CHAPTER FIVE

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN POLITICS
Introduction:

The era that we live in is "information era" and the main sources of information are media. This chapter attempts to explain and analyze the role of media in Iran politics. Therefore, let us have a brief look at the role of media in politics before the 1979 Revolution. Then we will analyze the role of media in the first years of revolution and in the Construction era.

Globalization is another vital issue affecting and determining the role of media. At the end of this chapter we review the situations of media in Post-Khatami periods.

In Iran there are 7 TV channels and many national and regional radio stations. Iranian citizen cannot use satellite dishes because it is forbidden by the parliament. But some people use it informal. All of the above TV channels and radio stations are under the control of IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting).

There is a Supervisory Council in IRIB that controls the entire programs for broadcasting. According to the article 175 of the constitution, members of the Supervisory Council have been appointed by the President, Head of Judiciary and Speaker of the Parliament (in all 6 representatives). Moreover, the Leader appoints the head of IRIB.¹

¹ Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, (2003), "Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution" (Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.), p.93
In this era media in every country plays a dominant role in politics and considerably shapes the public opinion. We must know that in this era of information and technology it is quite difficult for the governments to limit the speed of transmission of information through new means like Internet, satellite channels and radio stations.

Iranians' interest in foreign media, via short-wave, satellite, or the internet will only increase as they seek unbiased information about developments in their own country. State radio and television already had a powerful role in opinion making because newspapers and print media have a limited circulation outside the main cities. The closure of so many publications only increased this advantage.

Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), however, is criticized for being one-sided in its news reporting, which explains the popularity of foreign radio services. "Considering the limitations of literacy and the even greater limitation in their access to the press, people obviously turn to Voice of America, the BBC, and Radio Free Europe, which can be heard in the most remote villages with two-band radios," a Tehran journalist warned.

Especially in the 1990's, the availability and the use of video tapes, compact discs or CD, satellite dishes, and the Internet became more pervasive. Moreover, the more than 3 million Iranian expatriates kept in close contact with their brethren inside Iran, keeping them apprised of the global political, economic, and cultural trends. Iran's youthful population, therefore, have become increasingly globalize, in tune not only with what is occurring inside the country but also with developments taking place in the world.
A) Pre-Revolution Mass Media:

Although an official newspaper first appeared in Iran in 1851, it was not until late in the nineteenth century that publishing and journalism had much effect on the political or intellectual life of the nation. And the most important Persian papers such as Habl-ul Matin, Hekmat and Chehr-e Nama at that time were in fact printed abroad, chiefly in India, Egypt and Turkey.  

From the early twentieth century onwards, however, publishing developed rapidly in Iran, and several newspapers played an important role in the success of the Constitutional Revolution.

The first modern newspaper, Ettela'at, was launched in 1926. Its success led to the establishment of another paper Kayhan, in 1941. These two evening papers have now developed into the country's main publishing houses, producing a wide range of dailies and periodicals in several languages. In fact, they the most important press publications in Iran and the other newspapers used their equipments.

In addition to these two old-established papers, there were number of other Persian dailies with large circulations, including Rastakhiz and Ayandegan, both morning papers. In the country as a whole 85 periodicals were published, including a number of official publications, mainly dealing with technical or specialized subjects. The foreign-language press is represented by two English, one French and one Armenian daily, a German weekly and an Arabic monthly magazine.

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While the larger publications subscribed to the international news agencies and services independently, many subscribed to the official Pars News Agency\(^3\), which edited and translated material of interest to its subscribers. Pars had a large provincial network of correspondents and were also building up a foreign news network. While the press remained relatively static in terms of the number of publications and circulation, there was a tremendous expansion among the electronic media.

Iran's **first radio station** went on the air in 1940, with a 30-kilowatt medium-wave transmitter broadcasting five hours a day. Radio quickly became popular, especially with the advent of cheap transistorized receivers. Total transmission capacity has grown rapidly, from 3,523 kilowatts and 38 stations in 1968 to 7,710 kilowatts and 64 stations in 1976.

Radio coverage in Iran extended to 100 per cent of the population on medium-wave transmission, and in addition most provincial centers and major towns had an FM network. The estimated number of radio sets was twelve million. The **Voice of Iran** beamed to the entire Middle East, Europe and North America, and Far East broadcasts too began. In addition to Persian, the Voice of Iran did broadcast in 15 other languages.

In 1971, after over 30 years of independent operation, Radio Iran was merged with the state television organization to form a semi-autonomous governmental authority, **National Iranian Radio and Television**.

Television broadcasting began on a small scale in 1958, but it was not

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\(^3\) - After the revolution the name of this news agency changed to Islamic Republic of Iran News Agency (IRNA),
until 1966 that serious efforts to start a nation-wide network began. Coverage expanded tremendously in the seventies, and covered much of Iran.

Transmission capacity was 161 kilowatts in 1976 and the number of transmitters exceeds 100. By the end of the Fifth Plan period it was expected that coverage of the Television First Channel would reach 65 per cent of the population and that of the Second Channel 50 per cent. Color television broadcasting was on the French SECAM standard.

The cinema has always enjoyed great popularity in Iran. Originally, foreign films were imported and Persian sound-tracks or sub-titles simply added, but in the past decade a flourishing local film industry has developed.

Iranian film-makers have mostly been influenced by straight box-office considerations, but of late a numbed of producers and directors has been raising standards, and several Iranian films, including some excellent documentaries, have received international. Acclaim, while also being box-office hits. In 1976 there were 433 cinemas in 151 towns with 109 of them in Tehran. In 1975 a total of 67 films were produced in Iran.

The Centre for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, under the patronage of Empress Farah Pahlavi, commissioned several excellent productions, and the Tehran International Festival of Children's Films was one of the top four festivals of its kind in the world.

The first Tehran International Film Festival was held in 1972, one of only half a dozen recognized by the International Federation of Film Producers' Associations. It was held every year in late autumn and had firmly
established itself as a major show-piece for Asian and Third World films, and its **Golden Ibex awards** attracted the world's top film-makers.

**B) The Iranian Press in the First Years of the Revolution:**

During the revolution, there were worrying signs about the attitude of Ayatollah Khomeini's followers towards the press. In 1979, an Islamic committee took control of the newspaper **Keyhan**, dismissing its leading journalists. Other employees organized a strike to protest the takeover. Rahman Hatefi, the paper's editor, was arrested and executed soon after. Soon after his return to Iran as the leader of the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini made a speech exhorting Iranian intellectuals to rid themselves of the "evils of -isms"(like liberalism, socialism etc.), and transform universities into healthy places for the study of higher Islamic teachings.

This marked the beginning of a cultural revolution whose aim was the total elimination of western culture, values and influence. In the early days of the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini declared that it was not necessary to ban unsuitable books; they simply should not be read. Nonetheless, he warned that newspapers which printed articles harmful to the revolution or created discord would be charged with sedition against the Islamic Republic. His speeches were inflammatory enough to incite the Revolutionary Guards, local revolutionary support committees and religious officials to harass and even carry out physical attacks on the liberal media in his name.

Post-revolutionary leaders attacked journalists suspected of having supported the Shah's monarchy or of holding ideas opposed to the principles of the new Islamic Republic. Many journalists were dismissed from their jobs
and several were later arrested and imprisoned. Approximately 1,000 publications were banned and closed down, and around 700 journalists were imprisoned for varying lengths of time.

By early 1983 at least 39 writers, translators and journalists had been executed. In addition, the authorities dissolved the three national unions representing journalists, press administrators, and editors and publishers. Around 400 journalists fled the country and settled abroad.

The then Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Ayatollah Doa'i, was quoted as saying that "the press is the most dangerous power in the contemporary world. It must be exclusively in the service of Islam. Freedom of the press is an invention of Jews, freemasons and colonialists and a means of sowing dissension among the disinherited." 4

Several women were arrested and imprisoned in 1983 at the time of the dissolution of the left-wing Tudeh Party because of their association with this party or its political ally, the People's Fedaiyan Organization of Iran; three of them were political activists and journalists. At the time of their arrests these parties were legal; they were only later declared counter revolutionary.

Mariam Firouz, in her late seventies, who was President of the Democratic Women's Organization of Iran, a former Tudeh Party activist and editor-in-chief of Jahan-e-Zanan, and Malakeh Mohammadi, in her mid-sixties, a writer for Nameh Mardom and Donya (both organs of the Tudeh Party), were arrested and detained with several others in Evin prison. They

were allegedly tortured during their imprisonment. Both were tried in 1986 and sentenced to death, but their sentences were later commuted to 20 years' imprisonment each. They were released in 1991, but are believed to be under house arrest. Zohreh Gheni, writer and editor-in-chief of the women's magazine *Azzaraksh*, was also arrested in 1983 for her alleged association with the Tudeh Party. She was tried in 1986 and given an eight-year prison sentence. She was released in 1991.

Foreign journalists who received permission to enter the country complained about the tight surveillance by security agents. The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance reportedly kept files on every journalist who wrote about or entered Iran. By the end of 1983, only the AFP and Reuters news services were operating in the country, but even they faced increasing difficulties.

