The Politics of Resistance in Modern Iran:

A century of defiance



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To the memory of Shahid Chamran,
for showing me the way.

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Abstract

This thesis is a century-long intellectual history of a century of the main resistance discourse dominating Iranian politics today. Conceptualising resistance as a justice-oriented revisionist practice, this thesis starts with the fourth Majles in the 1920s and traces the emergence and evolution of this discourse up until today. I have chosen to name this particular discourse the 'discourse of State Resistance' in modern Iran, which emerged as discourse centred around neutralism and non-alignment in the intellectual discourses of Ayatollah Modarres. Following Modarres, this thesis traces the journey of this discourse as it develops through thought collectives within the Iranian opposition and is produced and reproduced across the idiosyncratic political landscape of the Iranian opposition. Having started as a neutralist discourse for survival amidst imperial rivalries in the 1920s, by the 1970s the discourse had become a revisionist discourse espousing a comprehensive and strict understanding of independence and non-alignment which goes beyond the traditional international relations and legal understandings of the concepts to include religious requirements as well as discourses of authenticity. As the revolutionary state was consolidated, we witness the transformation of the discourse into an establishment discourse which, following the end of the cold war and the rise and decline of Western hegemony, starts to increasingly espouse the Islamic Republic of Iran as a powerful actor, which is engaging in worldmaking as it seeks to forge a new more just world order. Specifically, while the opposition sought to survive and pursue abstract notions of justice, the establishment sought to restructure the world order by bringing an end to foreign military presence in the region, as well as reforming international organisations and regional alliances. Importantly, the establishment project was not limited to geopolitical restructuring, but also included challenging Western hegemony ideologically, both within Iran and beyond.

Note on Dates and Transliteration

The frequent use of primary sources in this thesis requires some explanatory remarks. When a year is given, such as 1388, the Gregorian date will be given as 2008-2009 unless the source indicates in which corresponding Gregorian date the Iranian date falls at. The same goes for months, when only the month is indicated, for example Farvardin, this will here be cited as March-April. On transliteration, with the exception of names, events, titles and dates that have an established English form, all Persian words have been transliterated according to the *Iranian Studies* scheme. Individuals' titles and ranks will be used in accordance to what was accurate during the time period being discussed.

Glossary

'Adam-e ta'ahod	Non-alignment
Bidāri-ye Eslāmi	Islamic awakening
Bitarafi	Neutrality
Diplomāsi-ye chand jānebeh	Multilateral diplomacy
Estekbār-e jahāni	World arrogance
Este'mār-e farhangi	Cultural colonialism
Esteqlāl-e vāqe'i	True independence
Eqtesād-e moqāvemati	Resistance economy
Gharbzadegi	Westoxification/weststruckness/occidentosis
Goftogu-ye tamaddon-hā	Dialogue among civilisations
Haqq-e hākemiyat	Sovereignty
Jang-e narm	Soft war
Mehvar-e moqāvemat	Axis of Resistance
Modāfe'ān-e haram	Defenders of the Shrines
Mostakbarin	Oppressors
Mostaz'afin	The oppressed
Moqāvemat	Resistance
Moqāvemat-e Eslāmi	Islamic resistance
Na sharqi, na gharbi, jomhuri-ye Eslāmi	Neither East nor West: An Islamic Republic
Nezām	Establishment, system
Niru-ye sevvom be ma'nā-ye 'amam	Third force in general
Niru-ye sevvom be ma'nā-ye 'akhas	The third force in particular
Omm al qorrā	The leadership of the Muslim community (literally, 'the mother of the villages')
Siyāsat-e kolli-ye nezām	General policy of the system
Siyāsat-e movāzeneh-ye 'adami	Negative balancing
Siyāsat-e movāzeneh-ye manfi	Negative equilibrium
Tahājom-e farhangi	Cultural invasion
Tavāzon-e vojudi	Existential balance

Chapter 1: Introduction

Resistance in modern Iranian history and politics:

'This gross oppression (zolm) that afflicts us is due to us being weak'[1]
Soleyman Mirza Eskandari, 1921

'We are oppressed (mazlum) but strong, just like our Master, the Leader of the Faithful [Imam Ali]. The Leader of the Faithful was the most oppressed, but also the strongest'[2]

Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, 2016

Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran is manifesting its global footprint as an influential state on the world stage that is standing up to the United States and its allies while seeking to forge a new regional order in its own image. Distant seems the early 20th century, when parliamentarians such as Soleyman Mirza Eskandari, a founding member of the Democrat Party (*Ferqeh-ye Demokrāt)* and the first leader of the Communist Tudeh Party (*Hezb-e Tudeh),* frequently expressed their dismay at the status quo in Iran, which was blighted by imperial domination and a weak central government. The journey from being victims of imperial domination to a global actor pursuing a just new world order is inscribed in the politics of resistance, in Iran's century of defiance. However, even when speaking from a position of power, as is the case in the recent quote above by the current Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, the notion of oppression remains present. This indicates that, from the perspective of the current establishment, Iran's century of defiance against the global status quo appears to be more intricate and complex than the

[1] *Mashruh-e Mozākerat-e Majles-e Shorāye Melli*, *Dowreh-ye 4,* Meeting number 7, Retrieved from <https://www.ical.ir/ical/fa/Content/4_artmajles1/%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%87%207%20%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%AA%20%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AD%20%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3%20%D8%B9%D8%B5%D8%B1%20%DB%8C%D9%88%D9%85%20%D8%B3%D9%87%20%D8%B4%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%87%2027%20%D8%B0%DB%8C%D9%82%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%87%201339%20%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%82%20%D8%AF%D9%87%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AF%201300>. Accessed on 1 April 2019.

[2] Khamenei.ir. 1395/2016. *Bayānāt dar didār-e kārgarān*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=32920> Accessed on 25 July 2021.

mere power dynamics that opposition figure Mirza Eskandari believed. It is the intellectual dimension of this philosophical trajectory that this thesis will seek to explore. It will do so by taking a novel approach to Iran's politics of defiance, namely by foregrounding a particular discourse that I have termed the discourse of State Resistance in modern Iran, from its emergence in the 4th Majles (1921-1923) until the end of the Rouhani administration in 2021. I have chosen the term State Resistance, as its narratives evolve around the agency of the Iranian polity as it emerged within the opposition to the Pahlavi state before it became a part of the state ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In what follows, I propose the concept of resistance as an analytical tool for better understanding a politico-cultural phenomenon often categorised as 'fundamentalist', 'terrorist', or 'revolutionary' politics, to name a few of the common labels in the study of modern Iranian history and politics. I do so because the polemical and reductive nature of the existing concepts and theories for comprehending the politics of defiance in modern Iran, both discursively and materially, ultimately undermines our knowledge of the country and its history. As an alternative to the existing approaches that will be reviewed below, I propose the concept of resistance[3] as a discourse and intersubjectivity that has shaped the politics of defiance in contemporary Iran since the early 20th century. More specifically, I intend to study one particular discourse—as opposed to pattern of behaviour or policy

[3] The concept of resistance is widely used across disciplines in humanities and social sciences in particular, and as a fundamental clarification I wish to stress that by 'resistance', I do not refer to what has later been known as 'rightful resistance', as collective action of individuals operating within the legal and political framework of the state, also known as 'resistance within hegemony', see: O'Brien, Kevin J. 1996. "Rightful Resistance". *World Politics* 49 (1): pp. 31–55. Nor do I refer to 'everyday resistance', such as rural farmers stealing rice from the landlords or challenging gender roles in the workplace, see for example: Gregg, Nina. 1993. "'Trying to put things first': Negotiating subjectivities in a workplace organizing campaign.", in Fisher, Sue, and Kathy Davis (eds.) *Negotiating at the Margins: The Gendered Discourses of Power and resistance*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. pp. 172-204.; Scott, James C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press. For a comprehensive survey on studies on resistance, see: Hollander, Jocelyn A., and Rachel L. Einwohner. 2004. "Conceptualizing Resistance". *Sociological Forum* 19 (4): pp. 533–54. For everyday resistance in Iranian studies, see for example: Afary, Janet. 2009. *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Khosravi, Shahram and Stoller, Paul. 2008. *Young and Defiant in Tehran*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia University Press.

practice—of resistance, which was initially produced by opponents of the Pahlavi Dynasty, and later by the state establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Despite State Resistance evolving and growing over three political dynasties, two World Wars, two revolutions, the Cold War, and its aftermath (in which we find ourselves today), little scholarship exists on resistance as a politico-cultural phenomenon in modern Iranian historiography. In fact, over a century of resistance has failed to produce a comprehensive history or even a genealogy on the phenomenon. Such scholarship related to the politics of resistance in modern Iran as does exist has more often than not suffered from the same symptomatic shortcomings that has blighted the study of Iran, and perhaps also the study of the Muslim-majority world in general. While it is a truism that 'history is written by the winners', is worth noting that Iranian history in the West has been primarily written by its 'losers', often dissatisfied emigres with limited access to the country. As will be evident below, this has had a significant impact on limiting our understanding of modern Iranian politics and history, as the foundational research is yet to be conducted on several areas, resistance included, and most scholarship has been written, and still is being written, on the basis of relatively thin research. While legitimate explanations exist as to why the necessary archival or field research in Iran has not been done, the existing state of the field should not be exempt from the charge that it still finds itself in its prefatory stages with severe shortcomings, which this thesis intends to overcome in relation to the topic of resistance.

Reductive readings of Iran's politics, essentialist and generally unsophisticated understandings of its intellectual discourses, and the weak historiography that has characterised the field are not only the result of limited access to the necessary source material, but also a consequence of the politicisation of Iranian studies, both in the West and in Iran. Mentioning all scholarly work with these shortcomings in the study of resistance

politics in Iran is neither feasible nor my objective here; instead, this section will seek to identify the main trends in existing scholarship on the topic, and critically review the contributions made primarily in Western but also the often-neglected Iranian academia.

In particular, I believe that the current shortcomings in the existing literature on resistance politics in modern Iran have manifested themselves primarily in five academic trends: i) the politicisation—even militarisation—of Iranian studies, framing the study of Iran's resistance politics pejoratively into the study of for example 'terrorism' and/or 'Islamic fundamentalism'; ii) International Relations approaches to State Resistance that have often suffered from simplifications and a neglect of domestic politics; iii) reducing resistance politics to a predominantly religious phenomenon, with the possibility of the religious discourse adopting and incorporating a discourse of modernity such as Marxism or 'Third Worldism', whose meanings are often assumed rather than discussed; iv) historical studies of resistance in Iran which ignore intellectual discourses; and finally, v) attempts to study resistance discourses in Iran as the object of study, but which nonetheless fail to include a wide enough range of source material and often adopt an inappropriate conceptual framework, thereby severely limiting the ultimate scholarly and analytical contribution of this trend in scholarship.

Amongst a sizeable portion of Iranian studies in the West, the academic discourse on its resistance politics suffers from an exaggerated focus on its military and 'religious' dimensions, overshadowing the significant politico-cultural and literary aspects that my research identifies as being fundamental to comprehend State Resistance. Examples of these can be seen in the works of Afshon Ostovar on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps,[4] and Saeid Golkar's work on The Organization for Mobilization of the Oppressed,[5] commonly

[4] Ostovar, Afshon. 2016. *Vanguard of the Imam: Religion, Politics, and Iran's Revolutionary Guards*. New York: Oxford University Press.
[5] Golkar, Saeid. 2015. *Captive Society: The Basij Militia and Social Control in Iran*. New York: Columbia University Press.

known as the *Basij*. These studies provide extensive accounts on the organisational structure and history of two key institutions of post-revolutionary resistance in modern Iran. However, while the latter neglects the intellectual dimension of the Basij's resistance politics almost completely, the former follows a common pattern in works on 20th century intellectual history in Iran in general, as Ostovar identifies Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Khomeini as the sole significant influences on the Revolutionary Guards' ideology, without engaging further in its intellectual roots or in other intellectual discourses.[6]

Another symptom of existing literature on resistance politics, often written by the Iranian diaspora in the West, suffers from reductive and pejorative scholarship that uses polemics of limited analytical value to discredit both the Islamic Republic, a four-decade long project that has propagated State Resistance, as well as the Islamic Republic's pre-revolutionary intellectual and political antecedents. The most recurrent catchwords belonging to this trend in Iranian studies are notably 'terrorism' and 'fundamentalism'. The fact that most serious scholars understand the former term to have 'become too ideologically freighted to have any analytic value'[7] suggests that its use is more convenient for political rather than scholarly intentions.[8] As will be apparent below, while 'terrorism' is often used to condemn the practice of resistance, the discourse of 'fundamentalism' which often operates in tandem with the discourse of terrorism, is more specifically directed at the intellectual quality of the discourses that I understand to be resistance. Suffering from similar shortcomings to the discourse of terrorism, Ervand Abrahamian aptly demonstrates the problematic nature of the concept of fundamentalism when stating that:

> For conservatives, the term is associated with xenophobia, militancy, and radicalism. For liberals, it means extremism, fanaticism, and traditionalism. For radicals, it evokes theological obscurantism, political atavism, and the rejection of science, history, modernity, the

[6] Ostovar. *Vanguard of the Imam*. p. 34.
[7] Scheffler, Samuel. 2006. "Is terrorism morally distinctive?" *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 14 (1), pp. 1–17. p. 1.
[8] Rengger, Nicholas. 2008. "The greatest treason? On the subtle temptations of preventive war." *International Affairs*, 84 (5), pp. 949–961. p. 959; Bellamy, Alex. 2008. *Fighting Terror: Ethical Dilemmas*. London: Zed Books. p. 28.

> Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution. Meanwhile, for Orientalists — still a big influence in Middle Eastern studies — the term is useful precisely because it implies that the Muslim world is intrinsically timeless, unchanging, irrational, backward looking, and programmed merely to replay old scripts from the time of the Prophet, the early caliphate, and the medieval Crusades.[9]

Twenty-five years after Abrahamian's indictment of the concept of fundamentalism, its use in research on Iran, with its bedfellow terrorism, has survived virtually unchallenged. These discourses, widely reproduced in the West by notable scholars often located within—albeit not exclusive to—the neoconservative political tradition in the West, continuously resort to such terminology in their accounts of State Resistance in Iran.[10] Louise Richardson's summary of the violent dimension of Iran's foreign policy and its ideological dimension exemplifies the rather scant analytical value of this strand of scholarship when stating that:

> The Ayatollah Khomeini, a Shiite Muslim cleric who led the Iranian revolution, provided a theological justification for fundamentalist terrorism. He argued that Islam was threatened with destruction and that Shiite believers were obliged to fight in its defence.[11]

Despite being located outside the field of Iranian studies, Richardson's reductive discourse is widely reproduced by neoconservative and/or diaspora scholars both in conceptual and policy-oriented scholarship, where fundamentalism is also sometimes used interchangeably with 'Islamism'.[12] These approaches appear to be more interested in

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[9] Abrahamian, Ervand. 1993. *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 2.

[10] See for example: Alfoneh, Ali. 2013. *Iran Unveiled: How the Revolutionary Guards Is Turning Theocracy into Military Dictatorship*. Washington, D.C: AEI Press. Baer, Robert. 2008. *The Devil We Know, Dealing with the new Iranian Superpower,* New York: Three Rivers Press. Barrari, Hari Anand, and Akho-Rashida, Hani. 2010. "The pragmatic and the radical, Syria and Iran and war by proxy", in Jones, Clive. and Catignani, Sergio. (eds.), *Israel and Hizbollah, An Asymmetric Conflict in Historical and Comparative perspective,* London: Routledge. pp. 109-123; Byman, Daniel L. 2016. "Proxy Power: Understanding Iran's Use of Terrorism." Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/proxy-power-understanding-irans-use-of-terrorism/> Accessed on 26 Jul. 2021; Takeyh, Ray. 2006. "Iran, Israel and the Politics of Terrorism". *Survival*, 48 (4), pp. 83–96.

[11] Richardson, Louise. 1999. "Terrorists as transnational actors". *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 11 (4), pp. 209–219. p. 215. See also footnote 8.

[12] See for example: Cordesman, Anthony H. and Martin Kleiber. 2007. *Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf*. Washington, D.C: CSIS Press. p. 27; Chehabi, Houchang E. 1990. *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: The Liberation Movement of Iran Under the Shah and Khomeini*. London: I.B. Tauris; Milani, Mohsen M. 1989. "The Ascendance of Shi'i Fundamentalism in Revolutionary Iran". *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies,* 13 (1), pp. 5-28; Woolsey, R James. 1994. "Challenges to Peace in the Middle East". *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, Wye Plantation Policy Conference 1994. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-

delegitimising and condemning Iran's actions and purported ideology, rather than engaging with its intellectual discourses and political history. In the most radical instances, attempts are being made at revising parts of Iranian history in order to undermine State Resistance narratives.[13] Consequently, the academic output of this strand of scholarship falls short of providing much other than reductive readings of the country's resistance politics as simply 'religious fundamentalism' or 'irrational fanaticism,'[14] and becomes perhaps more useful as a dog whistle for understanding certain political discourses of Western policy-makers, academics and think tanks rather than Iranian politics and history.

