CHAPTER - VII
Chapter VII

The Iranian Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini and The Road To The Collapse of the Shah (1978-1979)

(a) The Background To The Iranian Revolution

During the decade of political stability (1964-1974) Iran had witnessed an unprecedented prosperity in terms of rising standard of living for most of its citizens in the urban centres. But such a period of prosperity had been followed by an intervening phase (1974-1976), which had been marked by the high point of Shah's royal dictatorship as well as a dramatic upsurge in Iran's international activities. In such a scenario it had seemed quite paradoxical that the turbulent courses of the revolutionary upsurge that had engulfed Iran beginning in January 1978 should have followed such periods of domestic stability.

By way of background, it may be stated that the outbreak of the Iranian Revolution had resulted largely due to Shah's failure to capitalize on the gains he had accrued through the launching of the "White Revolution" in 1963. In fact, the Shah had very soon found himself completely pre-occupied with numerous socio-economic problems such as the spiralling inflation, increasing corruption at all levels, and mounting inequalities among various categories
of Iranian population. On the political front, the Shah did not make any serious effort at liberalization and had instead perpetrated severe repressions against his domestic opponents through the agency of SAVAK. These developments, in fact, had prompted some Iranian masses to launch non-violent popular protests beginning in January 1977. These protests, however, had become violent upheavals against the Shah beginning with the Qom and Tabriz uprisings (January-February 1978), which in fact, had marked the beginning point of the "Iranian Revolution".

It may be stated that after consolidating his position in 1964, the Shah had resorted to a policy of broadening his power base in the country through a series of guided socio-economic reforms ostensibly under American insistence. In the process, had resulted a break-up of the traditional power base in Iran namely, the landlords and the "Ulama" (divines) and the emergence of a new middle class power centre rallied around the civil servants, peasants, and urban workers who had profitted enormously from the White Revolution. But a grave dichotomy was witnessed in Iran since though its socio-economic conditions had improved, there was absolutely no mobility on the political front. In practical terms the secret police (SAVAK) and the armed forces had resorted to a severe repression against any slight manifestation of domestic opposition to the Shah.

631. Abidi, n. 287, p. 134
632. For details Halliday, n. 291, p. 27
633. For details see Abidi, n. 287, pp. 134-135
With regard to the economic scene, the achievements made under the Shah had proved to be quite "illusory". To begin with, though Iran had traditionally been an agricultural country, but due to lack of coordination in the implementation of land reforms, the agrarian sector had suffered a great setback. For instance, after the initial phase of land reforms had been achieved through the "White Revolution", big and influential land holders had succeeded in acquiring large tracts of land from the small and indigent farmers, as the latter had decided to shift to urban centres in search of jobs. In the process, agricultural output had not only declined sharply in the rural sector but also that fresh socio-economic problems had been generated in the urban centres through such huge influx of population. 634

Besides, this, the industrial structure as evolved by the Shah had been highly unsatisfactory. For instance, most of the Iranian industrial establishments had been capital-based and also that most of these had been owned exclusively either by the members of royal family and courtiers or by foreigners who had merely resorted to an assembling of imported parts. The only stable enterprise namely, the oil industry, had not however, been able to absorb more than one percent of the economically active population. The other employment opportunities had been provided by the construction and

634. For details see Robert Graham, Iran: The Illusion of Power (New York, 1979), Chapter III
manufacturing industries, whose span had been both "seasonal" as well as "limited". Thus, the economic base of Iranian growth had been quite "illusory".

Also, the Shah's regime had become quite vulnerable towards the end of 1976 due to its lack of nationalist legitimacy as well as the Iranian ruler's indifference to the popular desire for political participation. In the process had emerged, an "official Tehran" which had been presented to the outside world as, "busy go-ahead, technologically-minded under the leadership of a far-seeing and benevolent autocrat" and an "unofficial Tehran", which was "seething with revolt". It may be significant to mention that even a celebrated royal personality like the Iranian Empress Farah had been kept deliberately in darkness concerning the activities of an arch enemy of the Shah namely, Ayatollah Khomeini until May 1978.

Further, in his anxiety to promote rapid process of industrialization in Iran, the Shah had resorted to the construction of a few show-piece projects as well as a few pockets of industrial centres in some urban areas, which, however, had brought about a lop-sided economic development. In the process had emerged a few symbols of "Western permissive culture namely, "the night clubs, casinos, bars

635. For details see Abidi, n. 287, pp. 135-136
636. Cottam, n. 221, p. 155
637. For details see Heikel, n. 160, p. 123
and boutiques", which had become real eyesores to all traditionalist Iranians, not merely the "Ulamas". Infact, these Western symbols had represented the first targets of popular attack during the initial phase of the Iranian Revolution. 638

Finally, the single most factor that had prompted the masses to launch into political action had been "economic imbalance" that had pervaded Iran during the period from 1973 to 1977. The situation had been due to an unintended boom that had resulted on the wake of an exorbitant hike in the prices of oil. This, in fact, had resulted in further frustrating setbacks for Iran. For instance, such an extraordinary increase in the circulation of money had caused a "psychological revolution of rising expectations" in certain exclusive circles that could hardly be materialized in practice. At the same time the wage explosion had "turned a cost-push inflation into a demand-pull one, and in the process the prices had got out of control." 639 As it actually turned out, the rate of inflation which had been 31 percent in 1976 had suddenly shot up to 50 percent in 1978 and in the process the real income earned had been eaten away. Also the Shah government had decided to give a lower priority to housing, labour-intensive industrial infrastructural

638. For details see Abidi, n. 287, p.138

639. For an excellent analysis of the situation see Hushang Mehr, "Government Review of Monetary Policy", Kayhan (Tehran), 29 October 1978.
facilities but more emphasis to the rearmament programme in Iran. All these factors in fact, had aroused a series of strikes by bankmen, employees of state-owned corporations, as well as civil servants, which had gathered further momentum to the dimensions of the opposition movement in Iran. 640

As regards political developments in Iran, begin with, the Shah had sought to emulate the example of the Turkish nationalist leader Kemal Ataturk by creating an "official opposition". In the process an artificial two-party system namely, Iran-e Novin and Mardom had emerged, which, however, had not functioned properly. In March 1975, the Shah had decreed that only a single political party called the "Rasta khiz" (Renaissance) would be allowed to operate in Iran. Thereafter, the Shah had decided that all deputies of the Majlis would become creatures of his will (Infact, including the Prime Ministers, and all the ministers) and that any slight hint of criticism concerning official policy would not be tolerated. 641 Infact, by the beginning of 1977 the Shah had been able to rule on the basis of powerful support that he had been receiving from "the armed forces, SAVAK, the bureaucratic and administrative apparatus, the rising oil-based middle class, and a portion of uneducated peasants and workers, who supported the monarchy because of their low socio-economic consciousness and their traditional loyalty to the Shah". 642

640. For details see Abidi, n. 287, p. 139
641. For details see Heikel, n. 160, p. 122
642. For details see Saikal, n. 223, pp. 188-189
Despite such a refreshing scenario as presented above, the domestic opposition had also started building up simultaneously against him. It had all begun, with the mysterious death of Ali Shariati, in London. It had been alleged that the distinguished Islamic scholar and the secular leader of the Iranian Revolution had met his tragic death due to secret involvement of SAVAK. 643

The domestic opposition to the Shah had initially been spearheaded by the National Front and the Tudeh party members. But following a split in the National Front, its leaders like Mehdi Bazargan, Ayatollah Sayyid Mahmoud Taleqani and Hassan Nazih had quit the organization to form the "Nezhat-e Azadi-Ye Iran (Freedom Movement). But both the Front and the Freedom Movement members, did not believe in armed resistance. Some of the Freedom Movement leaders namely, Bazargan and Talequani, however, had supported the role of religion in politics. 644

Besides these organizations there had emerged two terrorist outfits namely, the Fedayan-e Khalq and the Mujaheddin-e Khalq, which had operated in a clandestine manner. While the former was Marxist-oriented, the latter had been Islamic in inspiration. Also, while Fedayan-e-Khalq, was a nationalist, Marxist group on the far left (whose support had been drawn from young students and the radical wing of

643. For details see Heikel, n. 160, p.123
644. For details see Ramazani, The US and Iran, n. 26, pp.82-83
the intelligentsia) the Mujahedin-e Khalq, on the other hand had consisted of an impressive constellation of Islamic radicals whose basic goal had been the concept of "towhid" (a divinely integrated class-less society with total equality). The Mujahedins had further campaigned against capitalism, imperialism and ethnic exploitation, within an Islamic context. Their membership, had been drawn principally from the Central Provinces of Iran almost exclusively from Shi'ite families.\(^645\)

A noteworthy aspect of their operation, however, had been their relatively low level of militant activities. For instance, during the period between February 1971 and October 1977, only 341 guerillas had been killed in Iran during their operations against the Shah's regime.\(^646\)

As for the Communists they had found their active support from among the "Paykar group". This group had been a small radical Marxist force concentrated among both students and workers in large industrial cities like Abadan as well as among the minority wing of the Fedayen.\(^647\) It may be mentioned further that an increasing centralizing tendencies of the Shah's regime had caused a great deal of dissatisfaction among the Iranian minorities residing in Kurdistan, Azerbaijan

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\(^645\). For details on the radical political forces in Iran see Ervand Abrahamian, "The Guerilla Movement in Iran, 1963-1977", MERIP Reports, no. 86, (March-April 1980), pp. 3-15

\(^646\). Ledeen and Lewis, Debacle, n. 5, p. 113

and Baluchistan. As for the Tudeh party, it had decided to protect itself from the wrath of SAVAK by aligning itself with the radical Khomeini forces.

