The Iranian Revolution in 1979 transformed Iran from a monarchy under the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to an Islamic Republic under Ayatollah Khomeini, an aging cleric, as the leader and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran. After the French and Russian revolutions, it has been called the third revolution in the world. It was unique for its surprised created throughout the world. It lacked many of the customary causes of revolutions such as defeat in war, financial crisis, peasant rebellion or disgruntled military in which produce profound change at great speed and overthrow a regime thought to be heavily protected by a lavishly financed army and security services. It replaced an ancient monarchy with a theocracy based on Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist (Velayat-e Faqih).

This revolution as a revolution without borders was chanting “Neither East nor West but Islamic Republic”. It introduced itself as a seamless revolution in the world and proclaimed to have a new way of ruling for the world’s countries especially the third world and Islamic countries. Through integration of republicanism and religion, it was to rule religion on elective and democratic institutions, in other word, confining liberalism to religious injunctions. From its inception, the Islamic Republic was to create conditions under which may be nurtured and protected the noble and universal values of Islam. To achieve this mission, unelected institutions such as the Supreme Leader and the Guardian
Council were created and empowered with the ultimate authority over national affairs.

The present research is to survey relation between religion and government in the Islamic Republic of Iran. For this purpose, it has been focused on the roots of the Iranian Revolution victory along with a diverse coalition of political parties and groups such as liberals, communists and fundamentalists. consolidation of the Islamic power during the first years of the revolution through two chief events of the US embassy taking hostage on November 4, 1979 and international conflict of Iraq’s invasion to Iran on September 22, 1980 and eliminating dissent parties and groups and solidifying religious sovereignty on the country. Power structure according to the constitution including elective and non-elective institutions and related amendments in offices leadership, legislature, executive, guardian council and other parts are on the major focus of this study. Nevertheless, it was on 6 June 1989 that Iran changed domestically and internationally with the death of Ayatollah Khomeini. Three tendencies emerged in Iran’s political sphere, pragmatists stressing the need for a greater focus on the economy, hard-liners insisting that their mandate from God empowered them to disregard popular aspirations, and reformers stressing the need for a more tolerant theocracy began to battle one another for influence and power. Moreover, the philosophy of Jurisprudence (Velayat-e Faqih) and its pro and anti views and its compatibility with democratic parameters have been examined.

Another significant issue of the Islamic republic of Iran is its foreign policy especially towards the region countries and in this regard, Iran’s relation with them and having ideological influence on them in the name of exporting its revolution have been discussed. Whereas Iran has been called as the “axe of evil” by the Bush administration after September 11, 2001, this research is to discuss its international and domestic effects on Iran. Today the Islamic Republic stands at a crossroads. As Iran nuclear program matures and becomes the subject of
international scrutiny, another dynamic is entering the debate: public opinion. This debate and defense of it has been the significant and main strategy of Iran’s foreign policy, therefore, these themes as the controversial parts of Iran’s foreign policy have been discussed.

The present study is based on library research, both primary and secondary sources have been used to understand and explain the Islamic Republic of Iran. The primary sources include the original writings and the correspondents by the authorities of Iran like leadership, president, the parliamentary debates, press… and numbers of articles, which have been written in both Persian and English. The secondary sources include the researches based on religious, political, revolutionary and Islamic studies … related Iran both in Persian as well as in English carried on by Iranian and foreign scholars as well. The memoirs and biographies of Iranian authorities especially Ayatollah Khomeini, have been formed the major sources of research material. The following chapters are prepared for this study.

The revolution gave rise to a variety of political movements, ranging from reactionary to liberal, fundamentalist to secular, Marxist to capitalist. Ayatollah Khomeini was the leader, but by no means the only actor in one of the momentous revolutions in modern Middle Eastern history. The pathway to consolidation of clerical power came through the creation of a constitutional order that made secular and liberal inroads impossible. Two chief events in the early years of the revolution led to consolidate revolutionaries’ power. One, taking over the US embassy in Tehran by a group of Iranian students on Sunday, November 4, 1979, which led to a crisis that would last 444 days. The ostensible and alleged purpose of the hostage taking was the students’ alarm that the admission of the ailing Shah to the United States for medical treatment was an attempt by Washington to orchestrate a coup against nascent revolution like the coup of 1953. Two, it was on September 22, 1980 that an international conflict of
Iraq’s invasion to Iran convulsed the republic and paved the way for the complete control of the state by revolutionaries or in more precise word by clerics. The Iraqi invasion was intended to destroy the theocratic regime, but it ended up buttressing the revolution and subverting the remaining moderates within the republic. The war transformed the internal debates and the nature of the Iranian political landscape. Throughout the 1980s, war, martyrdom, sacrifice, and vengeance were the themes of Iranian politics and national discourse.