Whilst being less committed to polemics, the refusal to engage with the country's political and intellectual history is also evident in International Relations approaches to the revisionist politics of Iran and the study of the country's foreign policy. The ontological refusal imposed by mainstream International Relations theories to engage in comprehensive unit level analysis appears to shift the focus away from intellectual discourses and political history, and instead focus exclusively on the discourses of often arbitrarily selected high-ranking government officials, to complement their structural analysis. This has often culminated in simplistic readings of Iran's foreign policy, the most notable being that its revisionist post-revolutionary foreign policy is driven by Shariati's 1960s dichotomisation of the world into two groups; the oppressed (*mostaz'afin*) and the oppressors

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analysis/view/challenges-to-peace-in-the-middle-east> Accessed on 21 March 2018; Clawson, Patrick. 1993. *Iran's Challenge to the West: How, When, and Why*. Policy Papers, No. 33. Washington, D.C: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

[13] See for example: Takeyh, Ray. 2014. "What Really Happened in Iran". *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2014-06-16/what-really-happened-iran> Accessed on 6 March 2018; Bayandor, Darioush. 2010. *Iran and the CIA: The Fall of Mosaddeq Revisited*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

[14] Ganji, Babak. 2006. *Iran and Israel: Asymmetric Warfare and Regional Strategy*. Swindon: Defence Academy of the United Kingdom. pp. 1– 37; Levitt, Matthew. 2013, *Hezbollah, The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God*, Washington D.C: Georgetown University Press; Schbley, Ayla Hammond. 1989. "Resurgent religious terrorism: A study of some of the Lebanese Shi'a contemporary terrorism". *Terrorism*, 12 (4), pp. 213–247: Takeyh"Iran, Israel and the Politics of Terrorism. *Survival"*; Ansari, Ali. 2006. "Civilizational Identity and Foreign Policy: The Case of Iran", in Shaffer, Brenda. (ed.), *The Limits of Culture, Islam and Foreign Policy,* London: The MIT Press, pp. 241-262. p. 243.

(*mostakbarin)*,[15] which then is seen as the (revolutionary) discourse through which Iran interprets political affairs ever since.[16] This reading of revolutionary Iran appears to interpret the Islamic Revolution as a communist revolution, in which its foreign policy discourse has simply swapped the 'workers of the world' or the 'proletariat' with the *mostaz'afin*; the Islamic Revolution simply turned the Islamic Republic into the self-perceived 'vanguard of the oppressed',[17] as distinct from Vladimir Lenin's 'vanguard of the proletariat'.

Casting Iran into a predefined category determined by Cold War dynamics is also evident in International Relations scholarship that touches upon the country's resistance discourse of 'Neither East nor West', the genealogy of which Chapter 2 will demonstrate constitutes a crucial component of the Islamic Republic's resistance heritage. The state of existing scholarship, however, simply reduces this discourse to a predetermined category of 'third worldism'[18] or more disparagingly, 'militant third worldism,'[19] while failing to discuss what these concepts mean in the Iranian context, and consequently what practices they seek to enable or restrict. As a result, the meaning of various concepts and discourses espoused by Iranian government officials are often assumed to be merely the Persian

[15] Maloney, Suzanne. 2002. "Identity and Change in Iran's Foreign Policy", in Barnett, Mark. and Telhami, Shibley. (eds.) *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*. New York: Cornell University Press. pp. 88-116. p. 99.

[16] Colleau, Morgan. 2016. "Iran's Janus-Faced US Policy: The Rouhani Administration Between Continuity and Change, Opportunity and Constraint", in Akbarzadeh, Shahram, and Dara Conduit (eds.) *Iran in the World: President Rouhani's Foreign Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Springer. pp. 33-58. p. 35; Hunter, Shireen. 2010. *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Resisting the New International Order*. Santa Barbara: Praeger. p. 27. In domestic scholarship, see for example: Yazdani, Enayatollah. and Hussain, Rizwan. 2006. "United States' Policy towards Iran after the Islamic Revolution: An Iranian Perspective". *International Studies*, 43 (3), pp. 267–289. p. 269.

[17] Panah, Maryam. 2007. *The Islamic Republic and the World: Global Dimensions of the Iranian Revolution*. London: Pluto Press. p. 72.

[18] See: Martin, Vanessa. 2003. *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran*. London: I.B. Tauris. p. 164; Moghaddam, Val. 1994. "Islamic Populism, Class, and Gender in Post-Revolutionary Iran", in Foran, John (ed.) *A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in Iran*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. pp. 189-223. p. 207; Sadri, Houman A. 1997. *Revolutionary States, Leaders, and Foreign Relations: A Comparative Study of China, Cuba, and Iran*. Westport: Praeger. p. 17; Dorraj, Manouchehr. 1992. "Populism and Corporatism in Post-Revolutionary Iranian Political Culture", in Farsoun, Samih K, and Mashayekhi, Mehrdad. (eds.) *Iran: Political Culture in the Islamic Republic*. London: Routledge. pp. 149-163. p. 158.

[19] Hunter. *Iran's Foreign Policy*. p. 26.

equivalent for an already existing Western concept such as 'non-alignment', 'anti-imperialism', 'isolationism' or 'fundamentalism.'[20]

In the limited amount of International Relations scholarship that has managed to grasp the existence of a resistance discourse in Iran, the same failure to sufficiently engage in the country's intellectual and political discourses persists. Consequently, while successfully identifying the phenomenon of resistance, its meaning is simply assumed as 'anti-imperialist, anti-American, and anti-Zionist' without providing any explanation of its meaning or implications. [21] In the rare cases which elaborate the argument, such as in William Beeman's account of resistance in Iran as a 'postmodern discourse', resistance is framed exclusively in U.S.-centric terms as Iran's effort to 'force the United States to recognize Iran's right to be treated as an equal member of the international community' with its revolutionary identity,[22] ignoring the wide range of countries, empires, historic blocs and entities State Resistance is directed towards, internal disagreements, and the dynamic nature of its objectives.

More intellectually oriented approaches to the study of State Resistance in Iran typically seek to comprehend the phenomenon as a product of political Islam. Contrary to the proponents of the discourse of fundamentalism, authors in this academic trend seek to transcend such reductionism, and instead stress the eclectic nature of political Islam, and its

[20] Adib-Moghaddam, Arshin. 2006. *The International Politics of the Persian Gulf: A Cultural Genealogy*. New York: Routledge. p. 28; Tazmini, Ghoncheh. 2012. *Revolution and Reform in Russia and Iran: Modernisation and Politics in Revolutionary States*. London: I. B. Tauris. p. 264; Ehteshami, Anoushiravan, and Mahjoob Zweiri. 2007. *Iran and the Rise of Its Neoconservatives: The Politics of Tehran's Silent Revolution*. London: Tauris. p. 90; Takeyh, Ray. 2009. *Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 20; p. 147.

[21] Bullock Jenkins, William. 2016. "*Bonyads* as Agents and Vehicles of the Islamic Republic's Soft Power", in Akbarzadeh, Shahram, and Dara Conduit (eds.) *Iran in the World: President Rouhani's Foreign Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Springer, pp. 155-176. p. 160; See also Sariolghalam, Mahmood. 1993. "Conceptual Sources of Post-Revolutionary Iranian Behaviour toward the Arab World", in Amirahmadi, Hooshang, and Nader Entessar, (eds.). *Iran and the Arab World*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 19-27. pp. 21-3.

[22] Beeman, William O. 2005. *The 'Great Satan' vs. the 'Mad Mullahs': How the United States and Iran Demonize Each Other*. Westport: Praeger Publishers. p. 190.

compatibility with modernity manifested in its ability to synthesise, or even coexist with other modernist discourses. Moreover, such attempts tend to depict Ayatollah Khomeini often cynically as appropriating these terms rather than being influenced by the idiosyncratic intellectual eco-system that he and his supporters were situated within. The most notable of these are third world discourses of anti-imperialism, non-alignment and leftist political discourses whose meaning, however, is uncritically applied simply as a modernist supplement to an extensive discussion on the religious Shi'i essence.[23] This tendency to use secular discourses as the supplement to an Islamic essence is also evident in some domestic post-revolutionary historiography in Iran that is concerned with resistance, which situates the emergence of the contemporary State Resistance discourse at the point of the declaration of *jihad* against the Russian Empire following its invasion of Iranian territories in the Caucasus in 1803.[24]

Historiographical accounts of modern Iran written the West for the most part date the emergence of the country's resistance politics rather differently. Rather than the birth of resistance, the Russo-Iranian wars initiated a process of decline which allowed oppositional politics, often led by the clergy, to flourish. Starting with the Tobacco Revolt of 1890-1, the oppositional nature of the Iranian people becomes increasingly crystallised and takes on an increasingly religious form as the largely non-clerical opposition fails to produce a meaningful outcome through critical junctures such as the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911), the two world wars, the Anglo-American Coup in 1953, until it reaches the crux in 1979.[25] This approach, best exemplified in the writings of Nikki Keddie and John Foran,

[23] For third world eclecticism, see footnote 16. For leftist eclecticism: Arjomand, Said Amir. 1988. *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 97; Amanat, Abbas. 2009. *Apocalyptic Islam and Iranian Shi'ism*. London: I.B. Tauris. p. 66; Takeyh. *Guardians of the Revolution*.
[24] Najafi, Musa and Musa Faghih Haqani. 1393/2013. *Tārikh va tahavolāt-e siyāsi-ye Irān: barrasi-ye molfeh-hā-ye din, tajjadod va madaniyat dar ta'sis-e dolat-melat dar gostareh-ye hoviyat-e melli-ye Irān*. Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Motāle'āt-e Tārikh-e Mo'āser-e Irān. p. 117.
[25] Keddie, Nikki R., and Yann Richard. 2006. *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*. New Haven: Yale University Press; Keddie, Nikki R. 1995. *Iran and the Muslim World: Resistance and Revolution*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan; Foran, John, (ed.) 1994. *A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in*

while highlighting these critical junctures in modern Iranian history and consequently providing us with critical insight on political incidents that inform the country's post-revolutionary political landscape, nonetheless neglect crucial moments in the country's intellectual history which determined the particular shape and form that revolutionary discourses would take. The neglect of intellectual discourses and their evolution in relation to these historical events, I believe, has resulted in scholars across various disciplines in Iranian studies relegating resistance politics in Iran to grievances over limited number of events, most notably the Anglo-American coup in 1953.[26]

In recent years, however, several scholars have sought to engage with the intellectual discourses that form Iran's counterhegemonic politics. For example, Kingshuk Chatterjee's work on Ali Shariati accurately grasps the synthesised nature of the resistance discourse leading up to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and whilst appearing to suffer from the shortcomings of the Islamic modernist discourse critiqued above, manages to emphasise the conceptual role of other individuals, such as Mohammad Mosaddeq, in shaping Iran's counterhegemonic discourse, of which Chatterjee claims Shariati's political thought constituted the nucleus.[27]

Also focused on the Islamic dimension of counterhegemonic politics, but more focused on resistance in particular, is Alastair Crooke's *Resistance: The Essence of the Islamist Revolution*.[28] A general work on Muslim resistance against the West, Crooke's account of resistance as the ideology of the revolution is perhaps accurate,[29] but because he

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Iran. *Social Movements, Protest, and Contention*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 1993. *Fragile Resistance: Social Transformation in Iran from 1500 to the Revolution*. Boulder: Westview Press.

[26] See for example: Leverett, Flynt and Hillary Mann Leverett. 2015. "American hegemony (and hubris): The Iranian nuclear issue, and the future of Sino–Iranian relations". In Ehteshami, Anoushiravan, and Yukiko Miyagi, (eds.). *The Emerging Middle East - East Asia Nexus*. New York: Routledge. pp. 136-159, p. 139; Mafinezam, Alidad, and Aria Mehrabi. 2008. *Iran and Its Place among Nations*. Westport: Praeger.

[27] Chatterjee, Kingshuk. 2011. *'Ali Shari'ati and the Shaping of Political Islam in Iran*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. p. 49; p. 72; p. 170,

[28] Crooke, Alastair. 2009. *Resistance: The Essence of the Islamist Revolution*. London: Pluto Press.

[29] Ibid. p. 277.

defines it as an 'emancipatory' or 'eschatologically' Islamist ideology emerging from the traumatic encounters with the West,[30] Crooke fails to appreciate those influences not situated within the clergy that this thesis will demonstrate also had an significant impact on the nature of State Resistance. In fact, the closest Crooke comes to doing so is in his discussions of Abolhassan Bani Sadr's writings with Shariati, which Chapter 2 will demonstrate only scratches the surface of the opposition's idiosyncratic pre-revolutionary resistance discourse. While being weak in his genealogical account, Crooke nevertheless accurately captures the fact that the purpose of contemporary State Resistance is 'to force the West to change its behaviour – not to exterminate westerners as the crusaders sought to do to Muslims in the Holy Land',[31] and that resistance as a phenomenon 'represents a refusal to "normalise" injustice … a refusal to continue quiescent',[32] an essential quality of resistance which we will turn to in the conceptual discussion below.

Finally, the work that conceptually bears the closest proximity to the research of the subsequent chapters is Arshin Adib-Moghaddam's *Can the Subaltern Resist,*[33] which seeks to account for the phenomenon of State Resistance as a culture that made the Islamic Revolution possible. Adib-Moghaddam study, while avoiding the pitfalls discussed above, is flawed in other ways as he builds a theoretical framework on a serious misreading of Michel Foucault's understanding of resistance, which he calls Foucault's 'power-resistance dialectic'.[34] This is a highly problematic reading of Foucault's concept of resistance and power, since as will be apparent below, Foucault situates resistance *within* power and not in dialectical opposition to it. The conceptual weakness is accompanied by a historiographical one, as Adib-Moghaddam adheres to the historiographical narrative of resistance critiqued

[30] Ibid. pp. 276-7.
[31] Ibid. p. 17.
[32] Ibid. p. 225.
[33] Adib-Moghaddam, Arshin. 2013. "Can the (sub)altern resist? A dialogue between Foucault and Said", in Netton, Ian Richard (ed.) *Orientalism Revisited: Art, Land Voyage*. New York: Routledge. pp. 33-86.
[34] Ibid. p. 35.

above, and follows mainstream historiography in citing the Tobacco Revolt of 1890-1, Constitutional Movement of 1906-11, Oil Nationalisation in 1951, and the Coup of 1953, and the emergence of Khomeini as critical junctures that contributed to the perfection of the 'infrastructure of resistance … [a] pre-existing culture of resistance that was readily exploited by the revolutionaries supporting Khomeini'.[35] While these events were certainly important, Chapter 2 will demonstrate that reducing the history of State Resistance to those events is highly reductive. Moreover, rather than assessing this 'culture' through its creators, Adib-Moghaddam only uses a limited number of English translations of Foucault's coverage of revolutionary Iran for *Corriere della Sera* to account for the emergence of this discourse, and a specific 'regime of truth' that emerged,[36] the latter bearing some resemblance to a phenomenon I characterise as 'resistance subjectivity' in the conceptual discussion below.

Put shortly, in responding to the contributions of the literature reviewed above, this study intends to transcend their symptomatic shortcomings of polemics, reductionism, simplistic ideological eclecticism and thin research. Instead, it will first construct a genealogy of the emergence of resistance between 1921-1989, before presenting a history of its evolution following the passing of Ayatollah Khomeini up until the summer of 2021.

Conceptualising Resistance

It has been argued that resistance 'was one of the most important and enduring expressions of twentieth-century political imagination and action and one ever more important in the struggles of the present century.'[37] As individuals and movements challenging their respective status quos emerged across the world in the early 20th century, and began labelling themselves as resisters and their actions as acts of resistance, the

[35] Ibid. p. 43.
[36] Ibid. p. 45.
[37] Caygill, Howard. 2013. *On Resistance: A Philosophy of Defiance*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. p. 6.

subalterns sought to legitimise their struggles against the defenders of the status quo. However, contrary to other powerful political *expressions* of the 20th century, such as 'liberal democracy' or communism, resistance discourses did not emanate from a specific set of states, organisations, or institutions, nor do the resisters necessarily claim to belong to, or constitute one unified movement or share a collective vision for resistance. Instead, resistance has for the last century been declared by various actors across different space and time in opposition to matters ranging from military occupation, colonialism, neoliberalism, socio-cultural orders, discrimination, and authoritarianism.