C) **Legal Framework of the Press (The Constitution and the 1985 Press Law):**

The Iranian Constitution guarantees freedom of publication and the press but that freedom is not unconditional. Article 24 states that: Publications and the press are free to publish their ideas unless they are injurious to the fundamentals of Islam or public rights. Details will be provided by legislation. Article 175 states: Freedom of publicity and propaganda in the Mass Media (radio and television) shall be insured on the basis of Islamic principles. The management of the media shall be under the joint supervision of the Judiciary
(High Judiciary Council), Legislature, and Executive. Details of such management are determined by law.  

According to the Article 4 of the 1985 Press Law, "the Iranian press must not be subject to governmental or non-governmental pressure, censorship or control" But, other provisions contradict this declaration and impose a wide range of restrictions. For example, the Law requires the press to advance the aims and objectives of the Islamic Republic and to contribute to public knowledge and understanding of social and political issues (Article 2, sections A and B).  

The right to publish a newspaper is limited to those Iranian citizens who exhibit "moral fitness as well as social and political devotion" (Articles 5 and 8). Those who held official positions between 1963 and 1978, those associated with the Shah's regime, and those who supported that regime in the media may not publish (Article 9).

The Law prohibits the publication of material contrary to the principles of Islam, damaging to the Islamic Republic or insulting to its holy leaders. The press may not advocate self-determination or autonomy for national minorities in Iran and must not criticize Ayatollah Khomeini, high-ranking government officials and institutions, or publish cartoons depicting these officials. The punishment for publication of an article insulting Iran's leader is the
revocation of the publication's license; the editor may receive 40 to 70 lashes and 2 to 24 months' imprisonment (Article 24).

The Press Law names the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance as the government agency responsible for overseeing the press. The Ministry issues licenses for local newspapers and foreign news agencies and monitors their activities. It is also responsible for issuing licenses for publishing, printing, and distribution companies and monitoring their activities. The Ministry also licenses the import and export of audio-visual material, artistic works, press and other publications. It has a monopoly on the gathering of foreign and domestic news and photographs and on their distribution to the domestic media. The Ministry also monitors the publication of news and information about state activities and produces and distributes government publications.

The government monopoly on newsprint has served as a very effective censorship mechanism. Possession of a typewriter, fax machine, photocopier, computer or shortwave radio not registered with the authorities incurs severe punishment.

After president Khatami came to power and Iranian press started a new age of development many debates arose about the lack of regulations in Press Law.

In this regard, a revision of the Press Law was proposed in the parliament in October-November 1998, and the parliament approved the draft bill on 7 July 1999. The law said that a complaint against a publication could be filed for an unlimited period. In other words, there is no statute of
limitations. Part of the bill called for a reporter to be held responsible for what he or she wrote, whereas final responsibility rested with the publication's director or chief editor.

Granting of press accreditation was made more restrictive. The bill said that a Qom seminarian and the head of the Islamic Propagation Organization would serve on the Press Supervisory Board. Also, the bill said Revolutionary Courts are qualified to hear press offenses, whereas Article 168 of the constitution only permits press courts to do so.

This law was almost identical to an October 1998 proposal for revising the press laws by Deputy Minister of Intelligence and Security Said Emami. Emami complained that journalists' activities would "cause security problems for the Islamic Republic of Iran." Whereas the current press law only held license-holders and managing directors responsible for what appeared in publications, Emami wrote, the writers themselves must be confronted "individually, using the law, in order to ban them from writing or publishing." Emami proposed the drafting of a bill that would "lend legality to the security measures." He wrote: "The bill must include the professional nature of the work and eligibility for it." This meant that writers and translators would require licenses. Emami proposed a special disciplinary court to judge press offenses. Emami wrote, "In this way, associations that are acceptable to us can be strengthened and hostile elements driven away." 7

In January 1999, Emami was arrested for his part in the late-1998 murders of writers and dissident political figures. Little was known about

7 - Salam Daily, 6 July, 1999
Emami's letter until after his death in June, when he allegedly committed suicide while in custody.

News about Emami’s proposed press law was one of the sparks that led to the disturbances of July 1999. Parliament, therefore, postponed acting on it, leading to speculation that the new parliament could overturn it. But in late April 2000, a little more than a month before the new parliament was inaugurated, a new, tough press law was passed. The new law permits Revolutionary Courts to prosecute press cases and prohibits the reappearance of banned publications coming out under a new name. The new law prohibits criticism of the constitution and it makes journalists, as well as publications' directors, liable for what appears in the press.  

D) Press Court and Press Supervisory Board:

The Press Court is a branch of General Courts that handles offences related to the press. According to Article 168 of the Constitution, trial for press offences should be held openly in the presence of a jury, whose composition is determined in the Press Law. However, prosecution of critics of the government and harassment of a number of independent journalists and writers by the Judiciary increased dramatically during the past years. One the main factor conditioning this attack is the lack of legal protection for freedom of expression and association in Iranian Law.

In contradiction of international standards, the Press Law, enacted in 1985, significantly restricts freedom of expression by determining narrow roles for the media and setting up weeping prohibitions. Article 6 of Press

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8 - *Kayhan* Daily, 29 April 2000
Law, for instance prohibits the press from publishing materials that "harm the basis of Islamic Republic" or "create division among the different strata of society".

The law establishes the Press Supervisory Board, dominated by the member of the Executive Branch of the government. This Board is a responsible official body for issuing press licenses and examining complaints filed against publication, editors and publishers. According to the Press Law, and in violation of Article 14(1) of the ICCPR, the Board enjoys semi-judicial power to determine violation of the Press Law and may close newspapers or magazines solely by administrative order.

In the case of referral of some of the complaints to the judiciary by the Press Supervisory Board, the Press Court, a special tribunal within the judiciary, hears such complaints. The jury of the Press Court is in charge of making recommendations to the judge regarding the guilt or innocence of defendants and the severity of any penalty to be imposed.

In tens of cases against the newspapers and journalists the recommendations of jury for lenient penalties were disregarded by the judge of the Press Court in favor of harsher measures.

Most of the press cases were brought before the Revolutionary Courts and Special Clerical Courts, which do not have jurisdiction to hear press cases, and where defendants enjoy fewer legal protections. In the most of the press cases, newspapers or magazines were closed down before trial as a result of unprecedented and highly criticized creation of irrelevant laws by the judiciary.
E) The Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution:

The Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution (SCCR) was formed in December 1984 is in fact continuation of the Cultural Revolution Headquarters. The Council established in the time of Ayatollah Khomeini. Its decisions can be overruled by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Most of its members are appointed by the Leader. At present reformist President Mohammad Khatami is the chairman of the council but conservatives outnumber reformists on the council.

This council debates and approves its own relevant issues. The Imam used to say that such approved issues must be regarded as laws. He did not mean that the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution was a legislative organ. But, its ratified bills are valid as approved laws. In accordance with the instructions of the late Imam and the esteemed Leader, one must not overrule the approved issues of this council.

The headquarters took shape on June 12, 1980 and following a decree by Imam Khomeini the council was charged to take measures in planning for various courses and for the cultural policy of the universities in future on the basis of Islamic culture and through selection of efficient, committed and vigilant professors and for other issues relevant to the Islamic academic revolution.

In some case the Cultural Revolution Headquarters failed to make universities ready for building the future. The headquarters deleted certain courses such as music as fake knowledge as committees were after Islamization of all subjects in humanities such as law, political sciences,
economy, psychology, education and sociology.

Following the formation of the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, it declared itself the highest body for making policies and decision makings in connection with cultural, educational and research activities within the framework of the general policies of the system and considered its approvals indispensable. In fact, the group of seven (in 1980-83) and then 17 (in 1984) that was even expanded to 36 in 1999 was expected to compile all the cultural policies of the country.

Some of the reformists in the universities believed that the council that was legitimized upon a decree by the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Imam Khomeini, blocked the way to the emergence of the student movement in 1983-1989 periods by banning many books and purging thousands of students and lecturers. Through selection of applicants who wished to enter universities and by the formation of institutions inside universities, the council took control of the affairs of all university students.

In 1996 Hojjat ul-Islam Mohammad Khatami was appointed as a member of Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution by the Supreme Leader of Iran. As President he is the head of the council.

In October 2001 the council ordered all private Internet access companies under state control. The order was never implemented but parliament considered legislation that would require Internet providers to block access to adult sites and others.

On 10 June 2003, judiciary spokesman Gholam Hoseyn Elham explained that a lack of adequate, government-imposed filtering would
"pollute the climate" of Internet sites so that those seeking information would be put off from using the sites. They would thus be deprived of their natural rights to gain knowledge. Elham explained that an advisory committee of the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council will take charge of filtering. Elham listed more than 20 matters that would likely be filtered, including "the dissemination of blasphemous items; ...insulting Islam and Islamic sanctities; opposing the constitution and publishing any item that might undermine the independence and the territorial integrity of the country; insulting the Leader and the sources of emulation the values of the Islamic Revolution and the principles of the political thought of Imam Khomeini; undermining national unity and solidarity; creating pessimism and hopelessness among the people regarding the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Islamic system; providing publicity for illegal groups and political parties; ...propagating prostitution and forbidden acts; publishing pictures and photographs that are contrary to public morality; ...providing publicity for smoking cigarettes and the taking of narcotics; ...making false accusations against any of the officials or ordinary members of the society; insulting individuals or organizations; and creating any unidentified radio or television network and program without the supervision of the Voice and Vision Organization [radio and television.

