principle exports -New Persian Gulf sea-lane & shift in trade routes away from the Ottoman overland route -Alliance with the third power(s) in trade			-European economic imperialism -Concessions -Persian economic collapse	-Oil as a principle export -Role of Iran in OPEC -High price of oil in 1970s
	-Sanctions on Persia by the Turks	-----			
<b>Geopolitics of Iran</b>	-Threatening: Foreign invasions & interference due to the location of Iran in the Middle East; heterogeneous & multi-ethnic Iran -Advantages: international crossroad of commercial, cultural and political exchange				
	-Proxy tribes in the frontier areas		-Buffer zone		-Role of Iran during the Cold War
	-Overlapping of religious, geopolitical and territorial boundaries -Persian identity	-No overlapping of physical and political boundaries -expansion			
<b>Geographical Realm</b>	-Advantages: Difficult to conquer Iran				

	-Revolt in the late Safavid dynasty	-Civil war after Nader	-----	-Crisis in the south & the east	-----
<b>World Order</b>	-Ottoman hegemony (mid-16 <sup>th</sup> century) -Multi-polar or interrelated world system (mid-16 <sup>th</sup> to mid-18 <sup>th</sup> centuries)		-European hegemony		-World in transition (post-WWI) -Bipolar (post-WWII)
<b>International Division of Labor</b>	-International trade revolution & export of raw materials to the West -Revenue from transit trade -Modest player in the global commercial economy			-Opening of the Suez Canal -Less fashionable handmade products -Decline in Iran's role	-Rise in Iran's role since 1908 -Extra-regional oil trade
<b>Realities within the Agent-Structure</b>	-Regional competition				-Subordinate Persia
	-Revisionist Shah Ismail & Ottoman -Status quo and balance of power in MENA during the post-1555 & post-1639 eras -Revisionist Ottoman in the late 17 <sup>th</sup> & early 18 <sup>th</sup> centuries	-Status quo and balance of power during Nader -Revisionist Ottoman after Nader	-Status quo	-Status quo in post-1823 -Subordinate Persia to the international System	-Pahlavi I: Regional Cooperation -Mohammed Reza Pahlavi : Negative equilibrium before 1953; Regional competition after 1953; detente after 1966
<b>Interdependence in MENA</b>	-Asymmetrical & active confrontation until 1515, the late 16 <sup>th</sup> & the early 18 <sup>th</sup> centuries -Symmetrical & inactive confrontation after 1555 & 1639 -Symmetrical & inactive confrontation, before 1733	-Symmetrical & inactive confrontation, exc. the 1775-6 war	-Symmetrical & active confrontation before 1823 -Symmetrical & inactive confrontation after 1823	-Symmetrical & inactive confrontation between the wars & after 1967 -Symmetrical & active confrontation before 1967	
<b>Bureaucracy</b>	-Role of Shah, the Ulema and Qizilbash before Abbas -Role of Shah, Ulema, Harem & Slaves during the Abbas after him	-Role of Nader	-Role of Karim, Ulema and bureaucrats	-Role of Shah, provincial governors, viziers & Ministry of Foreign Affairs -Oppositional role of Ulema but the status quo	-Role of Shah, foreign minister & parliament -limitations on non-governmental circles
<b>Systemic Situations</b>	-Regional disorder in the early 16 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup> centuries and the late 16 <sup>th</sup> century	-Regional order after 1733	-Regional orderly. the 1775-6 war	-Regional disorder before 1823 -Fragile regional order	-World in transition after WWI -MENA in transition since

	-Fragile regional order in the mid-16 <sup>th</sup> & 17 <sup>th</sup> centuries -World in transition in the mid-16 <sup>th</sup> century			until WWI	1919 -Fragile regional order under the Cold War
Iranian Positive Dialectics; excluding The Quasi-Negative Dialectics of Mosaddegh' government.					

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