This pervasive application of the concept, without any agreement regarding its specific content has resulted in scholars of resistance conceding that the 'concept of resistance is thoroughly ambiguous',[38] but that at its most fundamental level it can be understood as the 'act of saying no to an existing state of affairs.'[39] Still, relegating resistance to merely being an act of negation would evidently undermine the analytical value of the concept; one fundamental challenge of writing about resistance is to provide a conceptually meaningful a priori understanding of it, which ought to be cautious of spatio-temporal and contextual differences in which the concept—used by movements across the world—is invoked and practiced. This is particularly important because of the normative implications of categorising something as resistance, since 'labelling something as resistance may give legitimacy to otherwise marginal work'[40], and that:

> Writing about resistance signals political solidarity with the oppressed and downtrodden; it permits the writer to choose sides in the power struggles that are interwoven with social life.[41]

Resistance has therefore become an 'important rhetorical tool',[42] and similar to how labelling an act, ideology or movement as 'terrorist' or 'fundamentalist' often implies a

[38] Amoore, Louise. (ed.) 2005. *The Global Resistance Reader*. London: Routledge. p. 13.
[39] Hynes, Maria. 2013. "Reconceptualizing Resistance: Sociology and the Affective Dimension of Resistance: Reconceptualizing Resistance." *The British Journal of Sociology* 64 (4): pp. 559–77. p. 567.
[40] Hollander and Einwohner, "Conceptualizing Resistance." p. 551.
[41] Ibid. pp. 550-1.
[42] Brown, Michael F. 1996. "On Resisting Resistance", *American Anthropologist 98*. pp. 729-735. p. 729.

condemnation of, or at least opposition to it, labelling something 'resistance' implies at the very least acquiescence to, and often outright support for, its moral character.[43] In acknowledging the moral stance taken and seeking to avoid the pitfalls of obscurity and apologism, one ought to provide an analytically useful conceptualisation of resistance that transcends simple legitimation. One of the most famous attempts to do so is seen in James Scott's seminal works on 'everyday resistance'. Scott, who is still cited as one of the most influential scholars on the topic, defines resistance as something which:

> includes any act(s) by member(s) of a *subordinate class* that is or are intended either to mitigate or deny claims (for example, rents, taxes, prestige) made on that class by *superordinate classes* (for example, landlords, large farms, the state) or to advance its own claims (for example, work, land, charity, respect) vis-à-vis those super-ordinate classes.[44] (emphasis my own).

In line with the more traditional materialist Marxist tradition, Scott's focal point for analysing resistance is class, with resistance largely appearing reactive to class conditions vis-à-vis the 'super-ordinate classes', an approach which has been influential in the study of social movements and 'peasant' resistance.[45] The value of Scott's contribution lies in his attempt to expand the notion of resistance to include the less organised masses, namely the peasantry, but also in enabling resistance to transcend simple 'negation', thereby including its revisionist dimension in the form of advancement of claims, which I have identified as a critical aspect of resistance. However, by framing acts of resistance primarily as class dynamics and virtually rejecting the Gramscian concept of hegemony which will be discussed below,[46] Scott and the Marxists' approach to resistance appears to undermine the importance of the participants' subjectivity, beliefs, and perceptions that made them perform resistance. This is evident in his discussion of intentions, which Scott claims 'are inscribed

[43] Evidently, the term can be used disparagingly when the term is preferred to reactionary, such as 'resistance to the abolition of slavery', or in compounds such as 'armed resistance'.
[44] Scott. *Weapons of the Weak*. p. 290.
[45] See for example: Barker, Colin. 2014. "Class struggle and social movements", In. Barker, Colin. Laurens. Cox, John. Krinsky, and Alf.G. Nilsen. *Marxism and social movements*. Chicago: Haymarket Books. pp. 41-61.
[46] Scott. *Weapons of the Weak,* pp. 314-318.

in the acts themselves', while conceding that in cases where 'there is strong evidence for the intention behind the act, the case for resistance is correspondingly strengthened'.[47] I believe Scott's approach is overly interpretive in the sense that it excuses researchers from studying intentions and instead grants them almost unrestricted power to interpret their intentions based exclusively on the acts committed.

Another popular approach to resistance is inspired by the writings of Antonio Gramsci, who despite writing decades before Scott, sought to move beyond the overwhelming materialist focus of traditional Marxism which he labelled as 'economism'. Against this, Gramsci proposed a concept of hegemony which—in the absence of a definition from Gramsci himself—has been aptly defined as 'a dynamic lived process in which social identities, relations, organizations, and structures based on asymmetrical distribution of power and influence are constituted by the dominant classes'.[48] What is significant here is Gramsci's emphasis on the fact that relations of domination and resistance (hegemony and counterhegemony) are not purely material, but also what he labelled as 'ethical-political'.[49] By doing so, Gramsci expands the scope of analysis into the realm of discourse, and expands the notion of power beyond economy, thereby enabling the study of resistance not *only* as a mechanical response to class grievances, but as a more complex politico-cultural phenomenon.

This comprehensive conceptualisation of power (hegemony) and resistance (counterhegemony) enables him to appreciate the importance of consciousness in the relationship between submission and resistance, in what has later been coined as 'counterhegemonic consciousness'.[50] By stressing that 'everyone is a philosopher',

[47] Ibid. p. 301; p. 290.
[48] Mittelman, James H and Chin, Christine B. N. 2005. "Conceptualising resistance to globalization", in Amoore, Louise (ed) *The Global Resistance Reader*. London: Routledge. pp. 17-27. p. 18.
[49] Gramsci, Antonio. 2003. *Selections from Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence and Wishart. p. 161.
[50] Mittelman and Chin, "Conceptualising resistance to globalization", p. 19.

possessing a politically significant subjectivity that is malleable, Gramsci essentially transcended the Marxist notion of people being 'merely class actors',[51] and enables an understanding of resistance as something that emerges from the consciousness of the subaltern.[52] Today, the Gramscian conceptualisation is one of the most influential approaches to resistance and has generated a wide range of scholarship across various fields and disciplines, from the study of World Orders, Neoliberalism, Globalisation and International Relations theory, to name a few.[53]

The poststructural turn in the study of resistance can to some extent be understood as a continuation of Gramsci's discursive contribution to the study of resistance. However, without question the most influential conceptual contribution to contemporary debates on resistance can be attributed to the poststructuralists themselves, and Michel Foucault in particular. More specifically, the combination of Foucault's conception of power, along with the revival of the Gramscian approach has 'offered a key theoretical backing for a micro-politics and thus the 'resistance' paradigm.'[54] Foucault's comprehensive desubstantiation of power, in which the phenomena transcends being a suppressive force of negation to become understood instead as a productive network that 'induces pleasure, forms knowledge,

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[51] Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. 2001. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso. p. xii.
[52] Gramsci. *Selections from Prison Notebooks*. pp. 324-330
[53] Cox, Robert W. 1987. *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History*. Power and Production. New York: Columbia University Press; 1999, "Civil society at the turn of the millennium: prospects for an alternative world order", *Review of international Studies,* 25 (1), pp. 3-28; Gill, Stephen. 2008. *Power and Resistance in the New World Order*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; Augelli, Enrico, and Craig Murphy. 1988. *America's Quest for Supremacy and the Third World: A Gramscian Analysis*. London: Pinter Publishers; 1997, "consciousness, myth and collective action: Gramsci, Sorel and the Ethical State" in Gill J and Mittelman (eds.) *Innovation and Transformation in International Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 25-38; Eschle, Catherine, and Bice Maiguashca. 2005. *Critical Theories, IR and 'the Anti-Globalisation Movement' The Politics of Global Resistance*. Abingdon: Routledge; Harrison, Graham. 2002. *Issues in the Contemporary Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa: The Dynamics of Struggle and Resistance*. New York: Palgrave; Motta, Sara C., and Alf Gunvald Nilsen, (eds.) 2011. *Social Movements in the Global South*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK; Petras, James F. and Henry Veltmeyer. 2016. *Power and Resistance: US Imperialism in Latin America*. Leiden: Brill; Polet, Francois. 2004. *The Globalizing Resistance: The State of Struggle*. London: Pluto Press.
[54] Bayat, Asef. 2000. "From `Dangerous Classes' to `Quiet Rebels': Politics of the Urban Subaltern in the Global South." *International Sociology* 15 (3): pp. 533–57. p. 541.

produces discourse',[55] combined with his famous mantra of 'where there is power, there is resistance',[56] has been responsible for a wide range of resistance scholarship and enables an understanding of resistance as 'a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions [that] may open up' in relation to power.[57]

However, while acknowledging that resistance can take several shapes and forms and may be directed towards numerous objectives, situating it within power as something that always relies 'on the situation that it combats'[58] (thereby transcending class dialectics of the Marxist tradition), Foucault's contribution faces significant limitations due to the space in which he situates resistance. By situating it *within* power, and consequently viewing its emergence as a part of the same process by which power (re)produces itself, Foucault essentially abstracts the resisting subjects' subjectivity away from being what Gramsci termed 'philosophical beings' and consequently denies their agency.

Despite this major shortcoming which will be addressed below, Foucault's influence has been great, and picked up by the postcolonial tradition, which, paradoxically, seeks to appreciate the subaltern's agency but nevertheless becomes conceptually unable to do so due to its adherence to Foucauldian resistance, as seen in Homi Bhabha's definition of resistance:

> Resistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it the simple negation or exclusion of the 'content' of another culture, as a difference once perceived. It is the *effect* of an ambivalence *produced within* the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference and reimplicate them within the deferential relations of colonial power – hierarchy, normalization, marginalization, and so forth.[59] (emphasis my own).

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[55] Foucault, Michel, and Colin Gordon. 1980. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books. p. 119.
[56] Foucault, Michel. 1990. *The History of Sexuality*. New York: Vintage Books. p. 95.
[57] Foucault, Michel. 1982. "The subject and power", in Hubert. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (eds.) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 208–226. p. 220.
[58] Foucault, Michel. 2001. *Dits et écrits Vol. II*. Paris: Gallimard. p. 1560, retrieved from Caygill. *On Resistance*. p. 8.
[59] Bhabha, Homi K. 2004. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge. pp. 157-8.

While being able to extend resistance beyond simple negation and managing to appreciate the different dimensions that can be resisted, Bhabha sees resistance only as an 'effect' as opposed to a conscious choice and fails to separate resistance from power as he seems to believe that resistance occurs within the space defined by the powerful, thereby also denying the agency of the resisters. Seeking to challenge this conceptualisation of resistance while still retaining Foucault's understanding of power is visible in growing attempts in the social sciences aimed at constructing an interdisciplinary field of 'resistance studies'. [60] Within this trend, Mikael Baaz, Mona Lilja, Michael Schulz, and Stellan Vinthagen have surveyed the existing literature in the field, and provided an alternative conceptualisation of resistance and its relation to power, one which intends to separate the two, thereby defining resistance as:

> a response to power from below—a *subaltern practice* that could challenge, negotiate, and undermine power, or such a practice performed on behalf of and/or in solidarity with a subaltern position (proxy resistance). *Irrespective of intent or interest*, we view resistance as (i) an act, (ii) performed by someone upholding a subaltern position or someone acting on behalf of and/or in solidarity with someone in a subaltern position, and (iii) (most often) responding to power (or, as we will see below, other resistance practices, which in turn emerge as a response to power).[61] (emphasis my own).

In this case, resistance is no longer situated within power, but as an *external response* to power. Thus, while rejecting the constitutive relationship between power and resistance, this approach instead promotes a reactive view of resistance and, like Scott's approach, the subjectivity of the actors involved in resistance is put in a subordinate position to their actions. However, they also concede that 'by searching for the content of a possible existing or emerging intention of the subaltern, our understanding of why there is resistance

[60] See: Baaz, Mikael, Mona Lilja, Michael Schulz, and Stellan Vinthagen. 2016. "Defining and Analyzing "Resistance": Possible Entrances to the Study of Subversive Practices". *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 41 (3): pp. 137–53; Hollander and Einwohner. "Conceptualizing Resistance.", pp. 533-554; Hynes. "Reconceptualizing Resistance". pp. 559–77.
[61] Baaz, Lilja and Schulz. "Defining and Analyzing "Resistance"". p. 142.

increases.'[62] They accurately highlight the conceptual challenges that arise when attempting to study intent, as:

> Intentions could be considered plural, complex, contradictory, or evolving as well as occasionally something that the actor is not sure about, views differently in retrospect, or even is not able to explain … by being able to identify a possible intention of the subaltern, it is easier to detect the power relations and the conflict issues related to this intention, which are of concern to the subaltern.[63]

These challenges are further complicated when studying the subaltern due to the latter's frequent inaccessibility to researchers. However, what is evident in the studies regarding intent in the conceptual study of resistance is the idea that while 'mass-based movements and revolutions clearly represent resistance, the intent behind such acts is a non-issue.'[64] In contention with this view, I propose that the study of the intentions of the subaltern taking part in such movements, as well as the discourses of relevant organisations and institutions, ought to be of scholarly interest as they can reveal valuable information of grassroots support as well as the specific subjectivities that instigate resistance. Anthropologist Sherry Ortner thus correctly highlights the existing shortcoming in the study of resistance due to its 'ethnographic refusal' in the neglect of the resisting subjects' spatio-temporal as well as cultural differences:

> Resistance studies are thin because they are ethnographically thin: thin on the internal politics of dominated groups, thin on the cultural richness of those groups, thin on the subjectivity—the intentions, desires, fears, projects—of the actors engaged in these dramas.[65]

My proposed conceptualisation of resistance therefore moves beyond the dominant understandings in the field, which even enable suggestions that resistance can be 'unconscious',[66] which is problematic as it again risks turning the study of resistance into a

[62] Ibid. p. 140.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Hollander and Einwohner. "Conceptualizing Resistance." p. 542.
[65] Ortner, Sherry B. 1995. "Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37 (1). pp. 173-193. p. 190.
[66] Pile, Steve. 1997. "Introduction", in Pile, Steve and Michael Keith (eds.) *Geographies of Resistance*. London: Routledge. pp. 1-32. p. 25.

tool for the retrospective legitimation of causes. Instead, I intend to treat resistance as a *conscious* act of defiance.

What is more, I believe that most of the aforementioned definitions fail to conceptually distinguish resistance from other acts of opposition, such as 'dissenting', 'negating', 'countering', 'contradicting', 'opposing', 'rejecting' and so forth, and therefore the application of resistance to political struggles faces the risk of turning it into an apologist tool for the researcher; if resistance is not an analytically meaningful category, its use is as unjustifiable as using the terms 'terrorism' and 'fundamentalism' in academic research. As a subaltern practice, resistance must therefore be conceptually distinguishable from other forms of subaltern defiance, such as for example bread riots and other scarcity related riots and case-specific dissidence and protests.

Existing understandings of resistance have also suffered conceptually from being appropriated by Western academics controlling the narrative, thereby shifting the focus from the 20th century struggles of the subaltern to issues concerning the socio-political life of the Western middle classes',[67] or framing resistance through the prism of Western liberal discourse as simply the struggle 'in defence of freedom, democracy and humanity', [68] or for 'equality rights and the rule of law'.[69] Without denying that these *can* be objectives of resistance, my work goes against this trend, and builds on Howard Caygill's seminal work *Resistance: A Philosophy of Defiance,* which draws broadly on resistance philosophy *across* the world. Perhaps unintended, the exclusion of the subaltern in the study of subaltern politics at the conceptual stage has thus far been a major shortcoming in the study of resistance and is a challenge I intend to take on.

[67] See reviews of existing literature in Hollander and Einwohner. "Conceptualizing Resistance.". pp. 533-554; Baaz, Lilja and Schulz. "Defining and Analyzing "Resistance"". pp. 139-143.
[68] Pile. "Introduction," p. 1.
[69] O'Brien. "Rightful Resistance". p. 34.

