Chapter VIII

Summary and Concluding Observations

An attempt had been made in the present work to analyze the United States-Iranian relations during the regime of Emperor Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi (Shah), with special emphasis, placed on the American response towards the evolution of political developments during the Shah period (1941-1979). This period was significant as it represented the case study of an "influential" relationship that had existed between a super power namely, the United States vis-a-vis its regional "surrogate" in the Middle East - Persian Gulf areas namely, the Shah of Iran.

The present study had consisted of eight chapters. While Chapters I and II had provided an "introduction" as well as the "setting" to the study, Chapter VIII comprised the summary of the work and some concluding observations. Chapter III to VII, however, embraced the substantive portion of the present study.

As regards Chapter I it had contained an "introduction", which comprised the following sections namely, "Statement of the Problem", "An Overview of Literature", "Research Questions", "Universe of the Study", Method of Data Collection", "Research Methodology" and "Method of Data Processing".
Chapter II provided the "setting" or the historical background of the study. It was entitled, "Emergence of American Interest in Iran" and had contained four sections namely, "Location and Topography of Iran", "The Anglo-Russian Rivalry over Iran", "Early American Contacts with Iran", and "The United States and the Government Under Reza Shah". Apart from providing a brief outline of Iran's location and topography, this chapter had embraced an overview of Persian history from the Golden Reign of ruler Darius (522 B.C. - 486 B.C.) till the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941. As far as American interest in Iran was concerned, it had been initiated through the religious activities of its Presbytarian missionaries who had contributed significantly to the process of modernization in Persia. But the US government had not evinced much interest in country until after the accession of the Shah in 1941 and the stationing of American troops during the course of the Second World War. During this period, however, three Americans namely, Howard C. Baskerville, W. Morgan Shuster and Arthur C. Millspaugh had played significant roles in the domestic developments of Persia. But following the Anglo-Soviet invasion over Iran beginning in August 1941, matter had become rather "desperate" for Reza Shah, as he had decided to abdicate in favour of his young son in September 1941.
Chapters III and IV embraced the American response to the evolution of political developments from the accession of Shah in 1941 till the out-break of non-violent uprisings against the Iranian ruler beginning in 1977. The first phase of the developments had been contained in Chapter III entitled, "The Nationalist upsurge in Iran and the American Response (1941-1952)". It had embraced four sections namely, "The Accession of Shah", "The Stationing of American Troops in Iran", "The Soviet Troop withdrawal from Iran" and "American Response To The Oil Nationalization Issue". It had been mentioned that the young Shah, after ascending the throne in 1941, sought to capitalize on the presence of American troops in Iran to induce the US policy-makers to develop greater stakes for his country. In this context he had invited two American military missions to Iran as headed by Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf and General Clarence S. Ridley as well as another American economic mission headed by Arthur C. Millspaugh. But a wave of intense nationalism had engulfed the country due to the refusal of the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops as well as owing to the clandestine activities of the extremist groups operating in Iran, who were being backed by foreign powers namely, the USSR and Britain. But despite the Soviet troop withdrawal beginning in May 1946, the situation, however, did not improve and in fact, had become complicated following the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) by the Iranian government under the leadership of its
Chapter IV dealt with the second phase of domestic developments under the title, "The United States and Evolution of Political Developments in Iran (1953-1977)". It embraced four sections namely, "Fall of Mossadeq", "The Consolidation of Shah in Iran", "A Decade of Political Stability (1964-1974)" and "Evolution of Political Developments in Iran and The American Response (1974-1977)". As stated in the work, beginning with the Eisenhower administration, the American policy-makers had begun to contemplate measures to resurrect the Shah (who had gone on exile) so that he might serve as a "rallying point" for popular opposition against Mossadeq, who was becoming increasingly hostile to the United States. Infact, the Eisenhower administration had masterminded an American intervention in Iran [Operation Ajax] under the aegis of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which, infact, had brought about the down fall of Mossadeq on 20 August 1953. Following this coup, the Shah had made a triumphal return from exile and had thereafter made a determined bid to consolidate his regime in Iran.
Following the overthrow of Mossadeq, the US government had responded positively to the Iranian request by providing the Shah an emergency economic relief to the tune of $43 million. Also, it had successfully brought about an end to the oil nationalization crisis through its mediation towards the signing of an agreement between the Iranian government and the newly-created International oil consortium on 5 August 1954. Following this development, however, the CIA had persuaded President Eisenhower to reach a conviction that the Shah had been genuinely interested to forge strong "links" with the United States, which had resulted in the signing of the Cold War alliance (Baghdad Pact) between them in February 1955. The Shah, thereafter, had initiated the process of political reforms in Iran by inaugurating a two party system namely, the "Melliyun" and the "Mardom" as well as by ordering for fresh elections to the Parliament (Majlis). The elections, which had taken place in January-February 1961, however, had been largely "rigged".