F) The Mass Media in Construction Era:

Following the election of Hashemi Rafsanjani as President of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1989, many people hoped that the press situation in Iran would improve. Rafsanjani was hailed as a moderate because of his commitment to liberalizing the Iranian economy, opening the country to foreign investment, and moving Iran back into the international community
after ten years of isolation. However, internal developments in the three years his presidency suggest that little have changed in the press situation.

As explained earlier, the Constitution provides for freedom of the press as long as published material accords with Islamic principles. The publisher of every newspaper and periodical is required by law to have a valid publishing license. Any publication perceived as being anti-Islamic is not granted a publication license.

In practice, the criteria for being anti-Islamic have been broadly interpreted to encompass all materials that include an antigovernment sentiment. In 1987 all the papers and magazines in circulation supported the basic political institutions of the Islamic Republic.

The major daily newspapers for the country are printed in Tehran. The leading newspapers include Jumhori-yi Islami, Resalat, Kayhan, Abrar, and Ettelaat. The Tehran Times and Kayhan International were two English-language dailies in Tehran. While all these newspapers were considered to be appropriately Islamic, they did not endorse every program of the central government.

For example, Jumhori-yi Islami, the official organ of the Islamic Republic Party before its dissolution in 1987, presents the official government line of Prime Minister Mir Hossein Musavi.

In contrast, Resalat is a pro-conservative newspaper and consistently critical of government policies, especially those related to the economy. The other newspapers criticize various aspects of governmental policies but do not have a consistent position.
No prior censorship of nonfiction exists, but any published book that is considered un-Islamic can be confiscated, and both the author and the publisher are liable for attempting to offend public morals or Islam.

Private publishing companies thus tend to restrict their titles to subjects that will not arouse official ire. Numerous new books in history, science, geography, and classical poetry and literature have been published since 1987, including many manuscripts that had been banned under the shah. Virtually no new works of contemporary fiction, however, have appeared in print.

All radio and television broadcasting is controlled by the government. Television and radio stations exist in Tehran and the major provincial cities. Stations in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan are permitted to broadcast some programs in Azeri Turkish and Kurdish. Several of the banned opposition groups broadcast into Iran from stations in Iraq or the Caucasus republics of the Soviet Union. Both the British Broadcasting Company and the Voice of America broadcast Persian-language news and feature programs to FM radio channels in Iran.

As explained earlier, after the end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988 and after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989, Hashemi Rafsanjani’s government announced its intention to liberalize its regulation of the press. In anticipation of a liberalized climate, a number of independent cultural and satirical magazines began publication in 1989 and 1990.

Two of these, *Gol Agha* and *Gardoon* (closed down in 1991, as discussed below), often included satire aimed at the authorities. Perhaps one of the main reasons of this new policy about the press was pressure from
international human rights organizations. But the most important need of open
the society was internal, not external pressures.

On October 1, 1991 the Iranian government announced that official
permission to publish was no longer necessary, revoking the previous
regulation requiring that all printed materials be approved by the Ministry of
Guidance before publication. It was a fundamental change in the publication
policy of the Iranian government since the 1979 Revolution.

These moves towards openness did not please members of the hard-line
Hezbollah Party. When it became clear that the Rafsanjani government would
not stop these publications, whose circulation was growing rapidly, they took
direct action. They mounted numerous attacks on newspapers and magazines,
including Gardoon, Farad and Donyayeh Sokhan, for publishing articles
critical of the regime.

Other Iranian politicians have made clear their opposition to any
liberalization. In an August 1991 statement, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei stated
that "attacks on the Government are treason which I would not tolerate for
long." He urged writers, preachers and government cultural institutions to
combat the "all-round, organized offensive against the revolution's cultural
values, mounted by opportunist elements in the form of artistic and intellectual
activities." 9

Rafsanjani's early promises of liberalization have not been fulfilled,
mainly because of the staunch opposition of hardliners. The few independent

newspapers and magazines that continued to test the sincerity of the government's commitment to freedom of the press by publishing minor criticism have suffered a wave of arrests, destruction and closures. Publications not controlled by government factions are closely scrutinized by the authorities; only official publications may openly criticize some aspects of government policies.

Writers and journalists have survived by exercising self-censorship. As one journalist explained, "a writer is living with two persons simultaneously - himself and the shadow of the government constantly watching him from within... The government has managed to install a police network in the brain of us all - they do not need to do anything else." 10

Self-censorship in Iran is made more difficult because the boundaries of acceptable journalism are not well defined. Writers complain that they never know what they may and may not write, and that it is not clear which institutions they are answerable to. The political tensions within Iran mean that a work cleared by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance might still be attacked by legislators.

As recently as January of this year, Rafsanjani seemed to support greater freedom of expression. According to the Iranian News Agency IRNA, he said that "refusal to tolerate opposing ideas and criticisms was one of the obstacles to growth and evolution in society... Criticism and discussion of problems in the press, dailies and periodicals, and in an open environment,

without bearing grudges and without hatred, can help the growth and development of society."  

Even if Rafsanjani is serious in advocating greater freedom of expression, he apparently cannot or will not ensure that government officials implement his policies. In June 1992 the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Mohammad Khatami, resigned; his liberal policy on art and the press had been under increasing attack since early 1991. Conservative Shia clerics at the Qom Seminary and hardline newspapers said that "harmful and corrupting films, music, books and magazines were proliferating." They accused the Minister of allowing people with less than impeccable Islamic credentials to publish magazines and make films. Khatami rejected the criticism, arguing that Moslem intellectuals should "debate with other views rather than use state power to ban them."  

Khatami and his Ministry were reportedly unhappy about the interference of the Islamic Revolutionary Courts with the press. A number of leading personalities in journalistic and literary circles have expressed concern over the resignation of Khatami, who was regarded as a liberalizing influence. Khatami was one of the few people who criticized the Press Law of 1985, saying that the law "left it open to a few people to impose their own ideas and tastes on what newspapers could print" and that the Law "could lead to newspapers being muzzled."

\[12\] - Ibid.  
Official interference with freedom of expression continues. Arman, a non-political magazine, was banned after it published an article about the work of some exiled Iranian writers. All the works of the well-known writer Said Sirjani were banned when officials decided that his alleged comparison of Zahak (a mythological Iranian figure from the pre-Islamic era) with Khomeini showed contempt for the Muslim leader. Sirjani has been prohibited from writing and all his mail has been intercepted.

In December 1991 the offices of the cultural monthly Gardoon, were ransacked and its editor Abbas Ma'roufi was arrested. He was charged with apostasy, which is punishable by death, for publishing a caricature of a woman wearing an Islamic veil being mown down by a plane coming from abroad; the accompanying article discussed the depressing conditions that Iranians would find when they returned from exile. Officials called it an insult to Islamic society and said it mocked Muslim women's dress. Eleven regular contributors to the magazine, including the poet Saymeen Bahbahani, were summoned by an Islamic Revolutionary Court. Abbas Ma'roufi and the others have since been released, but the magazine remains closed.

G) Globalization and the Role of Media in Iran:

Globalization affected all aspects of human being from life styles to politics. Media is also not an exception. The Internet, therefore, is becoming an increasingly important news sources all over the world.

On the other hand, in Post-Khatami Iran, the print media are subject to a harsh yet vague press law and selective enforcement of that law by
conservative courts. Over the past 4 years there has been a closure of approximately 100 publications and the prosecution of dozens of journalists.  

Moreover, state decrees on what and how to cover events (e.g. Operation Iraqi Freedom and the June student protests) amount to a form of censorship. The Internet, therefore, is becoming an increasingly important news source and in 2003 the government took measures to control Iranians' access to websites.

Most of the Reformists believed that the news provided by state television and radio is biased and inaccurate and the entertainment available there is not appealing. As a result, satellite television programming is popular, although owning satellite equipment is illegal. For the same reasons, Iranians listen to Persian-language radio broadcasts from other countries.  

I. Print media

One of the most pivotal outcomes of Khatami's administration was the press evolution. In Khatami's 8 years of presidency, Iranian society enjoyed many important changes in the print media. In other words, they taught the people to practice democracy. In these years, quantity and moreover, qualities of print media considerably increased. But they also experienced many tensions at the same time.

"Iranian newspapers played a major role in the domestic debates regarding elections, the role of Guardian Council in the elections, transparency

15 -Ibid.
of the government doings and etc., throughout the 1990s. The multiplicity of newspapers, the diversity of views they presented and the level of free expression and criticism have become most visible following Khatami's election, reaching a new peak in 1999 and early 2000."

The numerous pro-reform newspapers have played a focal role in the heated political atmosphere, and proved to be the useful tool for enlisting support on the eve of Majlis election. At no other time before in Iran (nor elsewhere in the Middle East) had there been so many new papers and journals, enjoying such a degree of freedom and expressing such a diversity of viewpoints with such fervor and sense of mission.