Therefore, following Daniel Miller and Michael Rowlands, I wish to stress the importance of transcending previous conceptualisations of resistance that have often been rooted in the Western experience of 'modernisation', meaning that 'the classic sociological traditions of the 19th century, stemming from Marx, Freud, Comte, Weber and Nietzsche, have specific preoccupations that cannot be universalized.'[70] A concept of resistance thus has to partially divest itself from such readings; moving beyond the Western prism of modernity and other culturally-specific conceptualisations is particularly important when it comes to resistance, as it is:

> … closer to the pre-modern doctrine of the virtues than to the modern value of freedom: it responds to an implacable demand for justice with actions characterized by fortitude or the ability to sustain courage over a long period of time without any certainty of outcome, along with prudence in the choice and deployment of limited means.[71]

This understanding makes resistance conceptually distinguishable from other forms of subaltern opposition as it is the subaltern struggle for *justice*. My understanding of resistance thus deviates from that of Foucault, and Gramsci, and albeit at some remove, resembles more Ranajit Guha's conceptualisation of resistance as a practice that seeks not necessarily to challenge hegemony, but instead domination. [72] This reading, however, differs from Guha as it does not *necessarily* require power asymmetries for resistance to be performed and espoused; the perception of an unjust status quo is a sufficient requirement to generate resistance.[73] In other words, building on Manuel Castells conceptualisation of resistance identity, resistance is here understood to be 'generated by those actors who are in positions/conditions devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination thus building

[70] Miller, Daniel, and Michael Rowlands. 1995. *Domination and Resistance*. Hoboken: Routledge. p. 3.
[71] Caygill. *On Resistance*. p. 97.
[72] Guha, Ranajit. 1997. *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India*. Convergences. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. p. 23.
[73] Conceptualisations of resistance that transcends power dynamics appear to be in the making, with notable scholars such as Amal Sa'ad Ghorayeb's forthcoming *Hizbullah's Post-Resistance: From National Resistance to Regional Power*, Palgrave-Macmillan, appearing to be currently formulating a concept of post-resistance which is yet to be published, see: Medium.com. 2016. "As Assad Gains Power, so Does Hezbollah". Online: <https://medium.com/latterly/as-assad-gains-power-so-does-hezbollah-4845bfdd922b> Accessed on 20 July 2018.

trenches of resistance and survival'.[74] While this is generated ultimately to achieve justice, it is worth stressing that justice is not a concept I intend to universalise, which in itself ought to be kept vague in order to function as an anchoring and comprehensive aspect in the discursive space of resistance. What is more, its limited content will also be 'invested with new contents depending on the situation being investigated', and as such seeking to find 'absolute and unchanging definitions of these concepts that will be applicable to all societies' is simply futile.[75] Any conceptualisation has to accommodate spatio-temporal as well as cultural differences in the boundaries it draws; as such, a conceptualisation of resistance ought to function more as an analytical category rather than a comprehensive theory that seeks to provide a universal explanation of the phenomenon.

What is more, resistance is also a justice-oriented revisionist practice. Its revisionism is seen in Edward Said's attempt at analytically distinguishing two ideal types of resistance which will be adopted in this thesis; the immediate reaction, primary resistance, and its continuation in the form of a revisionist project; secondary resistance. Whereas the former aims to eradicate a physical presence of the 'other', the latter can be understood to approach a more abstracted 'other', as it produces its own specific politics of restoration and creation of community in which it establishes 'new and independent stakes' that the resisters pursue,[76] or 'advance[s] its own claims', in the words of Scott. Caygill observes a similar phenomenon in his study of resistance subjectivities, using the examples of Frantz Fanon, Carl von Clausewitz, Mahatma Gandhi, Mao Zedong and the Zapatistas, to show that while this subjectivity might be initially reactive in its emergence in relation/response to an injustice, it nonetheless needs to 'metamorphose into an affirmative, inventive resistance that does not just react to an intolerable predicament but transforms itself and its condition

[74] Castells, Manuel. 2010. *The Power of Identity*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell. p. 8.
[75] Miller and Rowlands. *Domination and Resistance*. p. 4.
[76] Said, Edward W. 1994. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books. p. 210.

through the work of resistance', to further realise the capacity to resist.[77] Therefore, whereas resistance in general is relational, thereby requiring an 'other' to resist, that 'other's' importance is reduced in secondary resistance.

These two ideal types of resistance are of course not exclusive to each other, and can happen at the same time, but nonetheless help us appreciate the revisionist nature of resistance where it transcends simply being a reaction to domination and for example 'the humiliation of colonialism',[78] and becomes conceptually distinguishable as it is also a revisionist project for an 'alternative way of conceiving human history.'[79] In many respects, the difference between the two is not qualitative as much as it is spatial, as secondary resistance approaches a more abstracted 'other' and perhaps a less discernible form of injustice. Nevertheless, justice is critical for distinguishing secondary resistance from any other revisionism, something that Fanon also highlighted when writing about French compensation received after resisting the German occupation in World War Two.[80] Whereas justice was granted to the French in the form of war reparations after the war, the subaltern is forced to continue resisting, not for the pursuit of an utopian ideal, but for justice which is not being realised, a constant reality of the postcolonial world. [81] Moreover, this pursuit of justice is not limited to political activism and discourse but will inevitably in many cases, such as de-colonialisation, also include violence.[82]

This extended pursuit of justice, which often occurred in the 20th century after the formal independence of a colony, or the expulsion of a foreign presence, can be better understood using what Adom Getachew has been termed 'worldmaking' in her study of

[77] Caygill. *On Resistance*. pp. 98-9.
[78] Said. *Culture and Imperialism*. p. 210.
[79] Ibid. p. 216.
[80] Ibid. p. 210; Fanon, Frantz, and Jean-Paul Sartre. 2001. *The Wretched of the Earth*. London: Penguin books. p. 101.
[81] Fanon and Sartre. *The Wretched of the Earth*. pp. 101-2.
[82] Ibid. p. 27; See also: Fanon, Frantz. 2007. *A Dying Colonialism*. New York: Grove Press. p. 3.

anticolonial nationalism in the Black Atlantic. Here, the initial objectives of resistance (primary resistance) are reinvented to transcend the national territories and 'to insist that the achievement of this ideal required juridical, political, and economic institutions in the international realm that would secure non-domination.'[83] The continuation of resistance beyond primary resistance is often the product of 'unequal integration' of post-colonial states:

> Distinct from hegemony, unequal integration as a constitutive practice of international law produces differential legal and political standing in international society. This unequal international standing functioned as the enabling background of European imperialism. It coincided with and facilitated political and economic domination … Because this mode of imperial domination extended beyond alien rule, decolonization could not be limited to securing independence from the colonial master. Instead, it had to overcome the background conditions of unequal integration and international hierarchy that facilitated domination. Anticolonial worldmaking—the project of overcoming international hierarchy and constituting a post-imperial world—took the form of securing international nondomination.[84]

Seeking to change not only the immediate conditions of the subaltern, but also the world they are situated within is thus another key aspect of secondary resistance that I seek to demonstrate using the case of Iran. This project, however, should not be limited exclusively to the political, legal and economic realm, but also the cultural, and as such, secondary resistance and worldmaking endeavours resemble Herbert Marcuse's 'Great Refusal', as the 'modes in which man and things are made to appear, to sing and sound and speak, are modes of refuting, breaking, and recreating [the] factual existence' of an unjust status quo.[85] Resistance thus also engages with questions of authenticity and positionality as a response to injustice, and the enduring pursuit of an authentic, respectable and independent self, constitutes key aspect of this ideal type of resistance.

It is therefore clear that resistance *is* an important politico-cultural phenomenon conceptually distinguishable from other forms of subaltern defiance. Resistance is a

[83] Getachew, Adom. 2019. *Worldmaking After Empire*. Oxford: Princeton University Press. p. 2.
[84] Ibid. p. 18; p. 23.
[85] Marcuse, Herbert, and Douglas Kellner. 2007. *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. London: Routledge. p. 66..

conscious defiant justice-oriented revisionist practice emerging from the resistance subjectivity of its practitioners. In the particular Iranian case of resistance which will be studied in subsequent chapters, I intend to demonstrate the emergence of a discourse of resistance as a strategy for survival for the Iranian nation amidst what is perceived as physically present unjust forces of domination (primary resistance), and its evolution into becoming a discourse of authenticity and justice by exhibiting itself in increasingly religious and normative terms as the centre ground between what it perceives as different deviations towards materialism (secondary resistance). With regards to authenticity, it is worth stressing that authenticity ought to be conceptually understood as an ideal objective, which might translate to specific demands and objectives, but similar to justice, tends to remain abstract due to the contested nature regarding what constitutes authentic, but also due to the fact that it tends to function as a discursive nodal point for a larger political project rather than a clear policy objective.[86] The significance of authenticity discourses in this context is therefore not their detailed content as much as it is the stipulation of authenticity as an objective to achieve and/or maintain the agency of the subaltern. While historical, political, cultural and intellectual developments change the shape and form of this resistance, what remains consistent is the nucleus of defiance against external forces of domination and destruction, a defiance which emerges from a perceived oppression of the self and subsequently gives rise to a revisionism that is still directed at overcoming the unacceptable status quo and achieving justice, first in the domestic arena and later on the world stage, *irrespective* of power relations.

[86] For more, see: Mirsepassi, Ali. 2000. *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 127.

Resistance in Modern Iran: Structure and Methodology

The historiographical approach of this thesis observes the emergence of a discourse of resistance within the Iranian opposition to the monarchy in response to Iran's weakness vis-à-vis the British and Russian Empires at the turn of the 20th century, but as the century progresses, begins to reject power dynamics and generate a more explicit revisionist discourse during the Cold War, when it seeks to assume the moral high ground and achieve justice through worldmaking by revising the status quo shaped by the unjust forces of domination that have constituted the international world orders of the 20th century.

Therefore, as will be apparent in the subsequent chapters, resistance continued well after the social and political uprooting of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and continued to reformulate itself over the subsequent four decades, though from the perspective of being the rulers in power domestically, and a rising revisionist force internationally. Looking back at nearly half a century of the Islamic Republic's resistance politics, its position in West Asia suggests that the considerable scholarly emphasis on 'exporting the revolution' might be more a consequence of researchers accepting and/or misinterpreting government officials' rhetoric and slogans at face value, rather than a result of the discourse's actual political impact in the region. Whereas the Islamic Revolution with regards to state structures has never been exported, the resistance discourse of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been exported, embraced, and is growing in currency as it is influencing the resistance politics of other Muslim majority countries such as Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Bahrain, and Yemen. Despite this, a lacuna remains in existing scholarship with regards to the history, evolution, and current form of this particular politics of resistance in modern Iran at the intellectual, political and grassroots level. The aim of this thesis is to fill that gap.

However, whilst the focus of this thesis is limited to one grand discourse of resistance which has shaped the behaviour of both the pre-revolutionary opposition, but also post-

revolutionary establishment in Iran, it is important to acknowledge that this resistance is one of numerous discourses of resistance espoused by Iranians, both from the position of, and in opposition to power. While it is certain that resistance has been performed and espoused by various societal actors against domestic elements, from the political systems that have governed the country, to gender norms and policies, lack of social justice and corruption, these aspects of resistance, which have arguably received greater focus in the secondary literature,[87] are not the primary focus of this thesis. Instead, it will focus primarily on resistance that culminated into the worldmaking ideology that is contributing to shaping regional politics in West Asia today, which its propagators understand to be mainly external forces of domination and injustice.

Moreover, while it is evident that covering all varieties of resistance that have been expressed and performed in Iran over a century is not feasible, word limits also force this thesis to narrow its focus to the **discourse** of State Resistance itself, giving less attention to its practice and other aspects, particularly as it becomes an establishment discourse after 1979, espoused and practiced by a wide range of individuals and institutions. It will seek to provide sufficient context for the reader to be able to appreciate those key contexts and practices of the discourses of resistance covered in the subsequent chapters that I understand to be either key aspects of the genealogy of the discourse of State Resistance in Iran, or key discourses that dominate the Islamic Republic's politics of defiance today. However, this thesis's subordination of 'actual' history to intellectual history is not a rehearsal of the old Orientalist approach to the Muslim Majority World where one is supposedly able to access the 'essence' of Muslim societies through textual analysis. Instead, it ought to be read as intellectual history which can accompany the slightly more developed field of modern

[87] See section "Resistance in Iranian studies" and footnote 3.

Iranian historiography and political science scholarship in the attempt to improve our understandings of contemporary Iranian history and politics.

While Chapter 1 (this introduction) critiques the existing literature concerning resistance in Iran and deals with the conceptual challenges of studying the phenomenon, Chapter 2 will fill the scholarly gap by constructing a genealogy of 'Neither East nor West', which I understand to be the embodiment of pre-revolutionary State Resistance as an intellectual discourse. In particular, it will transcend the reductionist approach to State Resistance critiqued above, especially the tendency to reduce the intellectual ancestry of State Resistance to a very limited number, and often not sufficiently representative number of intellectuals and oppositional figures. Instead, it will use parliamentary records of the Parliamentary Library of Iran to survey the parliamentary speeches of Constitutionalists such as Sayyed Hossein Modarres and Mohammad Mosaddeq to study the resistance discourses espoused from the Majles before the coup in 1953. Publications from the National Library of Iran, the National Archives, as well as archives outside of the country such as Manchester University's archive of Iranian newspapers will be used to study nationalist socialists such as Khalil Maleki and Mohammad Ali Khonji, related movements such as the National Resistance Movement, Freedom Movement of Iran, Devotees of Islam, and speeches and publications of more recent revolutionary figures such as Mostafa Chamran, Abolhassan Bani Sadr, Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Khomeini as the discourse of State Resistance was forced out of the Majles and went increasingly underground after the Anglo-American coup in 1953. In doing so, this Chapter will argue that the discourse of resistance emerged at the turn of the 20th century and largely revolved around contending discourses of non-alignment that were crystallised under the dictum 'Neither East nor West' which kept reformulating itself until the passing of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989. This discourse of resistance is thus traced as emerging among intellectual circles opposing the monarchy and

became a platform whereby religious, national, sectarian, and modernist identities and ideologies met, overlapped, and were thus reformulated into a more synthesised set of beliefs that took over the state, but continued to be contested before stabilising under the auspices of Ayatollah Khomeini until 1989. In short, Chapter 2 is the genealogy of Neither East nor West, the resistance subjectivity of the Islamic Republic, in which resistance is studied as an *oppositional* discourse.

I will conceptualise the journey of these ideas using Ludwig Fleck's concept of 'thought collective', understood as communities of people exchanging ideas and interacting intellectually, thereby constructing collective convictions, perceptions and vocabulary (linguistic habits)—the totality of which is understood here as discourse—to conceptualise how various oppositional groups developed a specific resistance discourse that would enter the post-revolutionary state.[88] Using this approach, the idiosyncratic eclecticism of the State Resistance subjectivity will be presented as emerging from the interaction of several thought collectives (oppositional groups and movements), who exchanged their respective discourses. As Fleck highlights, however, 'words change their meaning, the ideas obtain a different style colouring, the sentences receive another meaning, the opinions a new value',[89] something which will be apparent as key concepts of non-alignment such as neutrality and independence change their meaning as they travel across the political space of 20th century Iran. Importantly, individuals can be members of several—and as will be apparent in Chapter 2—even contradictory thought collectives, thereby enabling inter and trans-community exchange of ideas and the creation of broader, less specific thought collectives.

[88] Fleck, Ludwig. 1936 [1986]. "The Problem of Epistemology", in Cohen, Robert S. and Schnelle, Thomas (eds.) *Cognitions and Facts: Materials on Ludwig Fleck*. Dordrecht: Riedel. pp. 79-112. p. 94. However, Fleck's theory suffers from overemphasising the coherence of the thought collectives to the point that individual variations and deviations are virtually deemed impossible, and in his scepticism to the longevity and impact of cooperation and synthetisation of several thought collectives, see: Fleck, "The Problem of Epistemology": p. 82; p. 105.
[89] Ibid. p. 85.

According to Fleck such thought collectives are often short lived, but nevertheless may generate a new set of collective convictions, perceptions, and vocabulary,[90] which in this case is the resistance subjectivity that entered the state institutions in 1979. Importantly, in using this conceptual approach when approaching the aforementioned sources, Chapter 2 does not necessarily suggest a coherent intellectual ancestry of a discourse of resistance in modern Iran, but instead seeks to provide a more accurate account of the relationship between the individuals and the ideas that emerged, overlapped and reformulated in the decades that preceded the revolution, before turning into the resistance discourse of the Islamic Republic of Iran which got consolidated towards the end of the 1980s.

Chapter 3 will cease to use thought collectives as the analytical framework, as I argue that the post-Khomeini era was characterised by the consolidation of the political system and the emergence of what can be called a political establishment. Therefore, the three decades covered in this Chapter will offer an examination of the transformation of resistance as an oppositional discourse in the course of it becoming an *establishment* discourse. More specifically, it intends to study the specific arenas that for the past 30 years have been utilised by the Islamic Republic to produce and reproduce its particular discourse of resistance whilst having to deal with the recalibrations, contradictions and paradoxes emerging whenever a political discourse is forced to adapt to the realities of being in power; a fact of politics in general, but revolutionary states in particular.[91] Rather than assuming that the discursive practices of the Islamic Republic largely constitute a coherent continuation and/or cynical appropriation of its revolutionary intellectuals, this Chapter will demonstrate how changing circumstances as well as intellectual development have caused the discourse to shift away from being power-centric to become an increasingly normative discourse. Needless to say,

[90] Ibid. p. 103; p. 105
[91] Burns, Gene. 1996. "Ideology, Culture, and Ambiguity: The Revolutionary Process in Iran," *Theory and Society*. 25: pp. 349-388. pp. 375-8.

the middle ground assumed under the banner of 'Neither East nor West' is not a discourse of moderation, but a normative one; it is a revolutionary commitment to a self-formulated understanding of justice amidst what were perceived to be the unjust deviant forces that drive and dominate the world. In doing so, this Chapter will go against the common trend in Western scholarship of reserving resistance to marginalised individuals and non-state actors within a country—perhaps due to the fact that Western states for the past few centuries have found themselves at the top of international hierarchies—and elevate the study of resistance to a subaltern state entity that is the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Following a similar source base and methodological framework as Chapter 2, Chapter 3 will focus more on parliamentary records, publications, and speeches by the establishment, specifically the Leader of the Revolution, four presidential administrations, and the Majles, but also other senior officials in notable institutions such as the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and the Popular Mobilisation Unit. As the establishment discourse of the Islamic Republic is more revisionist (secondary) than reactive (primary), this Chapter will transcend reductive readings of post-revolutionary politics as simply seeking to achieve the mission statement put forward by revolutionary intellectuals in the 1970s, or the betrayal of these ideas. It will instead argue that this era is characterised by the Islamic Republic establishment's attempt to remain true to the values of the revolution by 'remaining Neither East nor West', but that the discourse of resistance which emerged in opposition to the state and the great powers before 1979 would continuously adapt to the new circumstances of a rapidly changing world where it would dynamically present and adapt its 'great refusal' to what is still today believed to be an unjust global status quo.