In the meanwhile, largely under the promptings of the new administration under President John F. Kennedy, Ali Amini had joined as the Prime Minister in May 1961. But very soon the new Prime Minister had fallen out of favour with the Shah on account of his "strong" views as well as due to his "suspect" Qajar credentials in the eyes of the Iranian ruler. This, eventually had led to his
dismissal in July 1962. Thereafter, the Shah had launched his most coveted programme, namely, the "White Revolution" in January 1963. But strong opposition to the programme had emanated from the religious forces led by Ayatollah Khomeini beginning in June 1963, which, however, had been ruthlessly suppressed by the Shah's forces and his intelligence agency, SAVAK. Beginning in 1964, however, Iran had witnessed a decade of political stability (1964-1974) during which the Shah had spearheaded efforts to achieve legitimacy for his regime through symbolic appeals concerning his dynasty (the Cyrus celebrations) as well as by successfully resorting to his role as an "agent" of "modernization". But domestic upheavals against the Shah had begun to gather momentum following a series of mass movements spearheaded by some old time National Front leaders as well as by "Freedom Movement" the "Mujaheddin", and the "Fadayin" groups. These movements had received their inspiration from the writings of the Persian-French educated intellectual Ali Sharia'ti as well as by the religious sermons of Ayatollah Khomeini as broadcast from his political exile at Najaf in Iraq.

Infact, spearheading a most vitriolic attack on the Shah regime as well as against the US government (for supporting his autocratic rule), Khomeini had urged for the establishment of an Islamic state based on Islamic law and the rule of the "Faqih" (Islamic jurisprudence). In the meanwhile, however, efforts had been made in the United States to bolster the Shah's image as a "progressive" ruler through
a host of public relations efforts including the sponsorship of pro-Shah books and advertisement as well as hectic behind-the-scene activities as engineered privately by the Iranian ambassador in Washington, Ardeshir Zahedi. Besides these, SAVAK had kept a close watch on the critics of the Shah both inside the US and Iran.

Chapters V and VI comprised the emergence and evolution of American "influential" relationship over Iran during the period from 1953 to 1979. As regards Chapter V, it was entitled, "The United States and Emergence of Its Influential Relationship with Iran (1953-1968)", and contained four sections namely, "The Signing of Cold War Alliance", "Eisenhower Administration and The Formation of Washington-Tehran Axis (1953-1960)", "Kennedy Administration and Iran (1961-1963)" and "Johnson Administration and Iran (1963-1968)". As regards the background towards the signing of the CENTO alliance on 21 August 1959 the US had been largely prompted by the strong impulses of the policy of containment as well as the development of the concept of "Northern Tier" system comprising Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. As for the Shah with the Soviet threat largely hovering over his head as well as the eruption of Iraqi revolution in 1958, he had decided to enlarge multi-dimensional including direct military relationship (CENTO) between them leading to the formation of Washington-Tehran Axis by the end of Eisenhower administration.
During the Kennedy administration, despite its initial reservations concerning the Shah, the US government had initiated the process of "influential" relationship over Iran through the nomination of Ali Amini as Prime Minister as well as by exerting strong pressures on the Shah for "socio-economic modernization" reforms. Also, noteworthy to mention that despite the tragic episode of June 1963 uprisings, the Shah had received strong endorsement to his rule by President John F. Kennedy and Secretary Dean Rusk as well as from the CIA and the State Department officials.

