

## Editor's Note

# Foreign Policy and Iran's Islamic Revolution

Iran has marked the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the victory of its Islamic Revolution. How can one analyze the foreign policy report card of the Islamic Revolution? It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to discuss the details of the foreign policy-related issues of the Islamic Revolution at the three distinctive, yet related, levels of national, regional and international political dynamics. However, through a careful examination of all foreign policy actions and interactions of the Islamic Republic, we may infer that independence stands as the most dominant prism through which the foreign policy of the political system in Iran can be understood. Independence in the foreign policy decision-making of Iran, as a byproduct of the Islamic Revolution, gave birth to a new regional setting with its global impacts.

“Independence, liberty and Islamic Revolution”, the motto of the Revolution, starts with a foreign policy issue; to avoid dependence on the great powers in the international scene. Independence has always been the national, natural and historical desire of the Iranian people. Nominally, Iran is one of the few countries that have never been directly colonized and remained independent. Yet, in real terms, it has experienced long-standing, excessive and tantalizing meddling in its domestic affairs by the United Kingdom, Russia and the United

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States. A patron-client state of affairs with the U.S. was set up following the Anglo-American-engineered overthrow of democratically-elected Iranian Prime Minister Mossadegh in 1953. Independence was and still is the crosscutting issue among Iranians of different political orientations. True independence was a historical desire because Iran was deprived of it. Independence was a national aspiration due to its overarching appeal. It was also a natural goal stemming from the simple fact that Iran, without independence, lacked the natural right to exert sovereignty over its destiny.

Iran has paid a high price and sacrificed a lot to achieve independence in its foreign policy. Nowadays, Iranians jealously protect and preserve this common national, natural and historical asset. Pundits, policy analysts and foreign policy practitioners who are not attentive to this national characteristic fail to understand Iran not only in its foreign policy sphere, but its domestic politics as well.

The independence of the foreign policy of Iran has had resultant regional and global effects. Regionally, a new balance of power has emerged in which Iran has become a genuine regional power, producing its own security rather than borrowing it from extra-regional forces. This phenomenon made a crack in the bipolar international system of the Cold War. This crack in the wall of bipolarity had ramifications for both the hard power and ideational structure of international politics and related narratives. As a corollary, the imprints of the Islamic Revolution of Iran perpetually remain in regional and global politics. In fact, this is still a process in progress in which some regional and global players seek to undermine Iran's independence as Iranians fight to preserve it.

In a nutshell, independence, as the most significant foreign policy element of Iran's Islamic Revolution, has been structurally placed in the cognitive map of Iranian foreign policy elites as well as ordinary Iranians from all walks of life.

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