True, in the past there had been occasional brief intervals of openness, such as in the early 1940s (following the abdication of Reza Shah), the early 1950s (under the opposition movement led by Mosaddeghh), or just prior to the fall the Mohammad Reza Shah (and until the consolidation of the Islamic Regime) But, on all these previous occasions the regime was weaker, the circle of reader more limited, and the press less developed.

"By 1999, it seemed as though almost all the taboos had been removed, and the most critical issues, domestic and foreign, were openly debated, including the basic principle of the system of government and relations with the United States. Pro-reformist newspapers took the lead in voicing dissent, as the many references in this chapter show.

17 - Ibid., p.325
They were extremely popular, particularly among the youth and the more educated class. At the same time, other organs continued to preach the more conservative line and genuine revolutionary values, using equally harsh language to denounce their foes, with similar degrees of passion and fervor.

The press thus turned into a major arena of public debate. The crackdown on the pro-reform newspapers, mainly after April 2000, and the banning of over 20 newspapers and journals since then, has somewhat checked this wave of colorful press, at least for the time being. Yet, their impact would be difficult to ignore."

Since spring 2000, the Iranian government has used a variety of pretexts to close approximately 100 publications. The parliament launched an unsuccessful effort in January to change the press law, with amendments that would remove both the current geographic restrictions on the distribution of publications and a requirement that subject matter be limited to a specific topic.

A previous attempt to amend the Press Law, in August 2000, was quashed. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned at the time in a letter that was read aloud to the parliament, "Should the enemies of Islam, the revolution, and the Islamic system take over or infiltrate the press, a great danger would threaten the security, unity, and the faith of the people and, therefore, I cannot allow myself and other officials to keep quiet in respect of this crucial issue." Khamenei went on to say in his letter, "The current [press] law, to a degree, has been able to prevent the appearance of this great

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18 Ibid., p.325
calamity, and [therefore], its [amendment] and similar actions that have been anticipated by the parliamentary committee are not legitimate and not in the interest of the country or the system." 19

The Supreme Leader is empowered to overrule any other state official. If predictions of voter apathy are borne out, it seems increasingly likely (as of December) that a conservative majority will recapture the legislature in the February 2004 parliamentary election. There is little chance that the press law will be reversed any time in the foreseeable future.

In October 2004, however, the legislature did pass a law that limited the duration of "temporary" press closures. In some cases these temporary closures have lasted several years, making them permanent for all intents and purposes. The intent of the legislation is to limit temporary closures to a maximum of 10 days for newspapers, four weeks for weeklies and biweeklies, two months for monthlies, and three months for other publications. Once that period expires, the ban cannot be renewed.

Another development related to the way Press Courts operated. The Tehran Province Justice Administration announced on 9 October 2004, that Press Court verdicts would be issued by three judges after they obtain the jury's opinion. Iranian Journalists Guild director Rajabali Mazruei described this as a positive development, and Muslim Journalists Society chairman Amir Mohebbian said that this would restore journalists' trust". 20


"Restoration of journalists' trust in the government will be difficult, in light of events that took place during the 7 August 2004, press festival. Some reporters refused to accept their awards, while others presented their prizes to the families of imprisoned colleagues. Bahman Ahmadi-Amoui, who won an award for investigative reporting, did not accept his prize; instead he objected to state radio and television correspondents receiving awards while nothing was said about Akbar Ganji, Abbas Abdi, and others who are in jail."  

in this regard, Mohammad Heidari turned down his prize for political reporting and said, "Journalists are free in the country if they write something that has no relation to the interests of the powerful people." Heidari also voiced his objection to the death of Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, who was beaten to death in Evin prison.

II. Broadcast media:

A-State broadcasting:

There is no private radio or television broadcasting in Iran. A state agency, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB, a.k.a. Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic), is responsible for all broadcast programs originating in the country. IRIB's ex-director was Ali Larijani, a conservative appointed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Under Larijani's guidance, and especially during the presidency of Hojatoleslam Mohammad Khatami, IRIB has earned a reputation for political bias and inaccuracy in its coverage of both domestic and foreign affairs. This has engendered criticism from pro-reform Iranians.

For example, several Iranian commentators criticized IRIB's coverage of Operation Iraqi Freedom. A Tehran University professor warned in early April that IRIB's biased reporting could be harmful to Iran's national interests and expressed the hope that no Iranian official would believe this reporting. "Reports such as 'America is being defeated,' 'all their plans have failed,' 'America has been bogged down on the battlefield,' 'the Iraqis have been successful,' and suchlike, which one can deduce from the news reports and analyses of the Voice and Vision, are unreal," the professor said. One parliamentarian complained in April that IRIB analyses of the war depicted events in such a way that viewers were likely to believe that the Iraqi regime would win, while another parliamentarian said that IRIB's coverage was so biased that it violated Iran's stated policy of neutrality. 22

IRIB is no better at covering domestic news. It imposed a news blackout during the July demonstrations in Tehran. The reformist daily "Mardom Salari" said in June 2004, "IRIB not report on unrest and rioting in Tehran that month until 10 days after it had ended, and the report that was broadcast tried to connect the riots with satellite-television channels based outside the country and with the U.S. leadership." 23 Moreover, IRIB merely showed "pictures of broken windows and thrown stones on the ground," while it "forgot about the universities and students." On the program, a citizen complained that his telephone cable was disconnected -- but there was no mention of the violent and bloody attack at Allameh Tabatabai University.

22 - Ibid., Samii, Bill, p.4
The IRIB Supervisory Board, which monitors state radio and television, criticized on 27 October 2004, what it described as a failure by IRIB to behave impartially, as well as lobbying for a political party. This went against IRIB's role as the "national media," the board announced, and it called on IRIB Director Ali Larijani to ensure impartiality in coverage of legal or real entities, particularly parliamentarians.

As mentioned earlier, State television has seven channels in Tehran. Channels 1 and 2 offer news and entertainment; Channel 3 offers sports and entertainment; Channel 4 has cultural programming; Channel 5 offers Tehran-oriented programs; and Channel 6 is news and channel 7 for training program.

There are also seven national radio stations. The name of these stations are as follows: Network One, Farhang (Culture), Koran, Educational, Sports, Youth, and Payam (an FM station heard mostly in Tehran that has traffic reports, short news items, and music). Provincial broadcasters are more popular than the national stations; however, according to a November 2002 survey of 13,600 radio listeners in 31 cities by the Voice and Vision of Islamic Republic (VVIR) Center for Radio Program Research, Study, and Evaluation, listeners said that the quality of the signal, as well as the specific topics on the air, generally determined their listening choices.
B-Foreign radios:

As of approximately one year ago (2003), more than 20 radio stations not affiliated with the Iranian government broadcast in Persian for an Iranian audience. This number has fallen because a number of these stations were based in Iraq and affiliated with the Baghdad-backed Mujahedín-i Khalq Organization, and since the ouster of Saddam regime they are rarely heard. Other stations included the Voice of the Iranian Communist Party (still broadcasting but subject to jamming) and many that were linked with Kurdish groups, such as the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan's Voice of the People of Kurdistan (still available), the Kurdistan Democratic Party's Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan (still available), Radio Komala (still broadcasting but subject to jamming), and Voice of Kurdistan Toilers (no longer available).

Other Persian-language exile stations are the Worker-Communist Party of Iran's Radio International, the Voice of Southern Azerbaijan, and Radio Barabari (Radio Equality), which claims to be on the side of workers, women, and the unemployed and national minorities.


Iran also is the target of religious broadcasting, and currently Christian programming is "completely organized by the evangelical branch of Protestant Christianity" (Biener). Trans World Radio and Adventist World Radio

C- Satellite Television Broadcasts:

In 1994, the Interior Ministry declared satellite dishes illegal. At the time, hard-line figures said that satellite dishes were like U.S. flags and the programs they receive were part of a cultural war. A law banning satellite dishes went into effect in 1995.

In October 2001, reformist parliamentarians called for an end to the ban on receiving satellite television, but the government blamed satellite-television broadcasts for riots that month and resumed confiscation of private satellite dishes. 24

Discussions on eliminating the satellite ban started again in November 2002, and were soon followed yet again by dish confiscations. The legislature ratified portions of a bill that would legalize private ownership of satellite receiving equipment in December 2002. The Guardians Council, which must approve all legislation on constitutional and Islamic grounds, rejected legislation in January 2003 authorizing private ownership of satellite receiving equipment.

Given the boring and biased nature of domestic programming, Iranians continue to ignore such restrictions and to tune in to Persian-language satellite broadcasts. Some of the stations available to them are: **Appadana, Azadi TV, Channel One TV, IPN TV, Iran TV Network, IR TV, Jaam-e-Jam, Melli**

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TV, NI TV, Pars TV Network, Rang-a-Rang and Tapesh TV. All of these stations are based in the Los Angeles area, with the exception of Rang-a-Rang, which is based near Washington, D.C.

The Communist Workers Party of Iran intends to establish a satellite television channel, an anonymous "source close to the leadership of the Communist Workers Party of Iraq" said in the 1 December 2003, issue of the Kurdish weekly "Jamawar." The Iranian and Iraqi parties reportedly will share airtime. According to an announcement on the party website (http://www.wpiran.org/english.htm), broadcasts will commence in January 2004.