The process of "influential" relationship had been strengthened further during the Johnson administration. The US government, in fact, had allowed the Shah to make a purchase of $200 million worth of American military equipments concerning Iran's modernization programme. Also, the Shah had allowed the Pentagon to acquire special "extra territorial privileges" in 1964 for its personnel concerning immunity from Iranian criminal jurisdiction. Further, the State Department had reportedly intervened in support of Iran during the oil negotiations that had taken place between the Shah government and the International consortiums during 1966 as well as in 1968.

Chapter VI was entitled, "The United States and Evolution of Its Influential Relationship with Iran (1969-1979)" containing four sections namely, "The Shah and
His International Stance", "Nixon Administration and Iran (1969-1974)", "Ford Administration and Iran (1974-1976)", and "Carter Administration and Iran (1977-1979)". As for the Shah's international perspective, it had been marked by a display of his "personal ambitions" and "subtle diplomacy". Also, he had sought to pursue a foreign policy which had been "pro-West" but not necessarily "anti-Soviet" in nature and had termed it as a form of "qualified neutralism", vis-a-vis the super powers. Further, he had developed a strong interest in "Pan-Islamism" by supporting Islamic states like Pakistan in its military encounter against India in 1965. He had further masterminded the formation of an Organization called the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) in 1964, which had very soon expanded itself into an "Islamic Alliance" consisting of "pro-Western" Arab countries in the Middle East.

During the Nixon administration, following the British policy decision to withdraw from the East of Suez, the American policy-makers had organised a series of gigantic "naval exercises" in the Indian Ocean beginning with the Indo-Pak War in 1971. These naval maneuvers, which had been conducted in cooperation with its allies namely, Britain, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey had not only sought to demonstrate the American desire to counter the Soviet presence but also to project its military ally namely, Iran as the principal naval power in the Gulf region as
against Iraq, a strong Soviet friend in the Middle East. In fact, following the 1973 October War the Shah had adopted a most resolute stand against an oil embargo and had clearly made a firm stand to supply oil to Israel in sharp opposition to the determined Arab resistance against the Tel Aviv government. Also, with strong encouragement from the US quarters, the Shah had successfully played his international role concerning the formation of "Red Sea Entente" as well as the "Safari Club", comprising a group of moderate Arab and African states. In the process, Iran under the Shah had emerged as the "key stone of the arch of Western policy" and also the American "surrogate" in the Middle East-Persian Gulf regions. During the Ford administration a further strengthening in US-Iranian relations had developed due to the Shah's regional policies as well as due to increasing significance that Iran had attached to its bilateral relationship with both Egypt and Israel following 1973 October War. This had resulted in the development of a consensus concerning the West Asian crisis. In the process had ensued the development of special relationship between them in the form of massive arms-sales programmes during the Nixon and Ford administrations.

During the Carter administration, there had been some apprehension initially that the new President might bring about a sudden sharp break to the existing area of "special relationship". Such an apprehension had been
aroused due to the fact that Carter had been an outspoken supporter of human rights issues as well as a bitter critic of America's arms export policy. But his administration had been handicapped by the constraints of policy as inherited from the predecessor Republic administrations under Ford and Nixon, which, in fact, had forced it to defend the Shah concerning the human rights abuses in Iran. Besides this, it had to vigorously lobby in the US Congress in favour of the commitments of the previous administrations concerning the proposed arms sales (AWACS). Carter had also showered overwhelming praises on the Shah during the latter's official visit to the United States in November 1977 despite the violent protest march as spearheaded by articulate Iranian students in Washington. Also, Carter had paid a return visit to Iran on 31 December 1977 during which he had once again reassured the Shah concerning American support.