The road to the outbreak of Iranian Revolution, however, had proceeded along peaceful lines commencing from 1977. To begin with several well-known leaders had written and distributed open letters to the Shah and his government out of which the most noteworthy had been the brilliant and pointed essays of Ali Asghar Haj Sayyad Javedi. Further, a small organization called the "Radical Movement" headed by Rahmatollah Mogadam Maraghei had published and distributed rather clandestinely highly critical accounts of the Shah regime's "scorn for rule of law, its corruption and its insensitivity to social justice". No direct attack against the Shah, however, had been launched by these leaders. Also, in May 1977, fifty-four Iranian lawyers had signed a declaration protesting against legal reforms as introduced by the Shah undermining the independence of the judiciary. In the following month, some National Front leaders namely, Karim Sanjabi and Shahpour Bakhtiar in an open letter to the Shah had demanded an end to his dictatorship as well as for implementing the 1906 constitution.

649. Bill, n. 647, p.10
650. For details see Cottam, n. 221, pp.158-159
651. As cited in Rubin, n. 7, p.195
It has been stated earlier that in response to these pressures, the Shah government had shown its willingness to tolerate a fair degree of internal opposition which had prompted organized groups in Iran to call for reforms. For instance, there had emerged a group of jurists, including some members belonging to the Ministry of Justice who had suggested for a critical review of the administration of justice in Iran.\footnote{Cottam, n. 221, p. 159} In June 1977 forty writers had signed another declaration, calling for an end to censorship and that in July 1977 similar declarations had been demanded by a large number of Iranian dissidents.\footnote{Wall Street Journal, 4 November 1977} Following these developments, a group of artists, composers and literaturers had demanded that they should be allowed to form an organisation independent of governmental control.\footnote{Cottam, n. 221, p. 159}

The Iranian students in the meanwhile had begun to intensify their opposition by organizing movements at various universities, colleges and other institutions of higher learning. These activities, in fact, had peaked up on 9 October 1977 when student militants belonging to the Mujaheddin Khalq had issued a declaration to female students (residing in the University of Tehran's dormitory quarters in Amir Abad) threatening them with dire consequences "if they continued to dine with male students in the same Cafetaria". On the same day itself a group of masked student
student militants had stormed into the female dormitory building and had set fire to a university bus. These incidents in fact, had marked the beginning of continuing disturbances which had pervaded Iran during the year 1977.656

In the face of such mounting pressures, the Shah had decided eventually to initiate a programme of "political liberalization" in July 1977. For instance, a bill was introduced to amend the military prosecution law. The new law had been perceived as ameliorating the conditions of political prisoners who were being tried by military courts without any application of the principles of due process of law. But such a move had been perceived as having been initiated under strong pressures from the US President Jimmy Carter.657 The Shah had further resorted to a programme of liberalization in August 1977, containing three aspects namely, "the institution for examining governmental implementation of policy decisions", security, the "toleration of more open criticism of the government in the Rastakhiz Party" and "a reshuffling of the cabinet".658 However, despite such concessions, the Shah had continued to openly denounce all Iranian dissidents as "terrorists", "Communists", "Islamic Marxists". For instance, responding to the student agitation

656. For details see Ettellat, 13 October 1977 as cited on Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p. 92
657. See New York Times, 3 July 1977
658. For details see Ramazani, The US and Iran, n. 26, pp. 93-94
in October 1977 the Shah had reportedly remarked, "All these developments smell highly of counter revolution, black reaction and outright treason". 659

The most important role concerning the outbreak of the revolution, however, had been played by the religious opposition to the Shah and their activities inside the mosques as well as outside. It has been mentioned earlier that Mehdi Bazargan and his Freedom Movement had provided an initial base for such activities. In course of time, however, there had developed a close process of interaction between the Shah's major opponents namely, "the liberals such as Bazargan, radical progressives such as Ayatollah Mahmud Taleqani and radical advocates of a religio-politico underground movement as represented by the "Fedayan", "Mujaheddin" and the "Paykar". 660 Also, the electric appeal of the lectures and writings of Ali Shariati had significant influence over the articulate Iranian youths who had felt deeply dismayed at the loss of their "cultural identity" under the Shah regime. Inspired by Shariati's writings, religious sermons had been delivered in mosques throughout Iran during the entire year of 1977 that had contained open criticisms of the Shah's regime. 661

659. As cited in Ibid, p.94
660. For details see Cottam, n. 221, p.159
661. For details see Ibid, pp.159-160
In summer 1977, another development had occurred which had significant bearing on the outbreak of the Iranian Revolution. For instance, in early June 1977, Shariati had been released from prison and sent into exile. But on 19 June 1977 Shariati had suddenly been found dead ostensibly out of heart failure in London. To some Iranians, however, Shariati had become another victim of SAVAK, in a process to eliminate or reduce the influence of religious spokesmen who had been outspoken opponents of the Shah's regime. Indeed these developments had been followed by further mass arrests of religious leaders which had created great amount of resentment in the country.

(b) Ayatollah Khomeini and The Outbreak of Revolutionary Upsurge in Iran

Ayatollah Ruhallah Musawi Khomeini had been born on 20th Jamad in 1902 at the village of Khomein, about eighty miles south-west of Qom, where his father Mustafa Musawi had served as a Mullah. His birth in fact had taken place on an auspicious date as it had coincided with that of Fatima, the daughter of Prophet Mohammed. But it had to follow tragic consequences as only a few months after his father Mustafa had been killed by the agents of rich landowners as he had championed the cause of some tenant farmers in the village.

662. For details see Ibid, p.160
His mother, also had died in 1918. These tragic events had forced Young Musawi to live with his elder brother Basendidiah Musawi, who had succeeded his father as a Mullah. Ruhallah had received his formal education in the "hawza" of Ayatollah Abdel Karimel-Ha'iri at first in the town of Ark, about thirty miles north of Khomein and later on at Qom, to which his teacher had shifted later on. In due course of time he had completed his studies by taking the degree known as "Mahallet es-Sutwh el-aliyah [the high roofs] and had begun assisting his teacher actively by delivering special lectures on Islamic philosophy and logic as well as by starting a new course on ethics [akhlaq].

In the year 1927 Ruhallah had got married to Khadijah, the daughter of Mohammed el-Thaqafi a Shi'i from Taif in Hejaz. They had five surviving children namely, two sons and three daughters. Out of these, however, one son namely, Mustafer, had been murdered in 1977, ostensibly by SAVAK which had infuriated both Ruhallah and his followers greatly. As for Khadijah, she had been a woman of great strength of character, energy and charm who had constantly accompanied the Ayatollah during the period of his exile from Qom to Najaf and eventually to Neauphle-be-Chateau in Paris.