Having shown what particular discourse of resistance the establishment of the Islamic Republic seeks to generate and internalise among the masses; this thesis was intended to have a fourth Chapter which would assess the result of the establishment

discourse at the grassroots level in order to overcome the 'ethnographic refusal' which has and continues to impede resistance studies. Specifically, this Chapter was supposed to conduct a political ethnography of grassroots participants in the post-revolutionary resistance politics of the state, specifically Iranian volunteer participants in Lebanon's Hezbollah, Defenders of the Shrines in Syria and Iraq, as well as lower ranking Basij and Revolutionary Guard members based in Iran, in order to gain a better understanding of their internal politics, intentions, desires, concerns and visions with regards to Iran's resistance politics.

The absence of substantial and influential ethnographies on modern Iran is not without its practical explanations, such as the risks involved in carrying out such work, as well as the difficulties involved in gaining permissions and access for Western-based students of contemporary Iran. However, while these limitations did not apply to me personally with regards to the groups mentioned above, I believed it was not only possible, but in fact critical to document the resistance subjectivity of the Iranians on the grassroots level that are taking part in the revisionist project of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The method chosen to assess the resistance discourse on grassroots level differs from, for example, semi-structured interviews and oral history as it transcends only enquiring (interviewing) to also include examining material in the immediate surroundings as well as participant observation, due to its ability to appreciate several dimensions that are of analytical value, and to access knowledge otherwise not available from existing source material accessible to students of modern Iran.[92] As such, Chapter 4 would have constituted the most comprehensive study of resistance in this thesis.

However, due to limitations imposed on academic freedom in the United Kingdom, especially following its government's revision of the Terrorism Act (2000) in 2019 which

[92] Wolcott, Harry F. 2008. *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing*. Lanham: Altamira Press. p. 48.

saw Hezbollah being added to the list of terrorist organisations, as well as consultation with my supervisor and the lawyers of the University of Oxford, it was concluded that this section should be left out until a time when I am no longer required to travel to the United Kingdom in order to avoid potential prosecution for conducting academic research. The research for this section will hopefully be conducted after the completion of this doctoral thesis as I intend to publish this research as a more comprehensive monograph on the discourse of State Resistance in modern Iran.

Nevertheless, the totality of the study of these aspects of resistance is not to suggest that these are the only forms of resistance, but instead to function as an instigator for research on subaltern politics in various forms by using the subaltern in both the conceptualisation and interrogation of resistance. The resisting subaltern accounts for a significant portion of men and women involved in challenging what they perceive to be an unjust world order, whether internationally where great powers have a direct military, political or cultural presence, or domestically against regimes, or neo-colonial relations imposed by the hegemons and great powers on the subaltern. Thus, whether with respect to its military, political or cultural aspects, improving our knowledge of this phenomenon is justified not only on the grounds of its academic interest, but also due to its intrinsic practical importance for our future.

Chapter 2: Oppositional Resistance and its Islamic Revolution (1921-1989)

Introduction

Situated above the entrance of the Foreign Ministry Headquarters in Tehran today, the Islamic Republic's prevailing foreign policy dictum announces itself: 'Neither East nor West: An Islamic Republic' (*na sharqi, na gharbi: jomhuri-ye Eslāmi*). Being the product of a revolution filled with a plethora of intellectual discourses and slogans from across the political spectrum, espousing anything from claims for civil liberties to eschatological projections, 'Neither East nor West' became the slogan which made its way to the foreign office and would go on to define the boundaries in which Iranian foreign policy was made. At its heart, 'Neither East nor West' is a discourse of resistance framed in what at the time of its emergence was the popular language of non-alignment. Nevertheless, this Chapter will demonstrate that it is much more than just a foreign policy slogan of non-alignment in the strict sense – a prevalent misunderstanding which has resulted in claims that it is simply Iran's version of 'third world politics' as discussed in Chapter 1, or on the other hand simply a discourse of religious particularism where it is framed as another word for 'Islamic unidimensionalism'.[93] Others have inexplicably traced it to the foreign policy of the Qajar state,[94] while only a few scholars have been able to accurately trace the lineage back from

[93] Parvin, Manouchehr and Vaziri, Mostafa. 1992. "Islamic Man and Society in the Islamic Republic of Iran", in Farsoun, Samih K, and Mashayekhi, Mehrdad. (eds.) *Iran: Political Culture in the Islamic Republic*. London: Routledge. pp. 80-92. p. 85. See also: Sadri. *Revolutionary States, Leaders, and Foreign Relations*. p. 89.

[94] Ward, Steven R. 2009. *Immortal: A Military History of Iran and Its Armed Forces*. Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press. p. 313.

the discourse to the foreign policy doctrine of Mohammad Mosaddeq—who as we will show in this Chapter was *not* its originator—though without further elaboration.[95]

I will demonstrate that 'Neither East nor West' to a large extent manifests itself as the embodiment of the discourse of State Resistance, which constituted an important part of the ideology of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and that the Iranian slogan for non-alignment imposes specific requisites on the concept of independence which constitute a fundamental component of the resistance subjectivity which was to shape the perceptions and consequently inform the policies of individuals who entered state institutions after 1979. To do so, this Chapter seeks to divorce, though not separate, non-alignment—in the Iranian case at least—from the Cold War, and instead examine it as a discourse of 'true independence' that evolved in a dialectic relationship between anti-imperialism and discourses of authenticity. As mentioned in Chapter 1, authenticity in this context ought to be understood as the pursuit of an objective usually framed in abstract terms such as 'Iranian', and 'Islamic', with its exact meaning and content being a constant ground for contestation and mobilisation, even today. The synthesis of this dialectic would become what was, and as subsequent chapters will demonstrate, still is a critical component of what is understood as 'true independence' by the Islamic Republic. Therefore, rather than simply being a foreign policy doctrine, Iranian non-alignment, espoused as 'Neither East nor West' is a discourse of resistance which holds rigid qualifications for what constitutes independence which includes not only non-alignment in its commonly known form, but also requires a level of authenticity from the performers of State Resistance.

While several aspects of this discourse have been researched separately, especially discourses of authenticity,[96] such works tend to only scratch the surface and fail to examine

[95] Panah. *The Islamic Republic and the World*. p. 52; Ehteshami, Anoushiravan. 1995. *After Khomeini: The Iranian Second Republic*. London: Routledge. p. 130.
[96] On authenticity discourses using Ali Shariati and Jalal Al-Ahmad, see: Mirsepassi. *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*.

the historical context of foreign policy doctrines that enable us to understand authenticity discourses as the substance of 'Neither East nor West. On the other hand, State Resistance to empire which was to dominate the state discourse of the Islamic Republic did not simply emerge from the collective memory from a handful of 19th and 20th century events such as the Tobacco Revolt and the Anglo-American coup, but instead was also shaped by broader global and regional dynamics of its time, such as the discovery of oil in the West Asia, the fall of the Russian Empire and the rise of the Soviet Union, Iran's gradual integration into the global economy which coincided with two World Wars, and the Cold War.

In following this trajectory, this Chapter intends to observe how a particular discourse of neutralism emerges at the turn of the 20th century as 'neutrality' (*bitarafi),* before formulating itself as a doctrine of negative balancing (*siyāsat-e movāzeneh-ye 'adami),* negative equilibrium (*siyāsat-e movāzeneh-ye manfi),*[97] third force (*niruye sevvom)* over the first half of the 20th century. While the political vocabulary of non-alignment and resistance was largely established by the constitutionalist forces in the Majles, more revolutionary discourses espousing authenticity and particularism were brewing underground and reached the mainstream following the coup in 1953, which enabled it to travel across several thought collectives, some of them situated on opposing sides of the political spectrum, before reaching Ayatollah Khomeini's political circle in the latter 1970s. By the 1970s under his leadership, the discourse became formulated in more particularistic terms in which the authentic and comprehensive nature of resistance was stressed*,* resulting in claims that the revisionist force which was to challenge the unjust status quo ought to be neither Eastern, nor Western, but a truly independent Islamic Republic.

[97] *Siyāsāt-e movāzeneh-ye manfi* and *movāzeneh-ye 'adami* means the same but will be translated differently (negative equilibrium and negative balance), here to distinguish between Modarres' early conceptualisation and Mosaddeq's doctrine from the 14th Majles onwards in order to distinguish two chronological periods in the development of this concept rather than two distinct intellectual iterations of the concept.

What is critical to stress is that the malleable, evolving and sometimes even contradictory character of the resistance discourses of non-alignment that will be discussed in this Chapter does not in any way undermine their status as discourses of non-alignment:

> It is not unreasonable to say that there are as many definitions of nonalignment as there are nonaligned countries, and possibly even more. Most probably every statesman of these countries believes his own version to be the most adequate definition of the concept of nonalignment ... In a certain sense it can be said that the policy of nonalignment has permanently been undergoing definition, reexamination and criticism, while resisting arbitrary assessments.[98]

Yugoslavian Ambassador to the United Nations, Leo Mates' caution against arbitrary assessment, and acknowledgment of the different understandings of non-alignment also alludes to the inaccuracies of contemporary understandings of non-alignment that are more often than not framed simply and exclusively as a Cold War foreign policy doctrine of neutrality. While Iran was quick to accede to the Non-Aligned Movement on 9 September 1979, only months after the victory of the revolution,[99] this Chapter will demonstrate that this particular understanding of non-alignment transcends mainstream understandings of the concept to the point that its use has perhaps caused more confusion than clarity.

While obvious starting points for the study of modern Iranian history in general, and for Iranian resistance politics in particular, are the Russo-Iranian Wars of 1804-13 and 1826-28 (as the roots of the Iranian victim mentality and Qajar decline), and the Tobacco Revolt of 1890-91 (as the prelude the Constitutional Movement which determined the shape of modern oppositional politics in Iran), these critical junctures can at best be qualified as proto-resistance discourses due to the subordinate role of justice. The former is evident in the language of the actual fatwas declaring jihad against the Russian Empire's invasion of Iran which do not share many similarities with the resistance discourse that dominated the

[98] Mates, Leo. 1972. *Nonalignment Theory and Current Policy*. New York: Institute of International Politics and Economics; Oceana Publications. pp. 80-81.
[99] *Documents of the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries*. Retrieved from: <http://cns.miis.edu/nam/documents/Official_Document/6th_Summit_FD_Havana_Declaration_1979_Whole.pdf> Accessed on 29 April 2017. p. 6.

oppositional politics of the 20th century. Instead, the fatwas are more concentrated on fighting the 'abject infidels' (*koffār-e le'ām*) and defending the glory of Islam.[100] No attention is paid to Iran as a political entity, but instead the fatwa declaring *jihad* against the second invasion declares that:

> It is thus mandatory for those capable, to abide by his commands, and take part in his army and participate in jihad and defend against the abject infidel with spears and swords of revenge so that the splendour of Islam will not be undermined, and the signs of *halal* and *haram* will not be destroyed.[101]

While certain similarities in rhetoric will be seen in the religious particularistic trajectory studied in subsequent parts of this Chapter, these are only limited to a few nodal points such as the Muslim-infidel binary and occasional mentions of Islamic glory by the Devotees of Islam (*Fadā'iyān-e Eslām).* However, these fatwas marked the first instances in Twelver Shi'i history after the Great Occultation of Imam Mahdi (ajtf) where *jihad* was declared. Declarations of *jihad* would later become a consistent tool used in the performance of resistance in Iran, and as such, the Russo-Iranian Wars mark the beginning of increased clerical participation and religious legitimacy to State Resistance.

The next episode often cited in relation to the creation of the country's resistance politics was the Tobacco Revolt, which occurred in an era characterised by the Qajar dynasty granting concessions to foreign companies. However, while historians have emphasised the opposition to these concessions, and the popular defiance, which reached its crux following the famous fatwa of Ayatollah Mirza-ye Shirazi banning all consumption of tobacco in 1890, it is the intellectual foundations of the fatwa which make the best case for recognising it as a part of the ancestry of State Resistance. Rather than recycling pseudo-historiographical accounts such as Fereydoun Adamiyat's rejection of the fatwa's validity,[102] but studying the

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[100] Najafi and Haqani. *Tārikh va tahavolāt-e siyāsi-ye Irān*. p. 120.
[101] Ibid. pp. 120-122.
[102] Moaddel, Mansoor. 1992. "Shi'i Political Discourse and Class Mobilization in the Tobacco Movement of 1890-1892." *Sociological Forum*, 7(3), pp. 447–468. p. 465; See also: Lambton, Ann K. 1965. "The Tobacco Regie: Prelude to Revolution I." *Studia Islamica,* 22. pp. 119-157. p. 145; Mostowfi, Abdollah, 1341/1962, *Tārikhe edāri va ejtemā'i-ye dowreh-ye Qājār yā sharhe zendegāniye man*. Tehran: Entesharat Zavvār. p.

literature written in Samara at the time by Ayatollah Mirza-ye Shirazi's students such as Shaykh Fazlollah Nuri, one is able to contextualise the fatwa, not only as the 'height of such politicized *marja'iyyat'* at the time,[103] but also a strategy conceived to resist the economic interference of colonial powers which had blighted the country's economy since the Russo-Iranian Wars.[104] More specifically, the Tobacco Revolt is reflective of increasing awareness of the economic impact of imperialism and foreign domination, thereby enabling a multidimensional approach to resistance which goes beyond ending a foreign military presence. While the participants in the *jihad* against the Russian's and the Tobacco Revolt perceived themselves to be victims of the same curse as the later protagonists of resistance—namely western imperialism—doctrines of resistance that sought to resist encroachment and achieve justice for the Iranian nation—in other words, doctrines that can be termed resistance doctrines in the full sense of the concept—were not to emerge until after the Pahlavi Coup of 1921.

The First Part of this Chapter will therefore start by assessing the first tradition of resistance which was situated in the Majles, namely the constitutionalist tradition of resistance best exemplified in the doctrines of Ayatollah Modarres in the 4th Majles (1921-1923), where he broke with the submissive discourses of the Qajar Dynasty and formulated the doctrine of negative balancing as a doctrine of resistance rather than submission. It will then demonstrate how the call for resistance to preserve the independence of the nation and its authentic identity was continued and further popularised by Mohammad Mosaddeq in the 14th (1944-1946), 16th (1950-1951) and 17th (1951-1953) onwards as negative equilibrium.

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471. More recently, attempts have been made to challenge its validity by using both Adamiyat but also Ebrahim Teymuri's scepticism regarding the timing in which it arrived, see: Soudavar Farmanfarmaian, Fatema. 2014. "Revisiting and Revising the Tobacco Rebellion". *Iranian Studies* 47(4), pp. 595–625. Nonetheless, none of these approaches have produced concrete evidence of fabrication and remain limited to speculation.

[103] Amanat. *Apocalyptic Shi'ism*. p. 186

[104] Lambton, Ann K. S. 1987. *Qajar Persia: Eleven Studies*. London: Tauris. p. 120.

While the intellectual trajectories of Modarres and Mosaddeq were instances of primary resistance, this section will also show the emergence of secondary resistance witnessed in the writings of Khalil Maleki under the proto-non-alignment theory of 'the third force in particular' (*niru-ye sevvom be ma'nā-ye 'akhas*), and 'the third force in general' (*niru-ye sevvom be ma'nā-ye 'amam*) in 1951 that sought to resist foreign encroachment, as well as developing an independent path forward for the country. However, while there is no doubt that Maleki provided a conceptually comprehensive understanding of resistance and non-alignment, which the opposition would build on later, the Anglo-American Coup of 1953 marked the beginning of the end of secular[105] discourses of non-alignment who had mostly been limited to the Majles.