Chapter VII embraced an overview of American response to the outbreak of the Iranian Revolution leading to the fall of the Shah in January 1979. It had been entitled "The Iranian Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini and The Road To The Collapse of the Shah in Iran (1978-1979)" and had contained four sections namely, "The Background To The Iranian Revolution", "Ayatollah Khomeini and The Outbreak of Revolutionary Upsurge in Iran," "The Road To The Fall of Shah", and "The Iranian Revolution and American Response To The Collapse of the Shah (1978-1979)". In this context
it had been mentioned that the outbreak of the Iranian Revolution had been largely due to Shah's failure to tackle numerous socio-economic problems such as the spiralling inflation, increasing corruption at all levels, and mounting inequalities among the Iranian population. On the political front, he had also made no serious effort at liberalization and had resorted to repressions against his domestic opponents through the agency of SAVAK. These, in fact, had prompted some articulate Iranian masses to rise in violent popular protests beginning with the Qom and Tabriz uprisings in January-February 1978. As for the Shah, he had responded to such mounting pressures by resorting alternatively to politics of "Carrot" and "stick" which, however, had failed to satisfy the detractors of his regime led by Ayatollah Khomeini from his political exile in Najaf (Iraq). In the first phase of the Revolution ending in July 1978, a series of religious mass uprisings as well as public demonstrations had taken at Qom, Tabriz, Tehran and Isfahan. The second phase, however, had been marked by ugly developments namely, the "Rex Cinema Massacre" in Ibadan and the "Black Friday episode in Tehran, which had been followed immediately by mamoth public demonstrations on the streets of Iran, eventually leading to the fall of the Shah.

As regards the American response to the Iranian Revolution and the fall of Shah, the attitude of the Carter administration had been far from "positive". This had been
demonstrated by the fact that instead of paying greater attention to the evolution of domestic crisis concerning a firm ally namely, the Shah of Iran, the top American policymakers had been found deeply embroiled with major international problem of the period such as the Camp David Peace Talks, The SALT negotiations, Normalization of America-China relations and the guerilla War in Zimbabwe.

As far as the American policy towards the Shah was concerned, it had suffered from the widely-held official perspective that Iran would continue to remain strong under the leadership of the Shah and that any critical evaluation of the Iranian ruler's stability must be rejected and dismissed out of hand. Infact, there had developed a tremendous communication gap in respect of the assessment made by American intelligence communities and the actual domestic scenario of Iran. This had provoked President Carter to castigate them severely for their failure to monitor the covert intelligence on Iran. Also, during the Congressional hearings on Iran held in January 1979, several members held attacked the US administration for their inept handling of the crisis as well as for their lack of contacts with the opposition elements in Iran. But internal developments in Iran had deteriorated fast during the military government under the Shah, which had prompted the latter to depute four leading US officials as well as a former Under Secretary to State George W. Ball as his emissaries to
undertake a review of the Iranian situation. Also following the fall of the military government, and installation of a coalition government, under the leadership of Shahpour Bakhtiar, Carter had deputed Air Force Commander General Robert Huyser to Tehran with instructions to persuade the Iranian military to transfer their loyalty from the Shah to Bakhtiar, which, however, had failed to materialize. In the end, however, the domestic pressures against the Shah had eventually forced the Iranian ruler to leave Tehran on a long vacation to Egypt beginning on 16 January 1979. The departure of the Shah had virtually heralded the end of his rule over Iran as well as the culmination of the present study on Iran.

On the basis of the above summary, some concluding observations concerning the US-Iranian relations may be attempted as follows:

Firstly, despite the dynamic transformation in the realm of international relations (following the disintegration of western colonial empires and the emergence of increasingly assertive new states), a new system of regional "satellites" or "surrogates" had begun to evolve during the periods of the cold war/new cold war. The system had comprised a pattern of "influential relationship" between the superpowers vis-a-vis their regional "clients". The case of Iran had constituted a perfect example in this regard as the United States had enjoyed a most dominating control over the Shah's regime.
Secondly, in the realm of international politics, not only governments, but private individuals, corporations, and other state actors normally do exercise considerable influence in the over-all bilateral relationship between the United States and a particular Third World state. But in case of Iran, despite the presence of hundreds of US private corporations and about 45,000 American nationals (who had exercised considerable influence in various sectors of its economy and society), the interests of the United States towards Tehran government had been primarily guided by strategic rather than economic considerations.