663. For details see Heikel, n. 160, pp.134-135
664. Ibid, pp.135-136
As a religious preacher, Khomeini began his career as "faqih" (a canon lawyer) by making his personal contributions to Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). He had written several books out of which the most important ones had been Secrets Exposed (1943), The Liberation of the Means, Islamic Government (1970) and Khomeini and His Movement, (1975). To begin with, his religious ideas had been rather simple in nature. For instance, he had perceived "Islam as a whole, as a unity", and had often spoken about it as an "international force". He had denounced any government which had sought to deviate from the rules of "Koran" as "shirk" (heretical) and its ruler as "taghuti" (a tyrant). He also believed that the necessary return to Islam had involved two stages namely, "takhliya" (getting rid of obsolete ideas and practices) and "tahliya" (adding new things). The "takhliya" ideas to be swept away were "tuqi'a" (the practice of disguise or deception). The practice of "tahliya", however, would be harder as it involved both change and innovation to be achieved through "ijtihad" (formation of opinion by the canon lawyers namely, 'fuqaha'). According to Khomeini, the Imams had been "created from the light of God" and that they constitute a rank which cannot be "attained by temporal monarchs and even by angels". The "fuqaha" (the cannon lawyers) were to be considered as the representatives of Imams and that their role had been construed as both "the interpreter and executor" of the law.665 Also, Khomeini

665. For details see Ibid, pp.136-137
had denounced those critics who had advocated that "religious men should keep out of politics". For instance, he had cited the case of prophet Mohammed, who had organized society and acted as a judge in the community as well as had commanded armies in battle, dispatched ambassadors, and signed treaties. Further, Khomeini had advocated for the overthrow of the monarchy and its replacement by an Islamic state based on Islamic law and the rule of the "Faqih (Islam jurisprudence)". Also, he had strongly supported Ayatollah Kashani who had denounced the purported attempts of external powers like Britain which had sought to highlight the separation of religion from politics in case of Iran. He had further denounced the Shah government for succumbing to the Pentagon's pressures in 1964. Infact, he had characterized the relevant bill concerning the "Status of Forces Agreement" as "the document of the enslavement of the Iranian nation". Highlighting his views on the issue Khomeini had stated:

... I declare that this shameful vote of the Houses of Parliament is contrary to Islam and the Koran and hence illegal; it is contrary to the will of the Islamic nation... The world must realize that all the difficulties faced by the Iranian

666. As cited in Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p.87
nation and the Muslim peoples are because of America... It is America that supports Israel and its friends; it is America that gives power to Israel to displace the Muslim Arabs; it is America that imposes the Parliamentary deputies on the Iranian nation; it is America that considers Islam and Holy Koran determinal to its interest and is determined to remove them... it is America that pressures the Majlis and the Iranian government to approve and implement such a bill; it is America that treats the Islamic nation barbarously. It is incumbent on the Iranian nation to tear up these claims...668

It may be mentioned that while writing his book, Secrets Exposed in 1943 Khomeini had refrained from denouncing the Iranian Constitution of 1906-1907. But by the time his Islamic Government had been published in 1970, he had castigated the same bitterly on the ground that it had recognised the institution of monarchy for Iran. Such a concrete change could be attributed to the fact that during his exile, Khomeini had reached the conclusion for the

668. For details on Khomeini's speech see as cited in R.K. Ramazani, The US and Iran, n. 26, p.78
forcible overthrow of the Iranian monarchy as well as its replacement by an Islamic state based on Islamic law and the rule of the "Faqih". 669

It has been alleged that the Ayatollah developed a strong personal grudge against the Iranian ruler due to the fact that both his father as well as his own son had met their death under orders of the Iranian rulers. For instance, his father, who had been a private soldier in the services of Shah's father had been murdered at the instigation of the latter. Also, as stated earlier SAVAK had been responsible for the death of his son Mustafa Khomeini in September 1977. As for Ayatollah, however, he had asserted that there had absolutely been no truth behind such allegations. 670 Despite such denial, it may be deduced that the hardening of Ayatollah's stance could be attributed to such personal of grudge against the Shah.

The world view of Khomeini is contained in his works, Islamic Government (1970) and Khomeini and His Movement (1975). The central theme of both the volumes had been that, "the Shah must fall, for he is an enemy of Islam". Elaborating on his, Khomeini had stated that the Shah had made his foremost effort to "westernize" Iran and in the process had deprived the country of its "moral base", by allowing co education of boys and girls in high schools. Secondly, he had attacked

669. For details see Ibid, p.87
the Shah for the practice of appointing lay persons to high positions in national courts such as the Jews, Christians and other enemies of Islam. Thirdly, Khomeini had castigated the Shah not only for his attempts at "modernization" but also for his display of "leniency" towards "sinners" as under the western norms of justice. 671 Elaborating his views in defence of the Mullahs he had stated:

"... If a just mullah is placed in charge of the enforcement of canonical punishments ... would he enforce them otherwise than how they were enforced in the days of the Prophet? ... would the Prophet have imposed more than a hundred lashes on the fornicator not previously chaste? Can the mullah reduce the amount of this punishment, thereby creating a divergence between his practice and that of the Prophet? Certainly not! The ruler... is no more than the executor of God's command and decree..." 672

Further, Khomeini had attacked the Shah for continuing with his close relationship with the two foreign powers namely, the United States and Israel. While his

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671. For details see Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, pp. 106-107

hatred against the US had been well-known, as had been stated earlier, Khomeini had singled out Israel for his extreme condemnation. He had accused the US government for supporting the Israeli schemes for the destruction of Islam. In this context he had stated:

"... It is America which supports Israel and its well-wishers; it is America which gives Israel power to turn Muslim Arabs into vagrants; it is America which directly or indirectly imposes its agents on the nation of Iran; It is America which considers Islam and the glorious Koran a source of harm to itself and wishes to remove both from its path..."  

By way of concluding observations it may be stated that opposition to a secular ruler on the part of the Shi'ite leader was hardly a new phenomenon in Iranian history. In fact, according to such a tradition "there would one day be the return of the twelfth or "missing Imam" who had disappeared in the ninth century and that since then, temporal rules had been "usurpers" of power in Iran. In this tradition, thus, Iranian rulers had acquired a mere tentative status.

673. As cited in Ledeen and Lewis, n. 7, p.107
675. See Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, p.108
It may be mentioned that in course of time Khomeini had become the chief religious leader of the Shi'ite community as well as a personality of considerable importance throughout the Middle East, as he had developed most vital connections with allies in nearby countries like Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. For instance, the Imam Moussa Sadar had simultaneously developed close ties with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) groups. In fact, it was under his instructions that the Imam Moussa Sadar, a close friend had been instrumental in propping up President Hafez al-Assad to power in Syria during 1971-1975.\textsuperscript{676} Khomeini had also developed considerable rapport with the PLO groups. In fact, he had received enormous support from both moderate PLO leaders like Yassir Arafat as well as radical leaders like George Habash and Wadi Haddad of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).\textsuperscript{677}

However, the revolutionary upsurge under the leadership of Khomeini had gathered momentum following the murder of Ayatollah's son, Mustafa in September 1977. The mourning for Mustafa, made the occasion for demonstrating the strong antipathy of his supporters towards the Shah. For instance, thousands of his supporters had gone over to Najaf to join the funeral procession but had been turned back forcibly by the Shah's police. Following this, his supporters, had held

\textsuperscript{676}. For details see Ibid, pp. 109-110

\textsuperscript{677}. For details see Joseph Alpher, "The Khomeini International", \textit{Washington Quarterly}, Autumn 1980, p. 61
their prayer meetings as well as demonstrations in the cities of Tehran, Qom, Tabriz and Isfahan. In response to these gestures Ayatollah had stated:

... We have shed enough tears... You have offered your condolences to us and to the Imam many times. But from now on I am not going to accept any more condolences. What is needed now is action...

The revolutionary movement in fact had gathered momentum around his leadership. At the centre of the movement had remained the Ayatollah himself and around him were a curious mixture of his striking force consisting of Islamic and Marxist guerillas the Iranian clerics and the supportive Arab officials from Syria, Iraq and Libya who had provided logistical help, funds as well as sanctuary for Iranian exiles and their friends. Towards the end of 1977, however, Khomeini had delivered his final message concerning the waging of a revolution in Iran through such acts as the boycotting of all government institutions, withdrawing of any form of cooperation with the government, as well as cooperating in any activity that might benefit the Shah government.

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678. For details see Haikel, n. 160, pp. 131-141
679. As cited in Ibid, p. 141
680. For details see Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, pp. 105-106
681. Heikel, n. 160, p. 141
The outbreak of Iranian Revolution, however, had commenced in the religious city of Qom following the publication of an article in the government-controlled Tehran daily, Ettela'at on 7 January 1978. The said article, written by Darius Homayoun, the Iranian Minister of Information had made a vitriolic attack on Ayatollah Khomeini under the title, "Iran and the Red and Black Imperialism". The article in fact had been quite provocative for his supporters as it had accused Khomeini "of homosexuality, reactionary ideas, opportunism, ignorance of the true principles of Islam", etc. which had offended the entire Iranian religious community. Even the most moderate Ayatollah Shariatmadari had condemned such publication which, according to him, had "shocked" all Muslims in Iran. 682

Some theological students [tollab] in the holy city of Qom, however, had decided to demonstrate on 8 January 1978 in respect to such a publication. On the next day, itself a crowd of about 5000 people who had gathered in front of a large mosque had suddenly decided to march towards the house of the city's Ayatollah's as a mark of protest against the insulting remarks against Khomeini, which, however, had been fired upon by the Iranian police and in the process about seventy people had been reportedly killed. This ugly development, which unfortunately had coincided with the religious fervour associated with the end of the holy month of "Moharram",

682. For details see Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5', pp. 101-102
and that it had provoked the leading religious figure of Qom, Ayatollah Shariat madari to denounce the Shah's government as "anti-Islamic". 683 As for the Iranian government, it had characterized these developments as being "instigated" by "trouble-making" [ekhlal-gar] theological students [tollab] as it coincided the anniversary of the Shah's land reform and his policy of emancipation of women. 684 Such an attack, however, had been flatly denied by Shariat madari who had further castigated the government's version of the incident as an "absolute lie". 685 As for the Shah, his comment on the incident was that "there is little doubt in my mind that communist elements had infiltrated the 4,000 religious students and their supporters who took part in the protest". 686 These incidents at Qom on 8-9 January 1978 however, had marked the beginning of the Iranian Revolution as stated earlier.