Voice of America (VOA) launched a nightly Persian-language television program called "News and Views" in July 2000. VOA also produces a weekly news magazine called "Next Chapter" and a 90-minute discussion show called "Roundtable with you." According to a November U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) press release that cited a nationwide telephone survey of 1,000 people, these programs reach 12 percent of Iranians over the age of 18.

"The Iranian exile stations offer a mixture of news and entertainment, and the extent of their political involvement varies. According to Purdue University Professor Yahya Kamalipur, NITV and Azadi TV are pro-monarchist, while Tapesh and Iran TV are more commercial. Kamalipur said that the satellite broadcasts emphasize entertainment over education, although there are some useful shows. The channels also expend a lot of energy
insulting each other, Kamalipur said. "It seems that the Iranian satellite channels spend half of their time selling Iranian carpets," he added." 25

The broadcasters claim to be very influential. California State University, Los Angeles, Professor Afshin Matin-Asgari is less sanguine. He told PBS "Newshour" on 19 June 2004, that a "very small percentage of the population, mostly upper-class households in Tehran, maybe a few other cities," could afford access to satellite television. "Most people don't see satellite television," Matin-Asgari concluded.

Whatever the extent of the satellite stations' influence, the regime clearly fears them. Recognizing the futility of merely banning satellite-receiving equipment, Tehran turned to jamming satellite broadcasts. In April 2004, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps transmitted powerful jamming signals from its bases in Tehran, which prompted complaints from President Khatami and reformist members of parliament. The jamming took a more forceful tack in July, when broadcasts from VOA-TV and other Persian-language stations was the target of signals originating in Cuba. Tehran and Havana denied any involvement in the jamming of the satellite broadcasts.

III. Internet:

Telecommunications Company of Iran (TCI) Information Affairs Director Mohammad Sadri said in the 20 June 2004, issue of "Entekhab" newspaper that about 1.7 million Iranians use the Internet. He estimated,

25 - Entekhab Newspaper, 4 and 5 November 2004.
furthermore, that there would be 5 million Internet users in the country by March 2004 and this number would reach 15 million in five years.  

In light of the restrictions placed on the press and the limitations of broadcast media, the Internet has become an increasingly popular source of information for Iranians. Tehran reacted to this development with concern: in January 2004, the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution created a special committee to identify problematic websites. In May 2004, a government spokesman said the state telecommunications company has started blocking access to "immoral" sites including chat rooms, through which Iranian men and women get acquainted, as well as political sites.

Also in May 2004, the Judiciary announced the creation of a special unit to deal with Internet-related issues and the prosecutor-general said that the judiciary is drawing up a bill to investigate Internet offenses. One month later, a Judiciary spokesman said the absence of government-imposed filtering would put off potential Internet users.

The Judiciary spokesman listed more than 20 matters that would likely be filtered, including "the dissemination of blasphemous items; insulting Islam and Islamic sanctities; opposing the constitution and publishing any item that might undermine the independence and the territorial integrity of the country; insulting the leader [Ayatollah Khamenei] and the sources of emulation [leading clerics]; [distorting] the values of the Islamic revolution and the principles of the political thought of Imam Khomeini; undermining national unity and solidarity; creating pessimism and hopelessness among the people regarding the legitimacy and effectiveness of the [Islamic] system; providing

publicity for illegal groups and political parties...propagating prostitution and forbidden acts; publishing pictures and photographs that are contrary to public morality; providing publicity for smoking cigarettes and the taking of narcotics; making false accusations against any of the officials or ordinary members of the society; insulting individuals or organizations; and creating any unidentified radio or television network and program without the supervision of the Voice and Vision Organization [radio and television]."

Iranians reacted angrily to the blocking of websites, particularly personal publication websites known as weblogs. In July 2004, the Ministry of Post, Telegraph, and Telephone announced that the weblogs were blocked due to a private company's mistake. Students at Amir Kabir University threatened to take legal action against President Khatami's cabinet for blocking Iranians' access to their website. In late August 2004, 40 reformist parliamentarians called for Post, Telegraph, and Telephone Minister Ahmad Motamedi to answer their questions about website filtering. They noted that although the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution had approved filtering by the ministry, the filtering was being enforced selectively and for factional reasons.

Website filtering continued as of late November 2004. A committee formed by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution occasionally provides Internet Content Providers (ICP) with a list of sites that should be filtered, and an anonymous ICP manager said in the 25 November 2004, said that "this list is logical because it focuses on pornographic sites and those that are anti-regime. A compact disc distributed to ICPs by the Data Processing Company of Iran (http://www.dpi.net.ir), however, listed thousands of websites, even "ordinary and useful" ones such as Google. If all these sites
were filtered, the manager said, "It would have been more feasible to shut down everything." 27

The manager of Azad Net Medium ICP, Kasra Hedayat, said that the Post, Telegraph, and Telecommunication Ministry prepare the list of sites that will be filtered. Hedayat said, "The policy of filtering was appropriate in most cases, but in certain cases, it extended to shutting down social and political sites, and after some time, they were forced to reopen them." He also said that some Internet Service Providers and ICPs do not filter any sites and do not face any legal restrictions, and this attracts consumers who see this as improved service.

H) Post-Khatami's Press:

1-High Expectations:

When President Khatami was elected on May 23, 1997, there were expectations of increased press freedom for several reasons. After all, Khatami himself had been forced out of office in 1992 after almost ten years as Minister of Islamic Culture and Guidance after accusations that he was too lax with the media and had advocated relations with the United States. Then he selected Ataollah Mohajerani as Minister of Islamic Culture and Guidance, and there were early predictions that Mohajerani would not win parliamentary approval. 28


One parliamentarian criticized Mohajerani for being too "culturally tolerant and politically weak vis-à-vis the West," another asked Mohajerani if he would kill Salman Rushdie if he met him, and a third one said that "all the shrewd and cunning foreign media are supporting Mohajerani's nomination. Let us all disappoint them." 29

At that time Mohajerani displayed the resolve that showed itself in his later encounters with the legislature: "I disagree with almost all of the present practices in the culture ministry. We have to protect artists and provide an atmosphere for creativity, tranquility, and freedom." He added, "Everybody who has accepted the Islamic Republic and its constitution must be subject to tolerance. I condemn the burning of bookshops, the beating of university lecturers and attacks on magazine offices." 30

During his presidential campaign, furthermore, Khatami promised increased openness, civil society, and governmental accountability and transparency. A free press is essential if these conditions are to be met. A free press provides a voice for the average citizen. Journalists keep an eye on the government, serving as the proverbial watchdogs that can detect corruption and abuses of power. And in Iran, many publications serve as party mouthpieces, especially when contrasted with state broadcasting, which is heavily biased in favor of hardliners political tendencies.

Indeed, on the day that Khatami's victory was announced his spokesman said that "of course Mr. Khatami will not continue the present restrictions on

30 - Reuters, 20 August 1997
the press and media. He will have an open policy toward them." 31 In his first extended remarks after winning the election, Khatami said that it was time to insure more democracy in Iran. Khatami said that the Islamic Republic was stable enough and had recovered sufficiently from its war with Iraq to begin guaranteeing its citizen’s full constitutional rights, including free thought, life, employment, assembly and association. "We hope to gradually witness a more legal society," he said, "with more clearly defined rights and duties for citizens and the government." 32 And in his first address after taking office, Khatami also called for the creation of an independent press. 33

2-Some Expectations Met:

The first year of the Khatami presidency saw the emergence of a reinvigorated press. Notable was the publication of Jameah, which was the first to report the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) commander's closed-door speech in which he threatened to "cut the necks and tongues" of political opponents. The daily also ran interviews with Abbas Amir Entezam, who had served 15 years in prison as an American spy, in which he described torture in the prison system and the need to separate religion from politics. 34 Publications like this questioned the status quo, and they also served as vehicles for reform-oriented political figures to express their views.

32 - Khatami also took the time to criticize the U.S., saying, "We are sorry to see that the United States' policy has always been hostile to our revolution," and adding that "the key to the problem is in their hands and not ours;" Reuters, 27 May 1997.
Simultaneously, one also witnessed trends that would gain momentum later. Student leader Heshmatollah Tabarzadi was beaten up and his newspaper was closed in late 1997 after he said that the Supreme Leader should be elected directly by the people for a limited term, rather than by the Assembly of Experts, a directly-elected 86-member clerical body.

**Jameah** had its license suspended in June 1998, and the next month it resumed publication with the same staff under the name **Tus**. Editor Mashallah Shamsolvaezin opined that "We are a test case of how much openness the government can tolerate." The answer came in August, when the judiciary ordered the closure of **Tus** for "publishing lies and disrupting public order," and members of the hardline Ansar-i Hizbullah vigilante group beat up Shamsolvaezin. And the daily was permanently closed in September for questioning Tehran's tough policy towards the Taliban, a rather unwise move at a time when the regime to the east had just murdered a group of Iranian officials (who were diplomats and intelligence officers).