Thus, the Second Part of this Chapter will return to the early 1950s to study resistance outside the Majles as an alternative to the secular realm it had been situated in for the first half of the 20th century. Starting with The Devotees of Islam who gradually became enemies of the Mosaddeq government, and even attempted to assassinate several of its members, including Foreign Minister Hossein Fatemi, but whose religious discourse nevertheless was to become crucial to the Islamic Revolution's discourse of State Resistance. Specifically, this section intends to demonstrate that the affective discourse of the Devotees, whose discourse on revolution and Islamic government preceded the rest of the political opposition with almost two decades, marked one of the earliest instances I have been able to find in which the eschatological, religious, and more radical discourses of

[105] The use of 'secular' in this thesis warrants a brief explanation on the recurring challenges of using Western terminology that emerged in a Western context in order to explain a phenomenon in the non-Western world. Even though 'secular' is not analytically accurate, nor able to explain the phenomenon fully, it will still be used here in deference with common usage and due to the lack of a better term to distinguish the diverse movements discussed in Chapter 2 from their more religious counterparts that would become increasingly dominant from the 1970s onwards. However, due to recurrent mistakes and flaws in existing scholarship, it should be stressed here that the use of secular in this thesis to denote the movements should not serve as an indicator for the individuals and movements' position on state-religion relations. For a brief, but helpful discussion on this issue, see: Ghamari-Tabrizi, Behrooz. 2016. *Foucault in Iran: Islamic Revolution after the Enlightenment*. Muslim International. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.p. 82

resistance were espoused within the opposition. In particular, the discourses share some greater similarity with the instances of proto-resistance mentioned in the first section, but perhaps more importantly, with the religious and particularistic and pan-Islamist discourse that would be espoused by the followers of Khomeini from the 1970s onwards.

However, the era of military dictatorship after 1953 also marked the increased religious nature of resistance and non-alignment as the senior members of the Mosaddeq government were arrested and previously less prominent members would continue the resistance underground. Starting with the National Resistance Movement from 1953, and the Freedom Movement of Iran from the 1960s onwards, we see how increasingly religious oppositional figures such as Mehdi Bazargan struggling thereafter to keep what they called 'the path of Mosaddeq' by espousing a minimalist discourse of non-alignment while nonetheless deviating from the strict secular language of the National Front. attempted to continue the path of Mosaddeq, while gradually adding a more sacralised dimension to his primarily secular discourse.

Whilst the Devotees had fallen out with both their contemporary opposition, as well as the establishment, the Resistance Movement and the Freedom Movement appear to have functioned as a bridge between Iran's secular, and the religious resistance within the oppositional movements that are the focus of the third part of this Chapter, as these ideals were to be reproduced by what I have labelled the Revolutionary Movement, an eclectic thought collective consisting of members from all the thought collectives assessed so far, with the addition of Khomeini, Chamran, Bani Sadr and other revolutionary activists and intellectuals, would construct their own ideas of non-alignment for the imminent post-revolutionary state. The late 1970s witnessed the re-emergence of non-alignment in the political discourse, as well as the re-emergence of negative equilibrium. However, by then, the meaning of both concepts was reformulated within the particularistic and religiously

oriented prerequisites put forth by the religious intellectuals, and became discourses propagating resistance, not only against foreign interference in the country, but also against the current world order. Political and economic independence was no longer sufficient, but the very culture, religion and ideology of the state and the nation ought to be independent and authentic to make it possible to attain genuine non-alignment. Thus, Iran, and any other country, the Revolutionary Movement argued, ought to be Islamic in every sense of the word, not Eastern, nor Western, in order to be non-aligned and able to resist the unjust status quo.

This Chapter will then end with a discussion on the Islamic Republic's first decade of resistance, in which Khomeini's inner circle, which I have labelled the 'Thought Collective of the Imam' would go on to crystallise the discourse of 'Neither East nor West' as a justice-oriented revisionist discourse that ought to alter the existing world order through the various arenas made available to the victorious revolutionaries, both domestically and internationally. Although the Khomeinists were in full control of the Iranian state by 1981 at the latest, their resistance discourse continued until after the death of Khomeini in 1989 – partly because of political turmoil and the war with Iraq – to be expressed in the terms of an oppositional rather than a state discourse.

Part 1: Majles Resistance Between the Coups (1923-1953)

It is widely noted in existing scholarship that the decline of the Qajar dynasty, especially in its last decades, was accompanied by a rapid growth and solidification of the country's oppositional politics. However, while major oppositional success was to remain in anticipation for the subsequent decades, several episodes of success, accompanied by tragedy were to occur amidst the consistent oppositional struggle that characterised 20th century Iranian politics. A notable example of this was seen in the Constitutional Revolution,

when Mozaffar al-Din Shah signed the decree which facilitated the creation of the first Majles on August 9, 1906,[106] only to be countered by his successor, Mohammad Ali Shah's coup two years later which marked the beginning of the country's civil war euphemistically known as the era of 'lesser despotism' (*estebdād-e saghir*).[107] Defeated by the constitutionalist forces within a year, Mohammad Ali Shah was replaced by his 11-year-old son, Ahmad Shah, which marked the nadir of the Qajar's decline.[108] By the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Iran witnessed the military occupation by the British Empire in the South, the Russian Empire in the North, while the Ottoman Empire made a number of military campaigns in the West of the country.[109] While the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 resulted in the withdrawal of the Russian imperial presence in Northern Iran,[110] British interference and domination persisted, and reached its climax in 1919 when Prime Minister Vosuq al-Dowleh signed—but was unable to ratify due to Majles resistance—the Anglo-Persian treaty. Had it been ratified; it would have granted the British Empire significant control over the domestic affairs of the country.[111]

The imperial trauma, lack of political centralisation and stability resulted in the increased perception among the political class in Iran that, 'only a strong military leader could give Iran the unity, strength, and modernity that the Constitutionalists had sought'.[112]

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[106] Abrahamian, Ervand. 1979. "The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran". *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10 (3): pp. 381–414. p. 395; Bayat, Mangol. 1991. *Iran's First Revolution: Shi'ism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 138; p. 232.
[107] Cronin, Stephanie, 2010. "The Constitutional Revolution, Popular Politics and State-Building in Iran", in Chehabi, Houchang and Martin, Vanessa (eds.) *Iran's Constitutional Revolution: Popular Politics, Cultural Transformation and Transnational Connections*. London: I.B. Tauris. pp. 81-98. p. 85.
[108] Katouzian, Homa. 2003. *Iranian History and Politics, The dialectic of state and society*. London: Routledge. p. 154.
[109] Cronin. "The Constitutional Revolution". p. 90; Abrahamian, Ervand. 1982. *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 103.
[110] Kashani-Sabet, Firoozeh. 1999. *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804-1946*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 150.
[111] Cronin. "The Constitutional Revolution". p. 90; Kashani-Sabet. *Frontier Fictions*. p. 152.
[112] Ghods, M. Reza. 1991. "Iranian Nationalism and Reza Shah." *Middle Eastern Studies* 27 (1): pp. 35–45. p. 43.

Entering Tehran with 4000 thousand Cossack's soldiers on 21 February 1921,[113] Reza Pahlavi eventually fulfilled the apparent desire for a strong military leader by taking over Tehran, and installing Sayyed Zia al-Din Tabataba'i as Prime Minister before eventually exiling both his own Prime Minister and Ahmad Shah to then appoint himself as the King of Iran on 15 December 1925.[114] Having done so with support from British military officials based in Iran,[115] Reza Pahlavi is reported to have told politicians including Mohammad Mosaddeq and Yahya Dowlatabadi that while 'the British brought me to power … I nevertheless served the country'.[116] It was within this context that the Constitutionalists in the Majles emerged as the first thought collective in which the adherents of constitutionalism would bring about a neutralist discourse of resistance which by the 1950s would become a comprehensive discourse of non-aligned State Resistance.

Negative Balancing

Famous for his opposition to Reza Pahlavi, Ayatollah Modarres' has been largely overlooked in the study of intellectual history in Iran, with his contributions often reduced this participation in the Constitutional Movement. Instead, his contributions have been mistakenly attributed to other constitutionalists, such as the common flaw in Western scholarship to mistakenly attribute the doctrine of negative equilibrium only to Mohammad Mosaddeq and the National Front,[117] despite unambiguous evidence which will be presented

[113] Edmonds, C. J, and Yann Richard. 2010. *East and West of Zagros: Travel, War and Politics in Persia and Iraq 1913-1921*. Leiden: Brill. p. 313.
[114] Abrahamian, Ervand. 2008. *A History of Modern Iran*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 63-66.
[115] Zirinsky, Michael, P. 1986. "Blood, Power, and Hypocrisy: The Murder of Robert Imbrie and American Relations with Pahlavi Iran, 1924." *International Journal of Middle East Studies, 18*(3), pp. 275-292. p. 280.
[116] Katouzian. *Iranian History and Politics*. p. 25.
[117] See: Ramazani, Rouhollah K. 1961. "Oil and Law in Iran." *The Journal of the*. *Bassett Moore Society*. pp. 56-70, p. 56; Zabih, Sepehr. 1970. "Iran's International Posture: De Facto Nonalignment within a Pro-Western Alliance." *Middle East Journal* 24 (3): pp. 302–318. p. 303; Poulson, Stephen C. 2006. *Social Movements in Twentieth-Century Iran: Culture, Ideology, and Mobilizing Frameworks*. Oxford: Lexington Books. p. 168; Behrooz, Maziar. 2000. *Rebels with a cause: The Failure of the Left in Iran*. London: I.B. Tauris. p. 6; Abrahamian. *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. p. 189.

below suggesting it was introduced decades earlier in the very same building; the Majles. In Modarres' speeches, declarations, and parliamentary records, one can identify earlier examples of the doctrine, which as will be made apparent below, marked the early signs of neutralism as a resistance discourse as early as 1919, when, in response to the Anglo-Persian treaty, he stated that:

> Vosuq al-Dowleh's cabinet wanted to side with the British government and the Iranian nation revolted against him, as the Iranian nation opposes anyone who intends to take any side, whether it is the side of the North [Russia], the South [Britain] or with that of the end of the world (*ākhare donyā)* [The United States]. We are a poor and weak country who must remain neutral and not side with anyone.[118]

Importantly, Modarres' condemnation of any alliance or even leanings (*tamāyol*) with an imperialist government marked the first recorded instance I have been able to find of the discourse of negative balancing or negative equilibrium, which he introduced in the 4th Majles as *movāzeneh-ye 'adami* (as opposed to Mosaddeq's *siyāsat-e movāzeneh-ye manfi*).[119] More specifically, between Reza Pahlavi's coup in 1921 and coronation in 1925, on 10 June 1923 Modarres presented his conceptualisation of negative balancing as a path forward for the Iranian nation in its struggle for survival, independence and progress, when stated that:

> I am concerned by any government that seeks to interfere in our domestic affairs … [therefore] we must establish a negative balance with regards to everybody. Existential balance (*tavāzon-e vojudi*), means each to their own, and one must be cautious against too strong leanings.[120]

According to Modarres, the trajectory of contemporary global politics was that in the last centuries, especially in Europe, governments had emerged with the intention of

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[118] *Mashruh-e mozākerāt-e majles-e melli, dowreh-ye 4, jalaseh-ye 5. Surat-e mashruh-e majles, yowm yekshanbeh 25 ziq'adeh 1339 motābeq-e 9 assad 1300*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ical.ir/ical/fa/Content/4_artmajles1/%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%87-5-%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AD-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%DB%8C%D9%88%D9%85-%DB%8C%DA%A9%D8%B4%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%87-25-%D8%B0%DB%8C%D9%82%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%87-1339-%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%82-9-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AF-1300> Accessed on 13 July 2021; N/A 1355/1976. *Notq-hā va maktubāt va yādāshthā-ye pirāmun-e zendegi-ye 'mojāhed-e shahid' Sayyed Hassan Modarres* France: Enteshārāt-e Abuzar. p. 322.

[119] Modarresi, Ali. 1366/1988. *Modarres* Vol. 1. Tehran: Bonyād-e Tārikh-e Enqelāb-e Eslāmi-ye Iran. p. 159.

[120] Quoted in: Azghandi, Ali Reza. 1381/2002. "Sayyed Hassan Modarres va bāzbini be siyāsat-e movāzeneh-ye 'adami", *'Olum-e siyāsi* (26), pp. 334-343. p. 336.

'consuming smaller governments'.[121] Against the historical context mentioned above, Modarres believed that independence, understood as the absence of foreign presence, was Iran's best strategy for ensuring Iran's survival, this independence would be achieved through neutralism, which at the time appears to be understood as an alternative approach to approach to imperialism. Unlike many of his Western-educated fellow parliamentarians, Modarres favoured resistance against, rather than submission to the world powers. More specifically, Modarres' formulation of negative balancing marks the conceptualisation of Iran's primary resistance as an alternative to what he termed 'existential balancing'.[122] Negative balancing thus marks the break away from Qajar monarch's strategy of balancing empires within the country, which has been termed in Iranian domestic historiography as a 'third power strategy'[123], in which it sought to balance out the Anglo-Russian rivalry by inviting 'lesser' powers such as France into the country.[124]

However, Modarres believed that Iran, due to its unique geographic locations and economic potential, ought to pursue an independent path in order to preserve its freedom and independence and ensure progress, as well as what he perceive to be the essence of its authenticity; the Iranian and Islamic (*Irāniyyat va Eslāmiyyat)*.[125] He therefore rejected the politics of accommodating the great powers within Iran as contrary to these objectives and believed that their influence and interference ought to be resisted instead. Modarres' approach to colonial politics thus marks a break with the past, when even prominent anti-colonial intellectuals such as Sayyed Jamal al-Din Asadabadi (known as al-Afghani in

[121] Quoted in, Modarresi. *Modarres* Vol. 1. p. 160.
[122] Modarresi. *Modarres* Vol. 1. p. 161.
[123] Ramazani, Rouhollah K. 1975. *Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-73: A Study of Foreign Policy in Modernizing Nations*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
[124] Najafi and Haqani. *Tārikh va tahavolāt-e siyāsi-ye Irān*. pp. 163-4.
[125] Modarresi, *Modarres* Vol. 1. p. 162; Azghandi. "Sayyed Hassan Modarres". p. 336.

Western scholarship), who is often attributed with being a crucial pioneer in resistance politics in Iranian scholarship,[126] advocated the third power strategy in the Qajar court.[127]

As such, Modarres' introduction of the doctrine of neutralism into the political discourse constitutes a critical contribution to the politics of State Resistance, as he provided a conceptual alternative to submission and third power politics. While Modarres' discourse went on to become critical for his country's resistance politics, it failed to do so during his lifetime as Reza Pahlavi's rule grew increasingly authoritarian, which resulted in Modarres' imprisonment in 1929, before being murdered by the regime during his exile in Kashmar in 1938.[128] Three years later, Reza Pahlavi's brief affair with Nazi Germany would contribute towards the Allies invading and occupying Iran, as well as forcing his abdication on the first day on 16 September 1941.[129] Similar to Modarres after the First World War, the impact of the Second World War, the Cold War, as well as the relative weakness of the Mohammad Reza Pahlavi at the beginning of his reign was to provoke an enduring period of intellectual production on the country's resistance politics.

Negative Equilibrium

In his seminal work on the 14th Majles, former Member of Parliament and career diplomat, Hossein Key-Ostovan defines the policy of negative equilibrium in similar words to Modarres' negative balancing, namely as a strategy where Iran should not be dependent or aligned with any great power 'as it is clear that drifting towards one of the two sides will provoke the other side, and that the subsequent response from the opposing side will be at

[126] See: Najafi and Haqani. *Tārikh va tahavolāt-e siyāsi-ye Irān*. p. 160-163; Modarresi Chehardahi, Morteza. 1389/2010. *Sayyed Jamāl al-Din va Andishe-hā-ye u*. Tehran: Mo'aseseh-ye Enteshārat-e Amir Kabir.
[127] Najafi and Haqani. *Tārikh va tahavolāt-e siyāsi-ye Irān*. p. 163.
[128] Abrahamian. *History of Modern Iran*. p. xxii.
[129] Eshraghi, F. 1984. "Anglo-Soviet Occupation of Iran in August 1941." *Middle Eastern Studies* 20 (1). pp. 27–52. p. 27.

the expense of our country.'[130] Importantly, as will be evident later, contrary to later resistance discourses of non-alignment, negative equilibrium is less comprehensive and more pragmatic, as it is primarily a doctrine of primary resistance dealing with more imminent threats to Iran's survival, as Key-Ostovan notes:

> Recent Iranian history has shown that whenever our government adheres to the politics of negative equilibrium against the encroachments and impositions of our neighbours [the British and Russian empires/Soviet Union], we resisted indiscriminately and by doing so, succeed in reducing tension whilst satisfying them. And on the other hand, whenever Iran has pursued the opposite principle and attached itself to one of the two powers, Iran faced the strong backlash of the opposing power. The adherence to negative equilibrium is therefore appropriate when two or more rivalling powers are infiltrating the country, and not when the infiltrators are cooperating and following the same policy, in which case this policy will not succeed.[131]

The importance here is that in the search for self-preservation, contrary to the pro-Soviet communists on the left, and pro-Western politicians such as Ahmad Qavam al-Saltaneh, and Hassan Taqizadeh who were rather content with their presence, and wanted a direct alliance,[132] negative equilibrium demands *indiscriminate* resistance against *any* great power, while also recognising the limits of this (primary) resistance if the powers cooperate. The example Key-Ostovan used to illustrate the limitations of resistance was the aftermath of the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1907 when the empires competed within the country, thereby rendering negative equilibrium a futile strategy.[133] By the end of the Second World War, and the beginning of the Cold War, the doctrine of negative equilibrium was to resurface as a crucial policy doctrine for anti-Soviet resistance.