A second landmark development had taken place very soon at Tabriz, the capital city of north-western province of Azerbaijan on 18-19 February 1978. It may be mentioned that according to the Shi'ite tradition, a ceremony is held forty days after a death and coincide the same, the religious protestors at Tabriz had organized a demonstration

683. For details see Sick, n. 598, p. 34
684. As cited in Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p. 103
to mark the end of a 40-day mourning period [chele] for the martyrs [Shohada] of the "Qom shooting". In fact, such a pattern had been followed in several cities and that hundreds of people had been either killed or injured due to police action on these demonstrations. The reaction of the government to these incidents, however, had been highly provocative. For instance, the Shah's police had deliberately locked the mourners inside mosque (Masjed-e Jom'eh) at Tabriz and that Shah had put the entire blame for the incidents on the peaceful mourners. Further, he had denounced them as "Islamic Marxists" [Mujaheddin] and communists.

But very soon the Shah had adopted a conciliatory approach by blaming the local government officials for turning the "peaceful religious procession" into "bloody riots" through their provocative actions and in fact, had dismissed a few local SAVAK officials as well as General Eskandar Azmudeh, the unpopular military governor of eastern Azerbaijan. Also, the Iranian troops had been withdrawn from Tabriz and that sincere efforts had been initiated to bring life back to normalcy. Reacting to the incident following his

687. For details see Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p. 104
688. Washington Post, 4 March 1978
689. For details see Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, pp. 104-105
downfall, the Shah had conceded that "perhaps too much force" had been used and "had admitted further that the Tabriz uprisings had "marked the beginning of efforts to reduce my authority, to turn me into a weak and ineffectual... and finally to oust me". 690

But despite these developments another wave of protests had very soon broken out in Tabriz on 29 March 1978. The protestors had included uproarious elements of young dissidents consisting of students, ordinary citizens, carpenters, carpet weavers, artisans, Bazaar merchants, preachers, who, however, had resorted to vandalism, through mindless destruction of public and private property. By April 1978, these violent demonstrations had spread like a quick fire in about twenty four Iranian cities. 691 In response, however, the reluctant Shah had deployed army tanks at first against the demonstrators in Tehran on 11 May 1978. The demonstrators, had thereafter chanted the slogan "Down with the Shah", in the main streets of the Capital. A series of huge demonstrations had very soon followed beginning with the riot at the University of Tehran on 31 May 1978 in which around 2500 students had participated. Also, in July 1978 violence had erupted at Meshed to be followed by popular outbursts at Isfahan on 11 August 1978 as well as in other

690. Reza Shah Pahlavi, Answer to History, n. 628, p.154
691. For details see Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, pp.104-105
Iranian cities namely, Shiraz Ahvaz and Tabriz. But despite these stormy developments, the Shah had continued to dismiss the political "reformist approach" and had denounced the demonstrators for having collaborated with the communists for the "partition of Iran". But following these developments the Iranian Revolution had taken a different turn since June 1978, the story of which will be studied in the next section.

(c) The Road To The Fall of The Shah in Iran (1978-1979)

Beginning in 1978, the revolutionaries had discarded the "reformist" approach of liberals and leftists, who had dominated the Iranian movements during 1977 and had moved towards Ayatollah Khomeini for leadership. He had been considered thereafter as the "sole major spokesman of religious activism". Also, following the Qom and Tabriz uprisings as well as the developments of June 1978, the opposition leaders had begun to comprehend fully the potential power as well as the charismatic appeal of Khomeini over the Iranian masses. Infact, some of them namely, Ibrahim Yazdi, Sadeq Qotbzadeh, and Abdul Hassan Bani Sadr had begun to keep in constant touch with Khomeini during his period of exile both in Najaf as well as in Paris and in the process

692. For details see Rubin, n. 7, p. 206
693. For details see Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p. 105
had acquired positions of great influence in revolutionary Iran by the end of 1978.694

To begin with, however, some opposition members led by Mehdi Bazargan of the Freedom Movement had advocated for the unity of democratic forces. As he had been highly skeptical of the far left, (the Mujahaddin and Fadyan groups) and had been bitterly critical of any move towards dealings with the Tudeh and other pro-Soviet leftist forces. Bazargan had sought to galvanize the opposition activities under a single "human rights" banner to facilitate the formation of a transitional government in Iran. The transitional scheme had stipulated for the formation of a regency council consisting of Empress Farah, a military general, a conservative elder statesman [such as former Prime Minister, Ali Amini] a major religio-political leader [such as Ayatollah Mohammad Behesti] and a leading opposition figure [such as Mehdi Bazargan]. A new Prime Minister and a cabinet could thereafter be chosen representing various opposition groups as well as well-known supporters of the Shah. The choice of the new Prime Minister was stipulated to be a secular National Front leader such as Karim Sanjabi.695 The success

694. For details see Cottam, n. 221, pp. 163-167

of the proposal, however, had depended upon the approval by all the three major factors concerning—namely, the attitudes of the Shah, Khomeini and the US government. Out of these, only the support of Khomeini to the plan could be ensured, while the US government had decided to remain more or less unconcerned about it. As for the Shah, he had displayed no real interest in the proposal. Thus, the transition plan had failed to materialize by the end of first half in 1978.696

Following the fiasco of the transition plan, the opposition movement had begun to build up which, infact, had gathered momentum after mid 1978. The Iranian demonstrators had thereafter decided to resort to a common practice of parading on the street as a mark of protest against either police excesses or to mourn the deaths of those killed in the police firings. Also, a common pattern had been developed in course of these demonstrations concerning the targets of anti-establishment violence in Iran. For instance, the targets of attack had been the symbols of Western culture such as "night clubs, bars, cinema houses, and shops selling pornographic literature".697 The demonstrators had further resorted to some common slogans such as "down with the Shah and his oppressive and corrupt rule" and, "long live Khomeini, Islam, democracy, freedom and equality".


697. For details see Abidi, n. 287, p.142
These developments had reflected "not merely an alliance between these groups but rather a coincidence of their common opposition against the Shah". 698

As for the Shah, he had adopted a dual policy of "carrot and stick" to meet the domestic crisis. 699 For instance, he had initially responded by administering a warning to the opposition elements not to resort to excesses and in fact had ordered his security forces to contain these violent protests ruthlessly. 700 But the Iranian ruler had resorted to a policy of "carrot", thereafter to defuse the crisis by adopting the technique of appeasement. For instance, by removing his long time associate, General Nematollah Nasseri, as head of SAVAK. 701 In fact, he had followed up such a strategy by making the pledge before the Iranians to implement such policies as, "Islamic-based reforms, freedom of the press and of political activities, release of political prisoners, and free elections with participation of all political parties". Besides this, he had also promised to punish all those responsible "for killings, misconduct, and corruption", in the country. 702 Also, he had appointed his old trusted lieutenant Sharif-Imami, back as Prime Minister in order to work out a strategy of appeasement with the internal opposition in Iran. 703 The new Prime Minister, had

698. For details see Saikal, n. 223, pp. 193-194
699. Abidi, n. 287, p. 143
700. For details see Saikal, n. 223, p. 194
701. Cottam, n. 221, pp. 170-171
702. For details see Saikal, n. 223, pp. 194-195
703. Cottam, n. 221, p. 171
responded immediately to the Shah's gestures by closing down night clubs and gambling casinos, abolishing the post of women's affairs minister in the cabinet, as well as by banning public drinking and all forms of pornography. As for the opposition it had rejected these concessions outright and had instead demanded the unconditional abdication of the Shah. The opposition had also spearheaded a partial strike involving the oil workers numbering over 37,000, which, in fact, had been accelerated into a full-scale labour movement beginning in early September 1978. As for the Shah, he had responded rather angrily by imposing martial law involving twelve major Iranian cities on 8 September 1978, which had resulted in greater and more clashes between protestors and the troops resulting in hundreds of casualties.704

In the meanwhile the popular violence had reached new levels of intensity in August 1978, at the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan. For instance, on 10-11 August 1978 major clashes had taken place in Isfahan between demonstrators and the police at the residence of one of Khomeini's religious supporters who had issued a clarion call for the overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty as well as for the creation of an Islamic state. The Shah, had thereafter responded by ordering the movement of tanks into the city as well as by declaring a martial law over there.705

704. For details see Saikal, n. 223, p. 195
705. For details see Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, p. 136
The real disaster, however, had taken place in the oil port city of Abadan, where on 19 August 1978 the arsonists had resorted to an ugly action by setting ablaze a crowded movie theatre namely, the "Rex cinema". As a result some four hundred persons, consisting of mostly women and children had died in sheer panic. While the Shah government had been unable to pin point the real culprits behind the incident, the opposition leader Karim Sanjabi, however, had charged that these had been part of "a government intrigue to show foreigners that Iran is unable to have a democratic system".  