Just as press closures and violence against people in journalism took on a pattern, so did the continued publication of a banned newspaper under a new name and using an unused press license. After its closure, **Jameah** started coming out as **Tus**, and after that license was revoked the newspaper came out as **Neshat**. After its closure, **Neshat** took over the dormant license of **Akhbar** and resumed publication as **Akhbar-i Eghtesad**, employing **Neshat** staff. Other **Neshat** personnel were employed by **Asr-i Azadigan**, which after its

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closure was succeeded by Gunagun weekly. Until its closure, this weekly employed staff from Tus, Neshat, Asr-i Azadigan, and other reformist publications. Other Jameah alumni created Aftab-i Imruz. Hardline political commentators complained about the "serial newspapers."  

Some of the 1999 press closures clearly were factional and linked with the publications' support for the reformists. Examples of this situation were the cases of Salam, Neshat, and Khordad. Nevertheless, the issue was not always purely one of hard-liners versus reformists, or conservatives versus pro-Khatami moderates. The cases of Zan, Hoviat-i Khish, and many others were not so clear-cut and demonstrate the complex factors involved in silencing Iran's more outspoken media.

On July 7, 1999, Salam was closed and its editor-in-chief, Abbas Abdi, was arrested on the basis of a complaint from the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS). The complaint stemmed from a July 6 Salam reports about a MOIS plan to restrict the press. The MOIS said that the Salam report was false; the MOIS had no such plan and the letter cited by Salam was a fake. Even though the MOIS dropped the complaint against Abdi and he was released, a July 8 student demonstration against the Salam closure and the press bill, catalyzed by anger over the earlier arrest of students protesting the


detention of officials from a weekly magazine, **Hoviat-i Khish**, escalated into some of the worst violence in the Islamic republic's history.

The managing director of **Salam**, Hojatoleslam Mohammad Asqar Musavi-Khoeniha, was tried by the Special Court for the Clergy in July 1999 on charges of spreading fabrications, disturbing public opinion, and publishing classified documents. Khoeniha was found guilty and sentenced to a three-and-a-half year jail term and a flogging, but the sentence was suspended and Khoeniha was fined instead. He was banned from publishing activities for three years, and **Salam** was banned for five years.\(^{39}\)

Actions against **Salam** were politically driven. By restricting Khoeniha and Abdi's media access, hard-liners eliminated some of the institutional support for the pro-Khatami Second Khordad movement. Khoeniha is a co-founder of the pro-Khatami student group called the Office for Strengthening Unity (**Dafter-e Tahkimm-e Vahdet**), which is a member of the Second Khordad movement. Khoeniha also is a leader of the Student's Following the Line of the Imam Khomeini. Abdi is a member of the latter group, and he is a founder of Khatami's Islamic Iran Participation Party (**Hizb-e Mosharekat-e Iran-e Islami**). Leaders of the Office for Strengthening Unity, such as Ebrahim Asgharzadeh, are also one-time members of the Students Following the Line of the Imam.

Application of the law in this case clearly showed political-factional motivations. Hardline publications--the weekly **Javan** and the dailies **Kayhan** and **Jomhuri-yi Islami**--printed copies of a letter from 24 Islamic Revolution

\(^{39}\) *IRNA*, August 4, 1999.
Guards Corps commanders to Khatami in which they threatened to take the law into their own hands if the president did not act against the demonstrators.40 The publications received warnings from the Islamic Culture and Guidance Ministry for publishing a classified document. 41 But nothing else happened.

The September 1999 closure of Neshat was politically motivated, too, although the charges brought against it did not indicate this clearly. The paper was closed on the orders of Press Court Judge Hojatoleslam Saeed Mortazavi after a complaint from the public prosecutor. The charges against the daily stemmed from its publication of an open letter urging Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to distance himself from hard-liners, as well as two articles criticizing capital punishment.

Neshat seemed destined for a bad end from the outset. Its staff consisted of personnel from the previously banned Tus and Jameah newspapers. In April, just three months after getting its license, managing director Latif Safari had to appear before the Tehran Revolutionary Court on charges of questioning the Islamic Revolution and supporting the monarchy.42

In August, complaints were filed against Neshat by the Law Enforcement Forces, state broadcasting, the state prosecutor, Qom's Special Court for the Clergy, the Islamic Open University, and some parliamentary deputies. Neshat's managing director had to appear in court, as did Neshat

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40 - Jomhuri-yi Islami, Newspaper, July 19, 1999
41 - IRNA, July 21, 1999
42 - Qods, Newspaper, April 18, 1999.
columnist Ebrahim Nabavi.\footnote{Sobh-i Imruz Newspaper, August 24, 1999.} When \textbf{Neshat} was banned in September, the Tehran Justice Department pointed out that "repeated summons and bails [sic] have proved ineffective in preventing the daily from repeating its offense."\footnote{IRNA, September 5, 1999.}

And once again, the law was unevenly applied. \textbf{Neshat} officials apologized for any offense their articles might have caused.\footnote{Neshat Newspaper, September 2, 1999.} But they were not forgiven. When \textbf{Qods} was charged with offending two Shia sources of emulation, however, it published an apology and the Press Supervisory Board only issued a written warning.\footnote{IRNA, August 9, 1999.}

Hearings before the Special Court for the Clergy in the case of \textbf{Khordad} managing editor Hojatoleslam Abdullah Nuri got underway in October 1999. This case, more so than that of \textbf{Salam} and Musavi-Khoeniha, was based on the pro-Khatami leanings of both Nuri and the publication. Nuri served as Khatami's Interior Minister until his June 1998 interpellation. He was elected to Tehran municipal council in February 1999, and after announcing his intention to run for the legislature he was seen as a possible speaker of the parliament.

Nuri faced charges of publishing reports that insulted officials and institutions of the system, reporting lies and waging a propaganda war against the system, insulting Father of the Revolution Ayatollah Khomeini and his views, publishing reports contrary to religious principles, and insulting religious sanctities. Other charges included backing ties with America, promoting dissident cleric Ayatollah Hussein-Ali Montazeri's political views,
and urging recognition of Israel.\textsuperscript{47} The contents of \textbf{Khordad}, the Special Court for the Clergy's special prosecutor said, "smack of conspiracy and hostility."

Nuri's defense undermined many long-standing hardline values with clear logic, and the Tehran media covered the case extensively. This may have earned him popular support, but it did not help Nuri's case. The prosecutor in the case said that the more Nuri talks, "We realize that our opinion about him was right and his guilt becomes more certain."\textsuperscript{48} The jury found Nuri guilty on 15 of the infractions and recommended against any leniency in sentencing. He was sentenced to five years in prison and barred from journalistic activities for five years after that.

The \textbf{Salam}, \textbf{Neshat}, and \textbf{Khordad} cases were obvious attempts to eliminate reformist newspapers and to limit the influence of reformist political figures. Reasons for the closures of \textbf{Zan} and \textbf{Hoviat-i Khish} were fictionally related, too. Their closures were not, however, related to their relationships with Khatami or their reformist tendencies.

The Judiciary closed Tehran's \textbf{Zan} daily in April 1999. It was punished for publishing a letter from the ex-empress of Iran and for publishing a cartoon ridiculing the current Iranian interpretation of the principle of "blood money." (In Iran, the compensation one must pay to a murdered woman's family is less than that which must be paid to a murdered man's family.)

The case against \textbf{Zan} was not so much an attack on a Second Khordad publication, although Faezeh Hashemi herself is a Khatami supporter. There

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Hamshahri} Newspaper, October 12, 1999

\textsuperscript{48} Hojatoleslam Mohammad Ebrahim Niknam, cited in \textit{Sobh-i Imruz} Newspaper, November 11, 1999
was resentment over her apparent personal ambition. It was also an attempt to lessen the influence of Hashemi's father, Expediency Council chairman Ayatollah Ali-Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani. He is identified as the leader (in loose terms) of the Executives of Construction Party that is connected with Khatami's successful election campaign. In addition, there is a great deal of resentment over the cronyism, nepotism, and corruption associated with his family.

In June 1999, the Revolutionary Court detained Hoviat-i Khish weekly's editor-in-chief, Heshmatollah Tabarzadi, and director, Hussein Kashani. Tabarzadi's real crime, it seems, was his role as a leader of the Islamic Union of Students and Graduates, a more radical student group. The July 8 student demonstrations were catalyzed by the arrest two days earlier of students who gathered to protest Tabarzadi and Kashani's detentions. The Revolutionary Court judge later said that members of the Islamic Union of Students and Graduates were being prosecuted for their parts in the July demonstrations.\(^{49}\)

In 1999, other publications and their personnel encountered "legal" problems for reasons that were not political or factional. For example, the director of the provincial publication Kosar Kavir Kerman claimed that his offices were set ablaze in reaction to articles about the improper use of nationalized property in Kerman Province.\(^{50}\) The publisher of Sanandaj's Kurdish-language Sirwan weekly was summoned "for publishing falsehoods and slander against an adviser of the head of the judiciary," although it is more likely that the real issue was publication of an article about financial

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\(^{49}\) - Islamic Revolutionary Court Judge Gholamhussein Rahbarpur, cited in Jomhuri-yi Islami Newspaper, September 12, 1999.