Thirdly, during the Carter administration an acute domestic instability coupled with external vulnerability had placed a serious limitation on Iran to move towards the exercise of an "influence" relationship vis-a-vis the United States. Such a scenario, however, could be markedly contrasted with the first term of Eisenhower administration, during which the Shah had been "wooed" and actively "courted" by the United States. Infact, the US-Iranian relations had depicted a scenario in which the "client or surrogate" states like Iran had exercised a considerable influence over its patron namely, the United States.

Fourthly, there had been a general consensus in American circles that one of the major reason for the success for the Iranian Revolution had been the indiscriminate US support
for the Shah. Interestingly enough, while the "globalists" in the United States had blamed the Carter administration's "human rights" policy for the fall of the Shah's regime and the loss of "strategic" Iran to the "Free World", the "regionalists" on the contrary had charged the Nixon administration responsible for its failure to uphold American democratic ideals in dealing firmly with the Shah as well as by assigning him the role of the "protector" of Persian Gulf security. All of them, however, had shared a similar perspective concerning unlimited nature of American influence over Iran.

Fifthly, the fall of the Shah's regime and along with it the long-standing American role in Iran had begun to symbolize the scenario of an "Iranian syndrome". At the heart of that syndrome remained the inter-play between the Shah's "personality traits" and the deep-rooted problems of social, economic, political, psychological and cultural ailments, all of which had eventually contributed to his downfall. Further, the main thrust of his policies namely, "Obsession with military powers", and "economic and political liberalization" however, had been intended to avoid sharing real powers with the forces of opposition and to ingratiate the regime with the United States.

Sixthly, The fall of Shah had marked the collapse of an American Persian Gulf strategy that had been principally based on Saudi Arabia economic and political powers as
well as Iranian political and military strength. With the removal of the Iranian "pillar" such a strategy could no longer be materialized.

Seventhly, in less than a year of revolutionary upsurge, the entire gamut of the US-Iranian relationship (stretching for well over a quarter-century) had begun to collapse rapidly. Apart from severe disruptions caused to the Iranian oil industry due to frequent strikes by its employees, the revolutionary process had also affected the US arms sales towards Iran virtually as American corporations dealing these military transactions had become the major targets for violent attacks by the anti-Shah demonstrators.

Eightly, the single-most important strategic loss for the Americans had been the closing down of the listening posts near the Soviet border for the surveillance by the CIA. Without these tracking and eavesdropping equipment facilities as available earlier in Iran, the United States had been placed in a rather difficult situation, where an concerning effective verification of Soviet compliance with the provisions of SALT agreement could be ensued to its satisfaction.

Ninthly, there had emerged a widespread conviction in American circles that the US government had not only been "ineffective" and "timorous", but also had become "hypocritical" particularly in respect of its treatment towards the
Iranian ruler. The failure to grant sanctuary to the Shah immediately following his fall had aroused in the country a considerable psychological impact in this regard.

Finally, the Iranian Revolution had destroyed the Shah's regime and along with it America's influential role over Iran. Infact, Shah's long-standing "wooing" and the "winning" of American support had eventually paved the way towards the ultimate loss of such influential relationship, this had become quite marked in the post-Shah period when a hostile "second-rate" power like Khomeini's Iran had inflicted over the United States a great "humiliation during the crisis over the American hostage issue in 1979 which had represented the "nadir" of US-relationship vis-a-vis Iran in sharp contrast to the Shah period which had immediately preceded it. In the process a severe debacle in American policy had been markly evident concerning Iran in the post-Shah period.