But many Iranians had blamed SAVAK for the disaster in the heat of their anger and frustration against the Shah.

The next phase of violence had erupted on 4 September 1978 (the last day of the holy month of Ramadan) when the opposition had launched their largest demonstration in the capital, by parading nearly 100,000 agitators in a religious processions in which there had been frequent shouting for the return of the Ayatollah Khomeini. It may be significant to mention that on that day the demonstrators, far from being violent, had made special efforts to establish rapport with the soldiers who had lined themselves in the disturbed areas. It had been reported further that on such an occasion,

706. For details see Washington Post, 21 August 1978

707. For details see Robert Moss, "Who Burned the Rex Cinema", Daily Telegraph (London), 6 November 1978

708. Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p. 109
the florists had offered bunches of flowers to the agitators, who however, had placed these in the muzzles of gun being held by the Iranian soldiers, resulting in a feeling of brotherhood and community between them. But the Shah had decided to re-impose marital law on 7 September 1978. In fact, on an unprecedented crowd consisting of as many as one million people from all walks of life had poured into the streets of Tehran on 8 September 1978 without fully understanding the implications of the Marshall law. But the crowd had headed for Jaleh Square, the Iranian security forces had probably felt greatly stunned by the huge size of the crowd as well as because they had chanted slogans against the Shah and the Pahlavi dynasty, and had carried also banners in praise of Khomeini. The military officers, had thereafter asked the crowd to disperse. But when it had refused to oblige, the soldiers had then "lowered their aim into the crowd" and in the process between 7,000-2000 had died on the spot including a large number of children. Thus 8 September 1978 had become famous as "Black Friday". Following the tragic incident, many participants had felt greatly shocked at the sharp contrast between the military's behaviour on 8 September 1978 and that of preceding days as mentioned earlier. In fact, it had been widely rumoured in Iranian

709. For details see Cottam, n. 221, pp. 176-177

710. For details see Washington Post, 9 September 1978
circles that the offending troops most possibly had belonged to Israel. 711 Reflecting on the ugly incident lateron, the Shah, however, had sought to justify his position as follows:

"The violence of that Friday's demonstrations reached such a pitch of murder, pillage, and arson that the security forces had no choice but to fire". 712 As for the opposition, following the massacre at Jaleh Square, that had become more determined in their bid for the forcible overthrow of the Shah. For instance, they had organized in September-October 1978 eight more major demonstrations as well as an increasing number of strikes involving the industrial workers and government employees. 713 The Shah had thereafter resorted to his earlier policy of "political liberalization" by initiating the search for a "coalition government" which, however, did not materialize due to lack of sincerity on his part. For instance, the Shah had stated, "I tried, I contacted Karim Sanjabi and several other opposition leaders. But their demands were unacceptable". 714 In fact, the Shah had decided to follow a pacific strategy by sending feelers to Khomeini for a compromise, which however, did not work out due to lack of sincerity once again on his part. 715

711. Cottam, n. 221, p. 176
712. Reza Shah Pahlavi, Answer to History, n. 628, p. 160
713. Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p. 111
714. Reza Shah Pahlavi, Answer to History, n. 628, p. 164
715. Abidi, n. 287, p. 145
In the evolving domestic scenario also, Khomeini had become less inclined to agree to anything less than total capitulation by the Shah regime.\footnote{Cottam, n. 221, p. 177}

The hardening of Khomeini's attitude had further reduced the flexibility of the revolutionary leadership in Tehran. This had been witnessed when a delegation consisting of Mehdi Bazargan (Freedom Movement) Karim Sanjabi (National Front) and Nasser Minatchi (Director of the Iranian Human Rights Committee) had contacted Khomeini in Paris to throw his weight behind the transitional plan, which, however, had been rebuffed by Ayatollah himself. Following this development, Karim Sanjabi had issued a statement on 3 November 1978 in which he had flatly refused his participation in any Shah-appointed government and in the process the door to any compromise had been closed.\footnote{For details see John Stempel, n. 696, p. 130} On 5 November 1978, severe riots had taken place in Tehran causing a great deal of property damages. The participants in the riots had belonged to the Mujhaddin, the Fadayan, the Tudeh groups.\footnote{For details see Cottam, n. 221, pp. 179-180}

These riots, had marked the end of the Sharif-Imami's efforts at reconciliation and in desperation the Shah had decided to put Iran under a military government. In fact, General Gholam Reza Azhari had assumed office on 6 November 1978 following the resignation by the Prime Minister.

\footnote{Cottam, n. 221, p. 177}
\footnote{For details see John Stempel, n. 696, p. 130}
\footnote{For details see Cottam, n. 221, pp. 179-180}
Minister Sharif-Imami. The Shah had thereafter publicly admitted his past mistakes and excesses and had promised that "such mistakes, particularly political repression and brutality by SAVAK, would not be repeated and those responsible for those evils and for Iran's socio-economic ills would be punished". 719

The military government, however, had been asked to handle the situation in a peculiar fashion. For instance, to appease the opposition as well as to garner popular support, the Shah had ordered military government to arrest the ex-head of SAVAK, General Nematollah Nasseri as well as the former Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveyda for repression and past corruption respectively. 720 It may be mentioned that while the former had always been a main target of the opposition, the latter had been disliked particularly by the religious clergy for his secular orientation. 721 At the same time to frighten the dissidents, the military government had arrested prominent National Front leaders namely, Karim Sanjabi and Dariush Foruhar on 11 November 1978 for having denounced the Shah's government as "illegal". 722 Infact,

719. For details see Saikal, n. 223, pp. 195-196
720. Rubin, n. 7, p. 225
721. For details see Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p. 113
722. Rubin, n. 7, p. 225
their action of arresting Karim Sanjabi seemed to have contradicted the Shah's avoided intention of forming coalition government in Iran under his leadership.\textsuperscript{723}

The imposition of military rule in the country, however, had set the stage for a final but bloody confrontation between the Shah's and the inflamed opposition, which had urged its followers to intensify their protests and strikes. The opposition had sought to demonstrate the extent of its mass support on 11 December 1978 when it had paraded about two million people in a peaceful demonstration on the streets of Tehran.\textsuperscript{724} Thus, by the end of December 1978, Iran had witnessed an increasing bloodshed and strikes and the ineffectiveness of the military government to deal with the situation had become clearly manifest. In the meanwhile Ayatollah Khomeini, had continued his attack on the military government from his exile in Paris and had warned that he would resort to a civil war if struggle to oust the Shah would fail. He had launched a diatribe against the United States for supporting the Shah as well as for keeping him in power with the help of Iranian armed forces which, however, had been effectively controlled by the American military advisors.\textsuperscript{725}

By then it had clearly emerged that the Shah's rule over Iran was somewhat numbered. Finding such a scenario, the US government had pressed the Shah to establish

\textsuperscript{723} Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p.113
\textsuperscript{724} For details see Saikal, n. 223, p.196
\textsuperscript{725} For details see Grayson, n. 142, p.160
a civilian regime and to transfer his powers to the new government and transform his position to that of a constitutional monarch. The Shah, perhaps had heeded to such an advice as he had invited his long-standing political opponent belonging to the National Front namely, Shah pour Bakhtiar to accept his offer of heading a national government. As for Bakhtiar, he had imposed a strict condition before formally accepting the offer. His stipulation was that the Shah would hand over most of the absolute powers as was being enjoyed by him and that he would have to leave the country at least temporarily. Further he had put another condition that the Shah would never return back to his country as an absolute monarch. Infact, after these conditions have been fulfilled the Shah had departed from Tehran towards Cairo on 16 January 1979 ostensibly on a holiday trip abroad. Thus, the downfall of the Shah had taken place as he had never returned back to his country until his death.