\(^{50}\) - Kar va Kargar Newspaper, January 31, 1999.
mismanagement in the Kurdistan Province governorate.\textsuperscript{51} The situation in Gilan province seemed especially bad. Ali Sebati, director of the provincial publication \textit{Payam-i Shomal} was arrested by the Gilan province headquarters of the MOIS.\textsuperscript{52} Two months later, seven Gilan journalists were imprisoned.\textsuperscript{53}

\textbf{3-The Closures Begin:}

Events in the first two years of the Khatami presidency pale in comparison to what happened in 2000 and 2001, when about 50 publications were closed in a fifteen-month period. This trend started in March-April 2000, when Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gave several sermons and speeches that criticized advocates of reform generally and the reformist press specifically.

In one sermon, Ayatollah Khamenei complained about unnamed promoters of "Americanized reforms" and seemed to indicate that they were acceptable targets of violence.\textsuperscript{54} And in another, he said that the West first attacked Iran via its radio stations, but now it is building a "stronghold" in Iran. He said the press is creating anxiety, discord, and pessimism.” It seems as if 10 or 15 newspapers are being directed from the same center to publish articles with similar headlines. They make mountains out of molehills...kill the hope among the youth...weaken the people's trust...offend and insult." The Supreme Leader added that President Mohammad Khatami is unhappy with

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{51} - \textit{Hamshahr} Newspaper, April 14, 1999.
  \item \textsuperscript{52} - \textit{Khordad} Newspaper, February 3, 1999.
  \item \textsuperscript{53} - \textit{Neshat} Newspaper, April 17, 1999.
  \item \textsuperscript{54} - Friday prayer sermon at Tehran University, Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, \textit{Radio 1}, April 14, 2000.
\end{itemize}
the press too. "We are trying to stop the enemy from realizing his propaganda conspiracy."\textsuperscript{55}

Such statements inspired the IRGC to say that "if necessary, our enemies, be they small or large, will feel the reverberating impact of the hammer of the Islamic revolution on their skulls and the impact will be so strong that they will never be able to engage in hatching plots or committing crimes."\textsuperscript{56} Then the new press law was passed. In just one day, 12 publications were closed. And it was quite clear that the closures related to the publications' criticism of the hard-liners and support for reformist causes.

After the initial closures, an unnamed Judiciary official explained that a committee formed to investigate the press concluded that "despite frequent warnings given to them, they continued with their anti-Islamic and anti-revolutionary activities," and "the tone of material in those papers had brought smiles to the faces of the enemies of the Islamic Republic and hurt the feelings of devout Muslims at home and even the leader of the Islamic revolution." The Judiciary official warned, "We are also trying to detect the foreign links of some of these newspapers."\textsuperscript{57}

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei continued his criticism of the media during a 26 July speech in northwestern Meshkinshahr.\textsuperscript{58} He said that "a number of journalists in Tehran wait for opportunities in order to make a mountain out of a molehill in the political arena. They wish to keep the

\textsuperscript{56} - “Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran”, \textit{Network 1}, April 16, 2000.
\textsuperscript{57} - \textit{Tehran Times} Newspaper, April 25, 2000.
government, the officials, and the people engaged with political and factional
issues." Khamenei accused them of treason and cooperating with foreign
intelligence services. "The journalists stop the officials from carrying out their
duties and this is an act of treason. Talking about matters that are desirable by
the CIA and Mossad; or writing about issues in order to please them [CIA and
Mossad]; or taking stances for their benefit, do not serve the people's
interests."

In August, Ayatollah Khamenei put a stop to parliamentarians' debate
on the Press Law. He warned that "should the enemies of Islam, the
revolution and the Islamic system take over or infiltrate the press, a great
danger would threaten the security, unity and the faith of the people and,
therefore, I cannot allow myself and other officials to keep quiet in respect of
this crucial issue." Khamenei went on to say that "The current (Press) Law, to
a degree, has been able to prevent the appearance of this great calamity, and
therefore, its interpretation [amendment] and similar actions that have been
anticipated by the parliamentary committee are not legitimate and not in the
interest of the country and the system."

This outraged reformist deputies. Scuffles broke out in the chamber, and
there was a walkout. Speaker of Parliament Karrubi reacted by reminding the
protestors that the Supreme Leader's action was legally permissible. As he
later told state radio, "The constitution emphasizes the Absolute Rule of the

59 - IRNA, 6 August 2000.
Jurisconsult (Vilayat-i Motlaq-e Faqih) and this is how it is. And, you voted for it." \(^{60}\)

At least one hard line cleric approved of this development, saying that Ayatollah Khamenei "issued a warning to these nonsense-babblers. As a result they retreated one step. But if the people cooperate with us, the nonsense-babblers will be banished to the desert where Arabs play flute." \(^{61}\)

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) Persian Service asked reformist journalist Masud Behnud why the press law had been made so strict in the first place. Behnud explained: "When the hard-liners discovered that they were losers of the last elections, they made a few major changes to the Press Law at the end of the fifth parliament. These changes were based on one point only. They discovered they lost the election solely due to the presence of the press. Therefore, press has the power of making up the people's mind and they can be the determining factor, and observed the effect of the press campaign and advertisement in the past months. They changed the Press Law so that these things will not take place." \(^{62}\)

Press closures and persecution of journalists were most noticeable in Tehran, but these phenomena existed in the provinces, too. Editors from Rasht, Shiraz, and Tabriz described some of the problems they face in a roundtable organized by RFE/RL's Persian Service. \(^{63}\) The most pernicious


\(^{61}\) - Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah-Yazdi at a meeting in Qom's Abshar Mosque, Iran, 3 October 2000.


problem is self-censorship. After seeing what happened in Tehran and noting how long their colleagues have been unemployed, provincial journalists have become very cautious. The provincial publications have other problems, not least little money from sales, advertising, or state subsidies. There is also a dearth of modern printing facilities. This means that the provincial publications have a low circulation and limited reach.

Provincial journalists faced legal problems, too. Reformist journalist Masud Kordpur, who has been associated with Arya, Khordad, Fath, Neshat, and Asr-i Azadigan, was in court in September 2000. Kordpur told RFE/RL's Persian Service that he faced charges of spreading falsehoods because during a recent speech he criticized the disproportionate presence of non-Kurds in Bukan, Kurdistan Province. Kordpur pointed out that there were no Kurdish officials at his hearing, and their absence was particularly painful given the high level of unemployment in the province.64

Davud Bayat, managing editor of Zanjan's Farda-yi Roshan weekly, appeared in court to face charges of printing defamatory articles, publishing falsehoods to divert public opinion, and vilifying institutions, and Tehran's Justice Department and the public prosecutor were the plaintiffs.65 (The court ordered the weekly’s closure almost a year later, in August 2001.) Meanwhile, Mohammad Reza Nabaie, the managing editor of the weekly Andalib was summoned to the court following a complaint from former Malayer parliamentarian Hassan Zamani. Zamani claimed that an article in Andalib

65 - IRNA, 6 September 2000.
was defamatory, insulted the people of Malayer, distorted his words, and contained lies.66

When the Ava weekly from Najafabad, Isfahan Province, was suspended in April 2000, it faced complaints from the MOIS, the Press Supervisory Board, the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance, the Special Court for the Clergy in Qom, and the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps in Qom and Najafabad. Ava editor Mustafa Izadi was sentenced in early-July. Attorney Mohammad Aghassi told RFE/RL's Persian Service that Izadi's chief fault was the perception that he is a supporter of Ayatollah Hussein-Ali Montazeri-Najafabadi.67

The managing director of Tabriz's Ahrar weekly faced some complaints from Law Enforcement Forces (LEF) counterintelligence chief Brigadier-General Mohammad Reza Naqdi, the IRGC, and the East Azerbaijan Basij of the Dispossessed.68 Bayan Managing Editor Hojatoleslam Ali Akbar Mohtashemi-Pur was summoned by the Special Court for the Clergy to face complaints from the counterintelligence unit of the LEF, IRIB, the Tehran municipality, and hardline cleric Hojatoleslam Ruhollah Husseinian.69

In the hearing of Arya publisher Mohammad Reza Zohdi, the plaintiffs included the MOIS and LEF counterintelligence. Omid-i Zanjan weekly was accused of insulting the IRGC and its commander, General Yahya Rahim Safavi, by writing in 1998 that the military organization was planning a coup.

66 - IRNA, 3 September 2000.
referring to the IRGC headquarters in Zanjan as a "den of vampires," and accusing the IRGC of involvement in the March 2000 attempt to kill reformist ideologue Saeed Hajjarian.\textsuperscript{70} Fereidoon Verdinejad, chief of the official Islamic Republic News Agency, appeared before the court in July to face complaints by the Law Enforcement Forces (LEF), Ansar-i Hizbullah, Basij Mobilization Forces, IRIB, and private individuals.

And in the trial for the banned daily \textbf{Manateq-i Azad}, the plaintiffs included IRIB and the LEF. Qafur Garshasbi, editor of the banned reformist daily \textbf{Asr-i Azadigan}, faced charges of spreading rumors and of publishing false and defamatory reports that were filed by the prosecutor general; the LEF intelligence unit, intelligence deputy, and legal department; the Judicial Organization of the Armed Forces; the Guardians Council; the student Basij of Imam Sadeq University; Ansar-i Hizbullah, and IRIB.\textsuperscript{71}

\textbf{Conclusion:}

Khatami won reelection in 2001 by another big margin but with a smaller overall turnout. He once again has a mandate for reform, albeit a weakened one. His mandate and his prestige were undercut further when he was temporarily blocked from taking the oath of office until parliament approved the nomination of conservative jurists to the Guardians Council in August 2001. Nevertheless, he has had other mandates with which he has done nothing.