Shortly after 22-year-old Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's accession to the throne on 16 September 1941, prominent Iranian politicians realised that there was more to the allied invasion than just preventing the spread of the Axis powers and supplying the Soviet Union, and that the imperial presence of the British Empire in the South, and the northern neighbour,

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[130] Key-Ostovan, Hossein, 1328/1949. *Siyāsat-e Movāzeneh-ye Manfi Dar Majles-e Chāhārdahom*. Vol. 1. Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Mosaddeq. p. 13.
[131] Ibid. pp. 13-14.
[132] Katouzian, Homa. 1990. *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran*. London: I.B. Tauris. p. 100.
[133] Key-Ostovan. *Siyāsat-e Movāzeneh-ye Manfi*. p. 14.

this time in the form of the recently established Soviet Union was on the rise again.[134] While the British Empire's presence in the South had become a fact of life, Iranians would soon rebel against Joseph Stalin's increasingly assertive foreign policy towards Northern Iran as he demanded oil concessions in 1944.[135] Stalin's demands coincided with the increased communist radicalisation of the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party (*hezb-e tūdeh)*, who had managed to win eight seats, all except for one were from the occupied territories of the north.[136]

Just as Vosuq al-Dowleh's affiliation with the West provoked Modarres, The Tudeh Party's affiliation with the Soviet Union provoked the nationalists in the 14th Majles. However, a fact that often falls in the shadow of the Soviet demands in mainstream scholarship with regards to the Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946 and the issue of Iranian oil concessions to the Soviet Union was that Stalin was not the only one demanding oil concessions in the 1940s, with Majles debates from 10 August 1944, suggesting that two major American oil companies, Standard and Sinclair Oil Corporation were also actively seeking oil concessions from the Iranian government.[137] While the demands of the Soviet Union were certainly more pressing and backed up by their military occupation of the North of the country, the significance of this was the dual rejection and resistance against both blocs, making the issue of oil concessions the first example of the doctrine of negative equilibrium in practice.

This was manifested in Mosaddeq's speech to the 14th Majles on 28 November 1944, where he advocated a bill banning the granting of any oil concessions without the approval

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[134] Abrahamian. *History of Modern Iran*. p. 97.
[135] Fawcett, Louise. 2014. "Revisiting the Iranian Crisis of 1946: How Much More Do We Know?" *Iranian Studies* 47 (3). pp. 379–99. p. 383.
[136] Abrahamian, Ervand. 1999. *Tortured Confessions: Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp. 77-8; Abrahamian. *Iran between two revolutions*. p. 201; Zabih, Sepehr. 1986. *The Left in Contemporary Iran: Ideology, Organisation, and the Soviet Connection*. London: Croom Helm. p. 3.
[137] *Mashruh-e Mozākerat-e Majles-e Shorāye Melli*, *Dowreh-ye 14,* Meeting number 51, pp. 27-28, Retrieved from: <http://www.ical.ir/index.php?option=com_contentandview=articleandid=2379andItemid=14> Accessed on 2 May 2017 and hereafter be abbreviated as *Mashruh-e Mozākerat-e Majles-e Shorāye Melli*, *Dowreh-ye 14,* with meeting and page number where applicable.

of the Majles, a bill that was passed with overwhelming support despite strong opposition from the eight Tudeh parliamentarians. A push towards negative equilibrium is evident in Mosaddeq's response to the Tudeh Party who had rejected granting concessions to the United States a few weeks earlier, but now supported granting oil concessions to the Soviet Union to balance out the British concessions in the South:

> If we pursue positive equilibrium, we are forced to grant 92 years of oil concessions in the North [as was given to the British Empire in the South] and by doing so establish political balance. Nevertheless, the Iranian people have always, and the Majles is currently, opposed to doing so. Granting such concessions is akin to a one-armed person amputating the other arm in order to achieve balance … The one-armed person who wants to become an armless person ought to relieve themselves from their misery by committing suicide rather than amputating their other arm.[138]

Mosaddeq's transgressive comparison of political alignment, or positive, or existential in the words of Modarres, balancing, to suicide suggests that he saw the continuation of Modarres' doctrine of negative balancing and indiscriminate resistance as the *only* path forward for Iran. Importantly, this resistance was only to the imminent situation, which at the time was concessions held or requested by the great powers. Considering the emerging revisionist literature against Mosaddeq, it is perhaps worth noting that the 'indiscriminate resistance' advocated for in the 14th Majles did not equate to isolationism, as foreign trade and economic relations were not only accepted, but also encouraged.[139] Indiscriminate resistance in negative equilibrium was instead directed against any form of foreign domination and asymmetric affiliation, not to bilateral foreign relations with any country. In the words of Karim Sanjabi, one of Mosaddeq's supporters during the 14th Majles: 'They [the Tudeh Party] made slogans against colonialism and reactionaries [The Western bloc] … we made slogans against any form of colonialism, whether Red or Black.'[140] Thus, to the proponents of negative equilibrium, resistance was

[138] *Mashruh-e Mozākerat-e Majles-e Shorāye Melli*, *Dowreh-ye 14*, meeting number 79, p. 68.
[139] Ibid. p. 85.
[140] Sanjabi, Karim. 1368/1989. *Omid-hā va nā omidi-hā: khāterāt-e siyāsi*. London: Enteshārāt-e Jebhe. p. 71.

only seen as genuine when performed indiscriminately with regards to colonialism, as it ought to be non-aligned and independent.

What is more, Mosaddeq's doctrine of negative equilibrium shares striking similarities with Modarres' negative balancing, not only because of its call for indiscriminate resistance, but also due to its objectives, as Mosaddeq stated on 11 September 1945, that the objectives of Iranian foreign policy were the adherence to the doctrine of negative equilibrium, as:

> In our opinion, whether northern [Soviet Union] or southern [British], a foreigner is a foreigner. Only a balance between them will be our salvation, and it is under the protection of this policy [of negative equilibrium] that we will be able to acquire the spiritual and material benefits of that we deserve as an independent nation deserve to attain … I am Iranian and a Muslim, and, as long as I am alive, I will fight against anything that would threaten that which is Iranian and Islamic (*Irāniat va Eslāmiat*).[141]

We thus see the authenticity dimension of negative equilibrium which largely resembles that of Modarres, with an added focus on achieving justice. However, while the importance of non-alignment for the spiritual authenticity of the state was to regain significance in later decades, the 14th Majles succeeded in obstructing all new concessions, resulting in the Soviet Union utilising Kurdish and Azari sympathies to assert their influence militarily in the North. The bitter experience of foreign imperialism and Stalin's expansionist policy with regards to Iran reached its crux with establishment of short-lived Azerbaijan People's Government and the Republic of Mahabad, both proxy states of the Soviet Union, known as the Azerbaijan the Crisis of 1946.[142] Extended military occupation by the Soviet Union, however, failed to end the resistance of the Majles, who overwhelmingly rejected Prime Minister Qavam al-Saltaneh and Stalin's negotiated proposal concessions being granted to a joint oil-company with the Soviet Union in October after the withdrawal in 1947.[143] Nevertheless, the impact of the imperial endeavours of the

[141] *Mashruh-e Mozākerat-e Majles-e Shorāye Melli*, *Dowreh-ye 14*, meeting number 139, p. 6.
[142] Blake, Kristen. 2009. *The U.S.-Soviet Confrontation in Iran, 1945-1962: A Case in the Annals of the Cold War*. Lanham: University Press of America. pp. 30-34.
[143] Fawcett. "Revisiting the Iranian Crisis". p. 384.

Soviet Union and its support within Iran was to provoke one of the biggest contributions to the contemporary Iranian opposition's resistance politics in the form of the third force.

The Third Force

'Neither America, Britain nor the Soviet Union: With the force of the nation for the nation'[144]

The Third Force, 25 July 1953.

As a result of the trauma from Stalin's expansionist policy and the Tudeh Party's receptive attitude to the occupation of their homeland, the famous intellectual Jalal Al-Ahmad, under the influence of Marxist economist Eprime Eshagh, convinced Maleki to lead a split from the Tudeh Party on January 1948 in which prominent Marxists such as Anvar Khameh'i also joined.[145] The split from the Tudeh Party, and the intellectual discourses that emerged from it, was on the global level one of the earliest and perhaps most comprehensive contributions to non-alignment theory, namely that of the third force (*niru-ye sevvom*), which preceded concepts such as 'third world' and 'non-alignment'.[146] What is more, the discourses that emerged from this split also mark the discursive shift away from neutralism towards non-alignment in the intellectual trajectory State Resistance.

As Maleki had kept a low profile in the first year after the split, the establishment of the National Front under the leadership of Mosaddeq marked his return to politics with a series of articles published in Mozaffar Baqai's newspaper, *Shāhed* (Witness), which would become the official newspaper of the Toilers' Party (*Hezb-e Zahmatkeshān*) following their establishment in May 1951.[147] Maleki's articles, starting in 1949, sought to justify his split

[144] *Niru-ye Sevvom,* 3 Mordād 1332/3 July 1953 p. 1.
[145] Katouzian. *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran*. pp. 97-101.
[146] Pbs.org. 2012. *Homa Katouzian on Khalil Maleki | Part 1: Nonalignment and the 'Third Force.'* Online: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/2012/04/homa-katouzian-on-khalil-maleki-part-1-nonalignment-and-the-third-force.html> Accessed on 7 April 2017.
[147] Maleki, Khalil, Amir Pishdad, and Homa Katouzian. 1374/1995. *Barkhord-e 'aqāyed va āra*. Tehran: Nashr-e Markaz. p. 9.

from Tudeh, and were later compiled into the book titled *Barkhord-e aqāyed va ārā* (The Conflict of Ideas and Opinions). Later, he would go on to develop a theory of the third force, before becoming an editor of his own daily, also called *Niru-ye Sevvom*, which would become one of the most popular National Front publications during the crisis that culminated into the Anglo-American Coup of 1953. As will be apparent below, the significance of the theory of the third force, besides being one of the original works on non-alignment in Iran, is that it also demonstrates the extent to which Eastern (or Northern) Soviet imperialism contributed to shape the country's resistance politics despite the tendency in academic literature to frame it as an anti-Western phenomenon.

Maleki's initial critique was directed to the perceived hypocrisy of the Tudeh Party, who proclaimed themselves to constitute an anti-colonialist front (*jebhe-ye zed-e este'māri*), whilst condoning and actively supporting Stalin's imperialism during the Azerbaijan crisis.[148] By condemning the Tudeh as a fifth column (*sutun-e panjom*) of the Soviet Union, Maleki denounced them as either extremely idealistic, or as traitors for claiming that the interest of Iran and the Soviet Union were uniform.[149] However, Maleki's criticism was not limited to the Tudeh, but also previous governments, where his rhetoric resembles that of Modarres and Mosaddeq's critique of positive or existential balancing, and the extent to which it constitutes political suicide when stating that:

> The most corrupt individuals amongst the ruling elite (*hei'at-e hākemeh*) are those who granted major economic concessions to their Western Allies who plundered—in the true sense of the word—the Iranian nation to their own benefit, and who for the sake of balance, sought to grant the same concessions they had given to the English and American occupiers to the Soviets as well. In this way, nation-selling individuals from the Tudeh Party leadership obtained the labels as the elements of the nation (*anāsor-e melli*) or 'anti-fascist', yet in the name of materials for fighting against the fascists not only did they pass up the chance to fight against them, but instead welcomed and empowered them until our hands were tied.[150]

[148] Maleki, Pishdad, and Katouzian. *Barkhord-e 'aqāyed va āra*. p. 100.
[149] Ibid. pp. 100-101.
[150] Ibid. p. 103.

As such, according to Maleki, Tudeh's affiliation with, and advocacy for the Soviet Union constituted 'the biggest service to foreigners, and greatest betrayal of the Iranian nation', as it would prevent Iran from achieving progress domestically.[151] He also distinguished between the pro-Western and pro-Eastern 'traitors', and argued that whereas the ruling elite were knowingly committing treason, the traitors in the Tudeh Party were sometimes doing so thinking they were pursuing genuine socialist objectives due to the powerful ideological machinery of the Soviet Union.[152]

Nevertheless, having identified the unjust nature of the two blocs, both in the form of the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as their domestic agents in the Westernised right and the Aligned Left, Maleki goes on to question the dichotomous Cold War paradigm where non-alignment was rejected by each side as serving the enemy.[153] By rejecting this dichotomic discourse, Maleki made the case that there is in fact a third force, constituted by the masses of the nation, that is separate from the support of the Eastern bloc (the Tudeh Party), or the Western bloc (the ruling elite), and that its existence has been demonstrated in the form of Jawaharlal Nehru in India, Yugoslavia in Europe, and Mosaddeq and his followers in the 14th Majles.[154] At his time of writing, Maleki considered the National Front to constitute the third force in Iran, and its primary objectives was to fight against imperialism and nationalise the oil industry, and do so *only* through the strength of the Iranian masses.[155] The rather deontological requirement of achieving the ends *independently* constitutes a critical addition to the country's resistance discourse which the next Chapter will show has remained up until today.

[151] Ibid. p. 104.
[152] Ibid. p. 126.
[153] Ibid. 193.
[154] Ibid. p. 195.
[155] Ibid. p. 210; p. 230.

Having retired from politics in 1947, Mosaddeq reluctantly accepted the premiership of the 16th Majles in 1951 on the condition that the oil nationalisation bill would be passed.[156] While in government, Maleki would go on to provide a considerably more conceptual approach to non-alignment, as he sought to develop what he named the 'third force' (*niru-ye sevvom*) as an alternative for:

> … the masses of less powerful countries, and even some governments [of developing countries] that neither feel freedom in Mr. Truman's 'free world', nor do they see the impact of socialism in the Soviets' 'socialist' world.[157]

Maleki thus identified the struggle for non-alignment, not as a mere struggle for national independence, but also one for the sake of the preservation of the 'self', against the two dominant global forces. While this appears similar to Modarres and Mosaddeq's focus on preservation of *Irāniyyat* and *Eslāmiyyat,* Maleki's nationalist and socialist convictions enabled him to transcend the primary resistance discourse of neutralism against foreign concessions and encroachment and conceptually accommodate a revisionist agenda of non-alignment into his discourse of resistance, thereby making it a discourse of secondary resistance.

However, the comprehensive nature of the third force, as opposed to negative equilibrium also made the discourse more exclusive due to its socialist dimensions. Perhaps due to the diversity of the National Front, or as a genuine acceptance its diverse membership ranging from prominent clerics such as Ayatollah Abol-Ghasem Kashani, to secular politicians heavily influenced by socialism such as Maleki, Mosaddeq and Baqa'i, Maleki went on to present two dimensions of the third force; with the third force in general (*niru-ye sevvom be ma'nā-ye 'amam*) on one hand, and the third force in particular (*niru-ye sevvom be ma'nā-ye 'akhas*) on the other.[158] Whereas the former encompassed the whole National

[156] De Bellaigue, Christopher. 2012. *Patriot of Persia: Muhammad Mosaddeq and a Very British Coup*. London: Bodley Head. p. 156.
[157] Quoted in Maleki, Khalil and Katouzian, Homa. 1368/1989, *Khāterāt-e siyāsi-ye Khalil Maleki*. Tehran: Sherkat-e Saham Enteshārāt. p. 172.
[158] Quoted in Ibid. pp. 185-6.