Following the departure of the Shah, Khomeini had made his triumphal entry into Iran on 1 February 1979. As for the Bakhtiar government, it could not rule for long, as it had been formed under the Shah. But the situation had very soon paved the way for Khomeini to set up his Islamic Republic in Tehran which had terminated the 2500 years of monarchical rule in Iran.

726. For details see Saikal, n. 223, pp. 196-197
In the previous chapter an attempt had been made to analyze the US-Iranian relations during the Carter Presidency. In that context it had been stated that while Iran had been engulfed in a domestic crisis following the outbreak of the Iranian Revolution in January 1978, the response of the Carter administration had been far from "positive". In that context it had been stated that Henry Kissinger had castigated Carter for his "failure" not only to keep the Shah in power but also for the "bad" American press coverage following his fall in January 1979. Former US Presidents namely, Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan had also supported the views of Kissinger. In this backdrop, an attempt would be made to analyze the American response to the Iranian Revolution leading to the collapse of the Shah in January 1979.

By way of setting to the present section it may be stated that the Iranian revolutionary crisis (1978-1979) had been the third of its kind during the twentieth century with its other two historical antecedents being the "Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911)" and the Oil Nationalization Crisis (Nationalist Movement) (1951-1953)". In fact, there were four crucial factors which had been common to all these three revolutionary upsurges. Firstly, each crisis had reflected a revolution of rising alienation from the monarchical regime
as well as a perceived foreign domination. For instance, in the period of the Constitutional Revolution, the economic policies of the Qajar monarchy had resulted in an empty treasury, widespread corruption, financial disorganization, and foreign [British and Russian] economic domination. On the other hand, the opposition to the British as well as dissatisfaction with the Shah's rule had appeared to be the primary causes of the uprising of nationalist sentiment during the Oil Nationalization Crisis (1951-1953). The Iranian Revolution (1978-1979), however, had displayed a similar pattern concerning popular alienation, as described earlier. Secondly, like its historical precedents, the Iranian Revolution had enjoyed the support of many disparate groups and individuals, who had joined hands in common opposition to the Shah's regime. In fact, the role of university students, theological seminarians, Bazaar merchants and intellectuals had been found paramount in all the three major uprisings. Thirdly, ideological diversity had been quite marked in the Iranian Revolution as well as in other two previous uprisings. For instance, the Shi'i Muslim fundamentalism as interpreted by Khomeini and the lay Shi'i Muslim social and political radicalism as expounded by Ali Shariati had contributed to the ideological basis of the Iranian Revolution. Fourthly, modern liberal nationalism had been the primary force behind the Iranian Revolution. In fact, the clash between Muslim fundamentalism
and democratic secularist conceptions of society and politics had been quite real in this as well as in the previous two revolutionary upsurges. 727

As regards the American response towards the revolutionary upsurges (1978-1979) it may be mentioned that until about October 1978, an overwhelming majority of official opinion had developed a consensus that Iran would continue to remain strong under the leadership of the Shah and that any critical evaluation concerning his future prospects must be rejected and dismissed out of hand. There had been, some isolate forewarnings and contrary assessment concerning the Shah from certain American quarters. For instance, the station chief of the CIA in Tehran, Jesse Leaf had sent a communication as far as back as in 1973 that the Shah's policies were "sowing the seeds for popular dissidence". Before submitting his resignation in 1973 Leaf, in fact, had lamented that his evaluation had been largely ignored by his superiors in the CIA. 728 As for the CIA, it had virtually concurred with the assessment of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) under the State Department made in January 1977 that:

"... Iran was likely to remain stable under the Shah's leadership over the next several years, and committed to

727. For details see R.K. Ramazani, "Iran's Revolution Patterns, Problems and Prospects", International Affairs, Vol. 56, pp. 444-446
728. For details see Jesse Leaf, "Iran: A Blind Spot in US Intelligence", Washington Post, 18 January 1979
its relationship with US as long as the Shah rules... The undercurrents of terroristic violence notwithstanding, the Shah rules Iran free from serious domestic threat." 729

It may mentioned further that the US embassy in Tehran had sent an airgram to Washington on 25 July 1977 entitled, "Straws in the Wind : Intellectuals and religious opposition in Iran". The message had touched upon some of the elements who had comprised Shah's domestic opposition. In another communication to the State Department in February 1978 the embassy had provided a more detailed account of the political activities of Shah's opponents in Iran. 730 But despite this, the US official at the Tehran embassy had never envisaged atleast before October 1978 that the Shah would fail to survive the political crisis in Iran. 731 But the INR had in the meanwhile changed its stance concerning the Shah. For instance, on 1 September 1977 it had reported:

... We expect that violent dissent from the Shah's rule will continue to disrupt Iranian society despite his efforts at political liberalization and other reforms. We doubt that the Shah, in near future, can

729. As cited in Cottam, n. 221, pp. 172-173
730. As cited in Leeden and Lewis, n. 5, p. 123
731. Ibid.
suppress urban violence without substantial use of force... We see some chance that the Shah will be forced to step down by 1985. At the moment we would rate that chance as less than fifty-fifty...  

Infact, the possibility that the Shah might fall had not been perceived seriously by the US official and intelligence communities until about October 1978.  

As regards the assessment of the State Department, it had merely sought to make an exhaustive narration of current developments in Iran without attempting any systematic and proper analysis over them. Its views seemed to have been largely influenced by the commentaries as contained in the New York Times and Washington Post during this period.  

The State Department's analysis wing namely, the INR as headed by George Griffin had reportedly concluded that Iran's domestic problems had belied any "upbeat assessment". This view, however, had appeared to have been contrary to the assessments of the CIA as well as Pentagon's Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA). As for the CIA, it had submitted a twenty three page report in August 1978 entitled, "Iran

732. As cited in Cottam, n. 221, p.173  
733. Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, p.123  
734. For details see Rubin, n. 7, p.209  
735. Ibid, p.208
After the Shah", in which it had concluded that Iran was neither in a "revolutionary" nor even a "pre-revolutionary" situation. Also, the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), prepared under the supervision of the CIA had submitted an sixty page report on Iran during mid-September 1978, in which it had maintained that no drastic change was likely for Iran's political behaviour in the near future. Further, the DIA of the Pentagon had prepared five appraisals concerning Iran in course of the first nine months of 1978 and that in its last report submitted on 28 September 1978, it had opined that the "Shah would remain actively in power for over the next ten years".

It may be mentioned that within the American foreign policy bureaucracy, there had been strong resistance to any suggestion that the "Shah might be slipping out of power". Similar reactions seemed to have pervaded the atmosphere during the course of a Seminar held in the State Department on Iran in March 1978. For instance, James Bill had read a paper entitled, "Monarchy in Collapse" at the Seminar in which he predicted the view that "as violence escalated, more and more groups would coalesces in opposition to the Shah's regime". His observations however, had created a huge furore among the official participants in that

736. As cited in Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, p.124
737. As cited in Rubin, n. 7, p.209
738. As cited in Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, p.124
739. As cited in Fortune (New York), 12 March 1979, p.97
The position of the State Department in fact, had been spelled out by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and South Asian Affairs, Harold Saunders, before the Sub Committee on Europe and the Middle East of the House Committee on International Relations in June 1978. For instance, Saunders had testified before the Sub-committee is that, "we believe a large majority of Iranians thoroughly approve of the very substantial improvement that have been made in living standard and economic and social opportunities during the past three decades". Infact, a serious communication gap seemed to have developed between the State Department and the intelligence officials for a long time, which had probably prompted President Carter to make a caustic remark in November 1978 that "his intelligence officials had failed in case of Iran". The presidential remarks had also been concurred by a staff report of the Sub-Committee on Evaluation of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence which had maintained that "leading American policy-makers did not realize the gravity of the Iranian situation until October 1978". The staff report

740. As cited in Rubin, n. 7, p.208
741. For details see US Congress, House Committee on International Relations, Sub Committee on Europe and the Middle East, Review of Developments in the Middle East, 95th Congress, 2nd session (Washington, D.C., 1978), p.1281
742. For details see Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, p.123
743. For details see US Congress, House, Iran : Evaluation of US Intelligence Performance Prior to November 1978, Staff Report, Sub Committee on Evaluation, Permanent Selection Committee on Intelligence (Washington, D.C., 1979), pp.6-7
had contained several appraisals made earlier concerning Iran. It had pointed out for instance, that an intelligence appraisal towards the fag end of Ford administration had maintained that, "Iran was likely to remain stable under the Shah over the next several years". Also, another intelligence study conducted in August 1977 had pointed out that the Shah, "will be an active participant in Iranian life well into the 1980". The staff report had also made a mention of the CIA's assessment as on August 1978 that "Iran is not in a revolutionary or even a pre-revolutionary situation". On the basis of these reportings, the staff report had concluded that the Iranian disturbances had not exceeded the bounds of previous crises, which the Shah would be unable to weather successfully.