\textsuperscript{70} - \textit{Entekhab} Newspaper, 13 August 2000.

\textsuperscript{71} - \textit{Kayhan} Newspaper, 10 October 2000.
On the one hand, he may see himself as a lame duck that has nothing to lose by aggressively promoting freedom of the press and defending the print media. He might, therefore, appoint a Minister of Islamic Culture and Guidance who is as tough as Mohajerani. On the other hand, he may continue his current policy, which on the surface amounts to little more than subdued complaints about repression. Irrespective of Khatami's being president, the Judiciary, Revolutionary Courts, and the Special Court for the Clergy will continue to target the press, journalists, publishers, and reformist politicians.

The IRGC, which has adopted a more aggressive stance in the last year, will continue in this vein, too. Indeed, the Judiciary's closure of the reformist Hambastegi daily on 8 August 2001, the very day that Khatami took his oath of office, is a pretty clear indication that this will be the case.

Moreover, the use of the shabnameh (literally "night letter," a kind of samizdat) will increase if the current press situation persists. So far, most of these night letters have been produced by hard-liners and used to attack members of the reformist movement. Among the night letters' producers are so-called "research institutes" in Qom, the Qom Seminary Theological Lecturers Association, and hard-line pressure groups, and the allegations that appear in the night letters reappear in hardline publications like Kayhan, Siyasat, and Yalisarat al-Hussein.

The night letters rarely make direct attacks. They make allusions, or they describe a malfeasance but ascribe it to "Mr. X" rather than naming him. Another tactic is to let the reader draw his own conclusions, with sentences ending in ellipses because the material is too sensitive or possibly too offensive to complete. The research institutes try to make their work seem
scholarly and thoroughly researched by using references and endnotes. When one tries to look up the references, however, one discovers that the original source does not exist, people were misquoted or they never actually made the statements attributed to them.\(^72\)

Although they have fewer assets at their disposal, reformists also have resorted to night letters to spread their message. One example is the 80-page night letter about the serial murders, linking MOIS officials and top regime figures with murders that preceded those of 1998.\(^73\) Distribution of the videotaped confessions of Amir Farshad Ebrahimi, a former IRGC and Ansar-i Hizbullah member, is another example of reformists' use of night letters.\(^74\) Without newspapers to convey their views, it seems likely that they will resort to night letters more often.

Finally, Iranians' interest in foreign media, via short-wave, satellite, or the internet will only increase as they seek unbiased information about developments in their own country. State radio and television already had a powerful role in opinion-making because newspapers and print media have a limited circulation outside the main cities. The closure of so many publications only increased this advantage. Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), however, is criticized for being one-sided in its news reporting, which explains the popularity of foreign radio services. "Considering the limitations of literacy and the even greater limitation in their access to the press, people will turn to Voice of America, the BBC, and Radio Free Europe, which can be heard in the most remote villages with two-band\(^72\)

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\(^{72}\) - Bahar Newspaper, 27 July 2000.  
\(^{73}\) - RFE/RL Iran Report, v. 3, n. 45 (27 November 2000).  
\(^{74}\) - RFE/RL Iran Report, v. 3, n. 45 (27 November 2000).
radios," a Tehran journalist warned.\(^{75}\) Even the April-May 2000 mass closure of publications did not enhance IRIB's popularity. At that time, shopkeepers said that the demand for short-wave receivers in Iran increased after the press closures.\(^{76}\)

To counter this phenomenon before the February 2000 parliamentary election, Tehran jammed Persian language broadcasts by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the Voice of America, and the BBC. RFE/RL and VOA broadcasts were jammed before the June 2001 presidential election, too. This second round of jamming was justified by a February 13, 2001, statement by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that "the political and security organs which are against the Islamic Republic political system in America and Europe all emphasize in their statements, and in the broadcasts of the radio stations they fund, that their efforts are aimed at countering our political system. The other day, I accidentally heard this myself, while listening to one of these radios stations…" 

And a final note of caution. The Iranian media, if left alone by the state, is not likely to be perfectly objective and unbiased. Many publications serve as party organs and voice the viewpoints of certain political factions and pressure groups. Others are linked with factions within the government. Even the more independent newspapers, like Salam and Khordad, reflected some of the more populist and reactionary views in foreign policy.

I) - Lists and Charts:

A) - List of the Closure Press:

\(^{75}\) - RFE/RL Iran Report, v. 3, n. 38 (9 October 2000).
\(^{76}\) - Suleiman Kiai, Sobh-i Imruz Newspaper, March 29, 2000.
List 5-1: the original closures press; April 23, 2000:

**Dailies:** Guzarish-i Ruz, Bamdad-i Now, Aftab-i Imruz, Payam-i Azadi, Fath, Arya, Asr-i Azadigan, Manateq-i Azad

**Weeklyes:** Payam-i Hajar, Aban, Arzesh

**Monthlyes:** Iran-i Farda

List 5-2: Total closures, April 2000- August 2001

**Dailies:** Aftab-i Imruz, Ahrar, Arya, Asr-i Azadigan, Bahar, Bamdad-i No, Bayan, Dowran-i Imruz, Fath, Gonbad-i Kabud, Guzarish-i Ruz, Hambastegi, Ham-Mihan, Manateq-i Azad, Mellat (reopened July 2001), Mosharekat, Nosazi, Payam-i Azadi, Ruzdara, Sobh-i Imruz, Talieh

**Weeklyes:** Aban, Amin-i Zanjan, Arzesh, Ava, Ava-yi Varzish, Bazar-i Ruz, Cheshmeh, Farda-yi Roshan, Golbang-i Iran, Gunagun, Iran-Javan, Hadis-yi Qazvin, Harim, Iran Javan, Jahan-i Pezeshki, Jameh-yi Madani, Jebheh, Khalij-i Fars, Mihan, Milad, Mobin, Nakhł, Payam-i Hajar, Qesh-yi Zendigi, Ruzdaran, Sepideh Zendegi, Sobh-i Omid, Tavana

**Monthlyes:** Iran-i Farda, Javanani-i Qorveh, Kiyam, Payam-i Imruz

List 5-3: The List and Internet address of Iranian TV channels in USA

1-Appadana ([http://www.appadana.com](http://www.appadana.com))

2-Azadi TV ([http://www.azaditv.com](http://www.azaditv.com))

3-Channel One TV ([http://www.channelonetv.com](http://www.channelonetv.com))

4-IPN TV ([http://www.ipntv.com](http://www.ipntv.com))

5-Iran TV Network ([http://www.irantvnetwork.com](http://www.irantvnetwork.com))

6-IRTV ([http://www.irtv.com](http://www.irtv.com))

7-Jaam-e-Jam ([http://www.jaamejam.com](http://www.jaamejam.com))

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77 - This list does not include student publications--such as Mowj, Kavir, and Farda-yi Azadi--or publications that have closed due to financial problems, and it may not include some provincial publications that have been shut down. Also, the licenses of Ayadin, Danesh-i Hisabresi, and Nava were revoked by the Press Supervisory Board, but they had not been published for a "long time," Jomhuri-yi Islami reported on 3 October 2000.
8-Melli TV (http://www.mellitv.com)
9-NITV (http://www.nitv.tv)
10-Pars TV Network (http://www.parstvnetwork.com)
11-Rang-a-Rang (http://www.rang-a-rang.com)
12-Tapesh TV (http://www.tapeshtv.com)

**Chart 5-1** - The number of session of Press Advisory Board (1993-2002)  

![Chart 5-1](chart51.png)

**Chart 5-2** - Distribution of press regarding to the place  

![Chart 5-2](chart52.png)

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79 - Ibid., P.19
Chart 5-3- The number of press licenses issued by Ministry of Guidance and Islamic Culture (1993-2002)  

Chart 5-4- The number of licenses issued regarding To the language of the press (1993-2002)  

80 - Ibid., P. 17  
81 - Ibid., P.21
Chart 5-5- Percentage of issued press according to the place

Chart 5-6- Comparing the press regarding to the topics

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82 - Ibid., P.37
83 - Ibid., p.40
Chart 5-7- Currency quota allocated by the Khatam’s Cabinet for the press\(^{84}\)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount (in Million dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Chart 5-11- Closure newspapers at the time of Khatami regarding to the source of closure\(^{85}\)

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\(^{84}\) - Ibid., P.65  
\(^{85}\) - Ibid., P. 54
Chart 5-8- Authorized press, by concessionaire 86

Chart 5-9- TV Programs Produced by National Channels (2001-2002) 87


87 - Ibid., P. 203
Chart 5-10- Programs Produced by National Radio Stations 1 and 2 (2001-2002)  

- Sports; 15.14%
- General Knowledge; 9.91%
- Islamic Education; 16.79%
- Social and Culture; 40.55%
- Others; 17.61%

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88 Ibid., P. 203
General Knowledge; 9.42%
Sports and Recreation; 7.61%
Economics; 5.06%
Science and Technology; 4.16%
Others; 8.65%
Islamic Education; 22.90%
Social and Culture; 42.20%