The midst of the enveloping turmoil, Iran held elections for parliament and for the Assembly of Experts, which was to evaluate the draft constitution. In the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, the clerical hard-liners and their political party, the Islamic Republican Party (IRP), came to dominate the new parliament, further buttressing their encroaching institutional dominance. In a similar vein, the Islamist forces captured the majority of seats in the Assembly of Experts, ensuring them a commanding voice in the revision of the constitution. Ayatollah Khomeini blessed the new assembly, insisting that the “constitution must be 100 percent Islamic.” On 3 December 1979, the draft constitution approbated which led to create unprecedented theory of *Velayat-e Faqih* (Jurisprudence). By creating non-elected institutions such as the Guardian Council that had the power to veto parliamentary legislation and presidential determinations, the new system ensured that the decisions of the elected branches of government would not effect the essential demarcations of power. This office had virtually unlimited responsibilities and was empowered to command the armed forces and the newly created Revolutionary Guards; ordering referendum; declaring war and peace and ordering mobilization of forces; Signing the decree endorsing the president on his election; dismiss any elected official; countermand parliamentary legislation. The new office was subject neither to elections nor to the scrutiny of the elected institutions and the larger public. Islamic law was to displace the existing legal codes, circumscribing individual rights and prerogatives.
During his first two years in power, Ayatollah Khomeini’s achievements were considerable. He implemented the Islamic ideology that he had spent decades developing and refining, and he created a new constitutional system with clear redlines and an elite loyal to his vision, which ensured that the Islamic Republic would survive his passing. Iran would now be guided by activist clerics and a strict interpretation of Shiite Islam. Alternative ideologies such as liberalism or secularism and politicians and clerics challenging of the velayat-e faqih were simply excluded from the councils of power. To be part of the ruling echelon one had to be committed to the Islamic Republic and its mission of salvation.

After death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989; three political tendencies emerged in the struggle for the leadership of the Islamic Republic, all led by very different clerical politicians. The hard-liners, united by their contempt for democratic pluralism and their determination to sustain Ayatollah Khomeini’s legacy, would ultimately settle on Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as their standard-bearer. The more moderate and pragmatic elements within the clerical hierarchy would coalesce around Iran’s ultimate political insider, Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. These more tempered clerics believed that the perpetuation of Islamic rule mandated a greater attention to the economic deficiencies of the state and integration into the global economy. The pragmatists would press for a degree of cultural freedom and normalized relations with states that Ayatollah Khomeini had long castigated. Finally, the Islamic Republic featured a dynamic cadre of clerical and intellectual reformers who stressed that the legitimacy of the state was contingent on the vitality of its representative institutions by Khatami’s leadership. Also drawing on Ayatollah Khomeini’s legacy, they emphasized the elected branches of the state and the importance of popular will in charting the national course.
Internationally, the best way to understand Iran’s foreign policy is to imagine Iran with three competing elements - Islamic ideology, national interests and factional politics - all constantly at battle. As such, Iran’s policy has always been characterized by a degree of inconsistency and wild oscillation between pragmatism and dogma. This central paradox has perplexed both critics and supporters of Iran’s regime. The first decade of the revolution was indeed a heady time for the founder of the world’s first modern theocracy, Ayatollah Khomeini who did not see himself as a head of state but the leader of the entire community believers. This was to be a “revolution without borders”, seeking to emancipate the Islamic ummah from the transgression of American imperialism and Israel Zionism. Ayatollah Khomeini’s subdued successors gradually came to appreciate that his diplomacy had not only isolated Iran in the region but paved the way for a more robust American presence in their neighborhood. By the time of Ayatollah Khomeini’s death in 1989, Iran’s revolutionary foreign policy had not achieved any of its objectives. Tehran’s attempt to export its revolution had not merely failed; it had led the Persian Gulf states to solidify against Iran. Leading regional actors such as Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic ties with the Islamic Republic, while the sheikdoms put aside their historic enmities and came together in the Gulf Cooperation Council, an organization largely devoted to containing Iranian influence. Iran may perceive itself as uniquely aggrieved by the great powers’ machinations and it may nurse aspirations to emerge as the regional leader. The Islamic Republic may take an ideologically uncompromising position toward Israel, yet pragmatically deal with its historic Russian nemesis. The tensions between Iran’s ideals and interests, between its aspirations and limits, will continue to produce a foreign policy that is often inconsistent and contradictory.

Today the Islamic Republic stands at a crossroads. For nearly five years, Iran was involved in delicate negotiations with Britain, France, Germany and European Union regarding the direction of its nuclear program. Subsequently, it
began contemplating a plan for outsourcing its nuclear enrichment activities to Russia. As Iran nuclear program becomes the subject of deliberations at the UN Security Council, it is time for a more imaginative approach. As Iran’s nuclear program becomes the subject of international scrutiny, another dynamic is entering the debate: public opinion. Far from being a source of restraint, the emerging public sentiment is that Iran, as a great civilization with a long history, has a right to acquire a nuclear capability. The recent disclosures of the sophisticated nature of Iran’s nuclear program have been a source of pride for a citizenry accustomed to the revolution’s failures and setbacks. Iran’s experience during the past quarter-century with war, sanctions, and estrangement from the international community has fostered a population that is somewhat unresponsive to external pressures. Iran today is a nation in search of an identity, a state that oscillates between promises of democratic modernity and retrogressive traditions. The call for representation and the rule of law, for accountability and equality, have transformed the average Iranian from a passive observer of clerical politics into an active agent of change.