It may be mentioned that the Senate Foreign Relation Committee had conducted a close hearings on Iran scheduled for 15 September 1978. Henry Precht, the State Department's Iranian Director as well as Jack Miklos, a former US embassy deputy chief of mission at Tehran had been invited to testify. When the Senators had made enquiries as to why the US government had failed to anticipate the Iranian crisis, both these officials had maintained a rather unanimous stance that the United States had failed as it had to rely heavily upon SAVAK. Appearing before the same Committee twelve days later on 27 September 1978, however, Robert Bowe, the head of CIA's National Foreign Assessment Centre, had testified

744. For details see Ibid, p.6
745. For details see Ibid, pp.6-7
before the Committee that prior to the inauguration of Carter administration, it had been the common practice for the CIA to penetrate into dissident groups in countries like Iran. But under the Carter administration such a practice had been discontinued due to strong opposition from both the State Department as well as by the Shah that "contacts between the American government and the opposition might encourage the Shah's opponents". When pressed further by the members of the Committee as to why the US government had failed to anticipate the Iranian revolution, Bowe had made the remarks that "there had been no demand in Washington for in-depth assessments on Iran", as the American policy-makers did not think it likely that "the situation would fly out of control." Thus, the intelligence failure had resulted in a terrible mess concerning Iran.

Apart from these intelligence failures, the policy making had suffered from the fact that the Iranian crisis had not received its due significance as well as attention from the top American officials. In this context, it may be mentioned that many of the Middle East specialists had been asked to remain tied up with the complexities of the Camp David peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel. Also, while the NSC advisor Brzezinski had been busy working on the process of normalization between the US and China, the

746. As cited in Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, pp. 124-125
747. See Washington Post, 20 November 1978
Secretary of State Vance had been asked to wrestle with all the problems connected with the SALT II as well as the Camp David peace talks. Infact, the entire task of monitoring, evaluating as well as reporting on Iran had been entrusted to lower level US officials namely, Henry Precht, Robert Murry and Garry Sick belonging to State Department Pentagon and the NSC respectively. Their views on Iran infact, had carried weight with the US administration. 748

It may be mentioned that following the outbreak of the Iranian Revolution some articulate members of the Congress had expressed their serious concern regarding the deteriorating domestic developments in Iran and had pressed for a review of US policies towards the Shah regime. For instance, as the Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance, Lucy Benson had been testifying before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs concerning arms sales to Iran on 5 October 1978, Representative Stephen Solarz (Republican, New York) had expressed "profound concern over the rapidly changing Iranian situation". This had been despite the fact that Benson had maintained that the US had "been adequately and cautious" about it as before hand. 749 Infact, another Congressional hearing had taken place before the House Sub-Committee on Europe and the Middle East of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

748. For details see Rubin, n. 7, p. 208
749. For details see Washington Post, 20 November 1978
Affairs entitled, "US Policy Towards Iran: January 1979", to which three US officials namely, Harold H Saunders, Assistant Secretary for State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Stephen W. Bogworth, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs and Robert Murray, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Near Eastern African and South Asian Affairs of ISA had been asked to testify on 17 January 1979. During the course of the hearings, the Chairman of the Committee, Clemente J. Zablocki (Wisconsin) and other members of the Committee namely, Lee H. Hamilton (Indiana) Gerry E. Studds (Massachusetts), Donald F. Pease (Ohio) and Stephen Solarz (New York) had grilled Assistant Secretaries Saunders and Murray severely concerning their inept handling of the Iranian crisis, the future of US credibility in Iran, the inaccurate detection and assessment of the Iranian situation, as well as the lack of US contacts with the opposition elements to the Shah. In fact, Representative Studds had characterized the Shah as one of the most "absolute" and "brutal" dictators who had been "armed to the teeth" by the US government. He had further sought to expose the attempted "moral posturing" by US officials about noninterference in Iranian domestic affairs when the American press had clearly reported that frequent conversations had

750. For details see US Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Sub Committee on Europe and the Middle East, US Policy Toward Iran, January 1979, Hearings, January 17, 1979, 96th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, D.C., ), pp.1-67
taken place between Brzezinski and Ambassador Zahedi and between Ambassador Sullivan and the Shah. Representatives Solarz and Findlay had also accused the US policy-makers and the CIA for their inept handling and an accurate assessment concerning Iran which, however, had been a sharp contrast to the clandestine efforts of both the Israeli and French intelligence agencies.

Beginning with October 1978, however, the Freedom Movement leader Mehdi Bazargan had taken the initiative to contact the US embassy in Tehran concerning a "transition plan". According to this plan, the post-Shah period could witness a combination of the National Front and the Freedom Movement leadership in power, which, however, would control the Parliament and maintain a liberal reformist approach in Iran. But according to a US official John Stempel, (who had served at the Tehran embassy) despite Ambassador Sullivan's proddings about it, Washington did not respond to the transitional plan proposal seriously until January 1979. This had been due to the fact that National Security Advisor, Brzezinski, had perceived the entire world scenario through Soviet American Cold War lens. According to Brzezinski, the Shah of Iran had been a close US ally during the cold War

751. For details see Ibid, pp.40-41
752. For details see Ibid, p.34 and p.59
753. For details see Stempel, n. 696, p.129
conflict and as such would not be allowed to fall under any circumstances. In fact, according to him there could be only one acceptable strategy for the Shah namely to execute the suppression of domestic opposition and in case of his failure a military solution would have to follow to keep him in power. Such a perspective had also received considerable support from the Secretary of Energy James Schlesinger who had earlier served the US government both as the Director of CIA and as the Secretary of Defence. In fact Schlesinger had strongly believed concerning the vital importance of the Shah to the west and had successfully reinforced his views with the help of both the Egyptian and Chinese governments. But such a perspective had been stoutly contested to by the then Secretary of State, Vance. This had led to what had been known as the Vance-Brzezinski conflict. For instance, Secretary Vance had sought to highlight the fact that the old Kissingerian geo-political view (as shared by Brzezinski) had been abandoned in favour of a more moralistic approach under Carter. Thus, the United States could not possibly provide any support to the autocratic and repressive policies as pursued by the Shah government in Iran. In fact, Vance had been strongly supported by his Under Secretary for Political Affairs, David Newsom, and the US Ambassador at the UN, Andrew Young, as well as by several State Department

officials namely, David Precht, Patricia Derian and William Miller. The Pentagon, however, under the leadership of Defence Secretary Harold Brown, had not taken a strong position during the crisis and had decided to leave the entire matter in the hands of President Carter. As for the CIA, under its Director Stansfield Turner, it had sought to take a cautious position after being chastized by President Carter for failing to warn the American government concerning the impending crisis. It may be worthwhile to mention that even after the fall of Shah, both Vance and Turner had maintained that the United State, could still "live with honour" following the outcome of the Iranian Revolution.

The American intelligence community under the Carter Presidency had remained in an utterly bad shape under the CIA Director Stansfield Turner. For instance, instead of trying to instil morale into his organization, Turner had virtually ordered the transfer of every key CIA station chiefs within the first two years of his assuming office and in the process, experienced veterans had been replaced with people who had practically little knowledge about the language, history or culture of the countries to which they had been accredited to. Besides this, Turner had always been particularly sensitive to the political "winds" in Washington.

755. For details see Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, p.144

756. For details see Ibid, p.145
and had sought to remain on the right side of influential personalities such as Vice-President Walter Mondale and David Arron (NSC). These personalities, in fact, had always voiced a strong dislike for US covert actions which seemed to have influenced the attitude concerning Iran. In such a perspective was hardly surprising that Turner had made the remarks even after the fall of the Shah that, "he knew no other agency intelligence service that predicted trouble in Iran" and also that "even Ayatollah Khomeini did not realize how well his force was moving along".

The Carter administration, in the meanwhile, had spelled out its two-pronged approach namely, "political liberalization" by the Shah and the US support towards such goals following the inception of the military government in November 1978. Spelling out the American position Secretary Vance had stated, "We fully support the efforts of the Shah to restore order while continuing his program of liberalization". Infact, the State Department officials had kept insisting that the military government could be seen as part of the "process of liberalization". The US ambassador William Sullivan, however, had remarked in Tehran

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757. For details see Ibid, pp.131-132
758. As cited in Washington Post, 5 February 1979
759 Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p.128
760 As cited in Washington Post, 7 November 1978
761 As cited in Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p.129
on 12 November 1978, "we are aware that the political options were closing out for the Shah because opposition leaders refused to join a coalition and we told Washington what that meant". In the meanwhile, as stated earlier, President Carter had sent a strongly worded directive on 11 November 1978 in the form of serious warning concerning "political intelligence" failures in Iran. But implicit in the directive had been targeted mainly against Turner. The President's letter, however, had directed the three top US officials namely, Vance, Brzezinski and Turner to sit down together and to recommend jointly a specific programme of action to improve the quality of intelligence gathering and analysis.

The Presidential warnings and its subsequent leak to the press had brought forth the simmering disagreement to the open between Brzezinski and Vance concerning American foreign policy issues. In fact, the American intelligence officials had strongly believed that Brzezinski had played a key role in "making public" to the press concerning the President's directive and also that the NSC advisor had some how "misguided" Carter concerning the CIA perspective on Iran.

764. For details see Ibid, 28 November 1978 and 17 December 1978
765. For details see New York Times, 21 December 1978
The Iranian domestic developments, in the meanwhile had deteriorated fast following the massive, peaceful demonstrations organized by the opposition during Tasu'a and Aushura (10-11 December 1978). It may be mentioned that on the eve of these demonstrations, Carter had expressed his open concern regarding the uncertain political future for the Shah. For instance, responding to reports as to whether he thought that the Shah would survive, Carter had reportedly remarked, "I do not know, I hope so. This is something that is in the hands of the people of Iran". But following these violent disturbances, Carter had officially sought to assuage the feelings of the Shah by stating that "I fully expect the Shah to maintain power in Iran [and] for the present problems in Iran to be resolved". The President, indeed, had ordered the Pentagon to fly five water cannon riot control trucks to Iran in response to the Shah's request to provide such emergency help as made earlier to Carter.

The President, in the meanwhile had been contemplating along four principal courses of action concerning Iran. These had been along firstly that "the Shah should make a genuine effort to liberalize the regime" and secondly, that the Shah should "hit hard and to crush the incipient revolution by force". A third option, however, had been preferred to

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766. As cited in Washington Post, 7 December 1978
767. As cited in Ibid, 13 December 1978
768. Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p.130
by the Israelis as well as by Empress Farah, which had stipulated a course in favour of the formation of a regency council to be headed by the Empress to replace the Shah. A fourth solution seemed to have been initiated by the CIA officials who had advocated for a military coup which had been masterminded by Ayub Khan in Pakistan. Such a plan had envisaged that if the Shah would go into exile a good Muslim general would replace him in power.769 Thus, the American policy-makers had been speaking with several voices to complicate the situation further.

In the meanwhile President Carter had deputed four leading Washington personalities namely, the Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal and Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd (Democrat, West Virginia) Robert Bowie, head of CIA intelligence analysis and General E.F. Tighe, Director of DIA, for an on the spot visit to Tehran regarding a review of Iranian developments and to apprise him concerning their implications for the United States.770 The President had also sent George W. Ball, a former Under Secretary of State as his personal emissary to review the Iranian situation along the same lines. Ball's secret report had been placed before the special coordination committee of the NSC held on 4 December 1978, which, infact, had included various alternatives, "including the role of a constitutional monarch

769. For details see Heikel, n. 160, pp.150-151
770. For details see Ibid, p.162
for the Shah with a Council of respected, senior political figures, or notables, naming a civilian government to rule the country". Further meetings of the NSC special coordination committee had been held at least four to five times during November-December 1978, which had been attended by top policy-makers of US government namely, Brzezinski, Vance, Brown, Turner and Schlesinger. Other individuals such as Vice President Walter Mondale, David Aaron and Gary Sick (NSC) as well as Under Secretary of State David Newsom, and David Precht had also participated in some crucial committee deliberations. It appears that following these developments, the Shah had contacted Karim Sanjibi concerning the formation of a coalition government under his leadership, but it had been rebuffed by the latter. Eventually, however, the Shah under the American pressures had appointed a civilian namely, Shahpour Bakhtiar, to head the government in Iran.

It may be mentioned that the Russians had responded to the Iranian crisis for the first time on 19 November 1978, when the Soviet President and party chief Leonid Brezhnev had issued a stiff warning to the US government not to intervene in Tehran's internal affairs. As for the US government, due to sharp divisions in American policy-makers

771. For details see Washington Post, 15 December 1978
772. For details see Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, p. 158
773. For details see Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, pp. 131-132
774. As cited in Heikel, n. 160, p. 163
concerning Iran, they had not responded to the Soviet warning through a feeble statement by Secretary Vance. The US government, however, had responded vigorously to this challenge through an announcement made on 4 January 1979 that "it would effectively support Bakhtiar government whether or not the Shah remained in power". Despite this, it had been claimed by the Russian ambassador in Tehran, Vladimir Vinogradov that on the wake of the warning by Brezhnev, the Shah had held discussions with him. During the discussion, the Shah had reportedly expressed his helplessness vis-a-vis the American policy makers as the latter had been dictating impossible terms on him concerning Iran. But no concrete improvement in USSR-Iran relations seemed to have resulted following such reported meetings. As for the US government, it had demonstrated its clear intention to stand by the Shah by making an announcement on 29 December 1978 that US naval task carrier "constellation" had been asked to move from Phillipines into the Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf region. But due to certain confusion in US policy-making circles, "constellation" had to be reverted back to the Subic Bay in Phillipines. Following this episode, President Carter, on the reported advice of the Chairman of the joint chiefs of Staff, General David Jones had decided to depute Air

775. Washington Post, 20 November 1978
776. As cited in Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p.133
777. For details see Heikel, n. 160, pp.164-165
778. For details see Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, p.163
Force General Robert Huyser, serving at his NATO post in Stuttgart, West Germany as the Deputy Commander of US Forces for an on-the-spot reporting on Iran following the assumption of premiership by Shahpour Bakhtiar on 29 December 1978. The Presidential nomination seemed to have received the firm endorsement of both Secretary Vance and NSC advisor Brzezinski in the US government as Huyser had arrived in Tehran on 3 January 1979. The purpose of the Huyser mission had appeared to have been to persuade the Iranian armed forces to transfer their loyalty from the Shah to Bakhtiar. Infact, Huyser had been asked to personally supervise and monitor the whole arrangement and to report to the President directly for further action on the matter. 779

A final development concerning the Shah prior to his departure from Iran had been the role of Shahpour Bakhtiar during the short tenure in office as Prime Minister. In this context it may be mentioned that Bakhtiar (who had an impeccable record for opposing the Shah during even the peak period of his rule) had insisted for the removal of the Shah from power, if not permanently, atleast temporarily to enable him to make efforts to tide over the Iranian situation. 780 Bakhtiar had also evolved his own formula concerning this namely, the formation of a Regency Council, the nomination of a broad-based cabinet by him as well as the approval of

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779. For details see Heikel, n. 160, p.170 and Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, pp.173-174
780. For details see Cottam, n. 221, pp.183-184
the same by the Majlis prior to the departure of the Shah from Tehran on a long vacation. As for the US government, it had taken a long time to react to the fall of the Shah in order to avoid the impression that the Carter administration had been forcing the Iranian ruler abruptly out of the country. In the process, the Shah had met his tragic end with which the present study would end. It may be mentioned, however, that with the departure of the Shah on 16 January 1979 the triumphal return of Ayatollah Khomeini to Tehran from Paris had taken place on 1 February 1979. As for the Iranian military, it had initially supported their ruler. But it had started wavering in its allegiance towards the Shah following the massive popular demonstrations that had taken place in almost all cities embracing the whole country. Only a few old generals had decided to stick to the Shah till almost his bitter end. But at a later stage of the

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781. Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p.132
782. For details see Rubin, n. 7, pp.242-243
783. Ramazani, US and Iran, n. 26, p.133
784. For details see Heikel, n. 160, pp.176-178
revolution a clear division within the military had been witnessed when the younger officers had decided to withdraw from action on the second day of the armed clashes that had taken place between the revolutionary and government forces following the return of Khomeini to Tehran on 1 February 1979. In the process the fall of Bakhtiar government had taken place automatically without much commotion and that the revolutionary forces had captured power on 10-11 February 1979 under the inspiration of Ayatollah Khomeini. In the process, a total collapse of American influence over Iran had also resulted with which, however, the present study would culminate.

785. For details see Ledeen and Lewis, n. 5, pp.191-193