Front, which sought to resist imperialism, fight for independence, and pursue a non-aligned foreign policy, the latter was directed to the domestic path forward, encompassing the left-wing of the National Front that sought radical transformation of the socio-economic order of the time, mostly in accordance with secular socialist objectives.[159]

Despite its heavy socialist elements and Cold War influences, situating the third force as a resistance discourse within the genealogical ancestry of the resistance becomes more accurate than limiting it to a minimalist discourse of non-alignment as understood in contemporary Western scholarship due to its comprehensive scope and emphasis on self-realisation and authenticity. Specifically, his claim that neither revolution, nor social transformation can 'be reliant on a foreign army, or a foreign political force', since 'revolutionary and social forces must be authentic and born out of the masses of its own respective nation'[160] was not only rhetoric but a fundamental doctrine for the third force:

> … those who want Iran to be a base (*pāygāh*) against the Soviet Union—one day on behalf of the Germans, another day on behalf of the British, and eventually on behalf of the Americans—do not only fail to serve Iran, but either knowingly or unknowingly end up betraying their nation.[161]

Maleki thus stressed the normative boundaries of cooperation, as they must never reach the level recommended by the 'utopian' (*khiyālparastān*) politicians who previously, 'knowingly or not, served the interests of foreign expansionism.[162] The impact of Maleki's discourse was particularly evident in his newspaper, also called The Third Force (*Niru-ye Sevvom*), which was published daily after the Third Force faction split from the Toilers' Party as the latter turned against the National Front government in October 1952.[163] The publication was to continue throughout the 17th Majles (1952-1953) between in 23 October

[159] Quoted in Ibid.
[160] Quoted in Ibid. p. 177.
[161] Quoted in Ibid. p. 187.
[162] Quoted in Ibid.
[163] Azimi, Fakhreddin. 2008. *Quest for Democracy in Iran: A Century of Struggle Against Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. p. 131; Katouzian, Homa. 2018. *Khalil Maleki: The Human Face of Iranian Socialism*. London: Oneworld Academic. pp. 118-125.

1952, and the day of the coup on 19 August 1953. The newspaper itself, besides covering the news from the perspective of the Third Force, also frequently translated speeches from non-alignment figures across the world, such as Nehru, Gamal Abdel Nasser, and developments in Yugoslavia and in the French Socialist Party.[164] Thus, in 1952, almost 30 years after the emergence of resistance discourses in Iran, intellectuals of the country begin to actively situate themselves within the broader international context of non-alignment which would later be termed the 'third world'. The constant reference to global currents was not limited to Maleki and his followers, but propagated throughout the National Front, with for example Sanjabi speaking at the headquarters of the Toilers party declaring that 'the third force is the new genuine and ideal concept for a world for free, right-minded humans' and that this idea was not limited to Iran only, but was applicable across the world:

> … the Iranian nation has understood that its resistance (*istādegi*) is a value for the future of humanity as a whole and realised that the banner it is carrying is not the banner of its own freedom only, but the freedom of all nations that find themselves in the same situation.[165]

The confidence that preceded the coup is evident, and adherents to the third force, I believe, contributed heavily to shaping the specific nature of resistance which would conceptually distinguish the resistance discourse of the Islamic Revolution from that of the communist left who advocated for alliance-building with China or the Soviet Union, and the anti-communists who opted for alignment with the Western bloc to resist Communism. The significance of non-alignment in this resistance was also heavily reflected in their criticism of Mosaddeq's opponents, such as former Prime Minister, Qavam al-Saltaneh, which the newspaper equated to Gholam Yahya Daneshian, the General of the short-lived Azerbaijani People's Government:

> Qavam al-Saltaneh and Ghulam Yahiya are both condemned by the nation, and the nation considers them both traitors that are opposed to the independence of the country. They are both puppets with strings attached to international expansionists (*towse'eh talab*) and if one considers

[164] See for example: *Niru-ye Sevvom,* 23 Mehr 1331/October 15, 1952. p. 1; 21 Ābān 1331/November 12, 1952. p. 1; 28 Ābān 1331/November 19, 1952. p. 4.
[165] *Niru-ye Sevvom*, 26 Esfand 1331/March 17, 1953. p. 4.

> Qavam al-Saltaneh's opposition to the Soviet bloc as patriotism, one must consider Ghulam Yahiya and the Tudeh Party as patriots for their opposition to the British and Americans.[166]

However, the unequivocal condemnation of reliance, dependence, and infiltration did not equate to—unlike the discourse of the Revolutionary Movement which will be discussed in the next section—to outright rejection of the two blocs. Instead, they sought to establish equal relationship based on the mutual respect, something which was understood to be impossible if any country operates with fifth columns within Iran.[167] As such, the Third Force argued for both the sale of oil to the Soviet Union, as well as the United States,[168] but on the conditions that:

> We, as a free and independent nation which has recovered from a hundred-year long sickness, are ready to establish friendly relations, not on the basis of political deception … we have faith in governments that genuinely believe in the respect, freedom and independence of small nations [like Iran].[169]

In other words, the critical objective of this resistance and its revisionism was not to challenge the international order as much as it was about gaining a just position within it. While it could be argued that claiming a just position might axiomatically put Maleki in a position of presenting a de facto challenge to the international order, what was being levelled against it in Maleki's writings is clearly a critique, and not a great refusal. Nevertheless, its language began to share increasing similarities in form and outlook with dominant discourses of the 1970s and 1980s, especially as the coup edged closer and radicals in the party became more prominent. For example, slogans such as, 'Neither Western imperialism, nor Cominformism[170] of the East! Neither Washington, nor Moscow: but the force created by the masses of Iran and other nations!',[171] or the rather premature 'Neither America, nor

[166] *Niru-ye Sevvom,* 23 Āzar 1331/December 14, 1952. p. 2.
[167] *Niru-ye Sevvom,* 13 Bahman, 1331/February 2, 1953. p. 1.
[168] *Niru-ye Sevvom,* 19 Esfand, 1331/March 10, 1953. p. 4.
[169] *Niru-ye Sevvom,* 31 Khordād, 1332/June 21, 1953. p. 4.
[170] Cominfermism was a pejorative term used by Maleki for communists he believed blindly followed the orders of Cominferm (Communist Information Bureau) which preceded the more famous Comintern (Communist International).
[171] *Niru-ye Sevvom,* 24 Ordibehesht 1332/May 14, 1953. p. 10.

London nor Moscow: Mosaddeq is victorious',[172] were frequently printed in the newspaper in the latter half of 1953. The increased radicalisation, which culminated in the call for a republic with Mosaddeq as its President following the failed coup attempt on 15 August 1953, contributed to the newspaper being shut down on the eve of the successful coup on 19 August 1953, and Maleki being imprisoned in the post-coup crackdown two weeks later.[173]

Positive Neutrality and 'Independent National Attitude'

The decade between the coup and the rise of 'petrolic despotism' which lasted from the early 1960s until the Islamic Revolution was characterised by martial law until 1957, the creation of the Pahlavi regime's notorious intelligence organisation, SAVAK, as well as heavy crackdowns on political organisations.[174] However, these major developments appear to have overshadowed 1955, which, alongside the 1953 coup, proved in retrospect to be a critical juncture for secular forces of Iranian politics, as it marked the beginning of their relative decline at the expense of more religiously-oriented movements. On 3 November 1955, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi acceded Iran to the Baghdad Pact, a security organisation consisting of Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, and the United Kingdom, with dedicated support by the United States. This marked the Pahlavi regime's rejection of the doctrine of negative equilibrium and the popular third force theory.[175] Despite this, while large parts of the Iranian opposition rebelled against the Baghdad Pact, the details of which we will return to in the next part of this Chapter, the secular opposition which was not aligned with the Soviet Union failed to produce much resistance.

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[172] *Niru-ye Sevvom,* 13 Mordād 1332/August 4, 1953. p. 1.
[173] *Niru-ye Sevvom,* 25-28 Mordād 1332/16-19 August 1953.
[174] Katouzian, Homa. 1981. *Political Economy in Modern Iran: Despotism and pseudo modernism 1926-1979*. London: Macmillan. p. 188; pp. 213-255; p. 234.
[175] Yeşilbursa, B. Kemal. 2005. The Baghdad Pact: Anglo-American Defence Policies in the Middle East, 1950-1959. London: Frank Cass. p. 119.

For example, in his memoirs, Sanjabi—who had argued for the third force globally in 1952—argued in 1960 that his concern with the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO, the successor to the Baghdad Pact after the Iraqi revolution of 1958), was not its alignment and obligations to the Western bloc, but instead its failure to provide sufficient assurances to Iran.[176] This seemingly 'pragmatic turn' in the form of the tacit acceptance of submission to the Western bloc and indifference towards non-alignment was further reflected when past members of the National Front—which had been outlawed following the coup—reconvened in 1960 to form the Second National Front.[177] According Homa Katouzian, 36 individuals were reportedly summoned at Allahyar Saleh's house in Kashan including Baqer Kazemi, Gholamhossein Sadighi, Karim Sanjabi, Mehdi Bazargan, Yadollah Sahabi, Ayatollah Sayyed Mohammad Taleqani, and Shahpour Bakhtiar.[178] A notable absence there was Maleki, who according to Katouzian was denied entry by pro-Western individuals such as Bakhtiar.[179]

The absence of two of the main contributors of non-alignment doctrines in the first National Front, Maleki, and Mosaddeq, who was under house arrest at the time, was reflected in its doctrinal changes, which reflected a broader ideological crisis within the National Front when it reduced the principle of international non-alignment to the obscure slogan of 'an independent national attitude', making it so palatable to the Western-installed Pahlavi Court that the slogan was adopted by the Shah himself during the White Revolution in the 1960s.[180] The deviations from the National Front's original discourse was reflected in Mosaddeq's correspondence to the Second National Front, where he required changes to be

[176] Sanjabi. *Omid-hā va nāʾomidi-hā*. pp. 210-211.
[177] Chehabi. *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism*. p. 143.
[178] Maleki and Katouzian. *Khāterāt-e Siyāsi-ye Khalil Maleki*. p. 125.
[179] Chehabi. *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism*. p. 146.
[180] Katouzian. *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*. p. 226.

made in their charter.[181] A level of submission deemed impossible under all the aforementioned doctrines was suddenly the policy of one of the biggest opposition groups in the country. This submission, however, appears to have contributed to the downfall of the Front itself.

Organisational weakness, internal conflict, and doctrinal debilitation resulted in the fragmentation of the Second National Front less than a year after its establishment, with Bazargan, Sahabi, and Ayatollah Taleqani leaving to establish the Freedom Movement that we will return to later in this Chapter, while Maleki would go on to create his own Socialist League of the National Front (*Jāme'e-ye Sosiyālisthā-ye Jebhe-ye Melli*).[182] In response to these developments, Mosaddeq sent a critical letter from house arrest in Ahmadabad which resulted in Second National Front members resigning to pave way for the establishment of a Third National Front which would include a broader range of parties, including adherents to non-alignment such as the Freedom Movement of Iran, and the Socialist League of the Popular National Front.[183] However, this awakening in the mid-1960s coincided with the emergence of petrolic despotism where the autocratic state had already began to crackdown on political dissent, and the disorganised, inconsistent and unsuccessful secular opposition was to be overshadowed by the overwhelming force of the religious resistance movements.[184]

Still, it appears that in the years that succeeded the coup, the only National Front veterans to generate discourses of resistance and non-alignment were Maleki and his entourage. Following Maleki's release from prison in 1955, the Toilers Party's intellectual journal *Nabard va zendegi* (initially called '*Elm va zendegi* during the Mosaddeq era, and

[181] Zirakzadeh, Ahmad, in an interview recorded by Zia Sedghi, April 11, 1986, Arlington, United States. In Iranian Oral History Collection, Harvard University. Retrieved from: <https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:2814939$164i> Accessed on 27 April 2017.
[182] Maleki and Katouzian. *Khāterāt-e siyāsi-ye Khalil Maleki*. pp. 126-7.
[183] Ibid. p. 151.
[184] Katouzian. *Political Economy of Modern Iran*. p. 238.

was forced by the Pahlavi Regime to revert to the same name a few years later) was resumed, but rather than reproducing the slogans of the Third Force, they began using the concept of 'independence from the two blocs' (*esteqlāl az do boluk*), and later a another concept of non-alignment, far more familiar within Western scholarship as it was also adopted by the French Socialist Party, as well as non-aligned states such as India and Egypt, namely positive neutrality (*bitarafi-ye mosbat*).[185]

For Maleki, the coup functioned as another trauma for Iran, this time imposed by an old empire in decline, and its emerging successor. In the post-coup era, these protagonists of resistance sought to critically review of what was deemed to have been a failure. This is evident in one exchange in the 'free debate' section of '*Elm va zendegi*, where the prominent lawyer and former Mayor of Tehran who would later become a member of Majles, Arsalan Khalatbari stressed the limits of Mosaddeq's negative equilibrium:

> The Iranian nation put up a remarkable resistance (*moqāvemat*) for the nationalisation of their oil industry and was rewarded for that resistance. However, after succeeding in nationalising the oil industry, the government should have executed a policy that corresponds with the realities of the day … and if the government had pursued a new positive politics [positive neutrality], instead of negative [equilibrium], it could have resolved the oil dispute in its earliest stages and implemented good economic policies for the country, but instead of taking this great opportunity, we lost three years.[186]

In condemning Mossadeq's indiscriminate resistance as 'building a fence around yourself when you are in need of the world around you', Khalatbari instead argued that Iran ought to utilise what the world had to offer while maintaining the interest and the well-being (*maslahat*) of the country.[187] The editorial response to Khalatbari agreed that world politics had changed as technical, economic and political support had become more commonplace, but nonetheless stressed that small and less powerful states must not:

> … imagine that the colonial era is over, and in our opinion the weapon of colonial politics is not only bayonets or exertion of power, but money, which is more powerful than the sword, is also

[185] *Nabard va Zendegi*, Dey 1337/December 1958-January 1959. pp. 1-23; Stevens, Georgiana G. 1957. "Arab Neutralism and Bandung." *Middle East Journal* 11 (2). pp. 139–152.
[186] *Nabard va Zendegi,* Ordibehesht, 1334/April-May 1955. p. 47.
[187] Ibid.

> able to enforce colonial policies. Countries that wish to remain independent, must also maintain their economic independence, and not pursue the economic policy of powerful governments.[188]

Therefore, contrary to Mosaddeq who sought to capitalise on the generous, but conditional post-war aid policies of the United States at the time,[189] Maleki argued for a more reserved approach to the economic dimension of Iran's foreign relations, as he regarded it as inseparable from the country's resistance politics:

> … economic support from the United States or any other country is useful when the nation has decided its own path … and the foreign loans, investments and assistance must be utilised within the domestic framework.[190]

Thus, '*Elm va Zendegi* stressed that they 'are ready to accept respectable loans from Europe and the United States' as long as they are not accompanied with political conditions, and with regards to trade, they declared their willingness to 'trade its products, raw materials, as well as natural resources in dollars.'[191] In other words, the object of resistance, which was concession and domination and their secondary impact on the country's authenticity before the 1953 coup, became increasingly comprehensive to include economic reliance and neo-colonial relations, which would also become more important in the post-revolutionary propagation of State Resistance discussed in Chapter 3. What is more, while they at the time perceived the communist threat as more imminent, they still condemned the West, who they believed had created a fertile ground for communism with their imperial presence in recently independent countries. As such, they wondered why:

> … the United States' government must spend billions of taxpayer dollars on the futile struggle to preserve, to the extent possible, the legacy of colonial infiltration of countries such as Britain, France, Netherlands, and Portugal, from the past century, as well as giving hundreds of millions of dollars to corrupt governments.[192]

In choosing a new direction and for the realisation of justice, they argued that the West should make up for their colonial past financially and enable the small and weaker countries

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[188] Ibid. p. 45.
[189] Katouzian. *Musaddiq and the struggle for power in Iran*. p. 115.
[190] *Nabard va Zendegi*, Dey 1337//December 1958-January 1959. pp. 14-23.
[191] *Nabard va Zendegi*, Āzar 1334/November-December 1955. p. 12.
[192] Ibid. p. 11.

to pursue their own path for progress, as neither bloc possessed the blueprint for such progress.[193] This trend was maintained by Maleki's own post-coup party, the Socialist Society of Iran (*Jāme'eh-ye Sosiyālist-e Irān),* where he declared that 'independence from the two blocs' was a crucial foreign policy doctrine in its manifesto.[194] However, as will be apparent below, Maleki and the adherents to his non-aligned resistance discourse was a dying breed among the country's secular politicians, whose role as key protagonists of State Resistance would become relinquished to the more religiously-oriented thought collectives.

Part 2: Underground Resistance (1949-1970)

As the architects and proponents of State Resistance were ousted from the Majles in 1953, and the Shah forcefully returned to power with the help of British and American intelligence, the post-coup era of dictatorship also marked the beginning of the discourse of resistance being formulated in increasingly religious language and terminology. While the Majles could no longer be the political space in which discourses of resistance were generated, the arrests of the National Front leadership and the crackdowns on political opposition resulted in the emergence of several thought collectives that operated in various less formal political spaces. Whereas the decade after the coup marked the decline of secular resistance politics, thought collectives opposed to the National Front, as well as new ones lead by the younger members of the National Front would continue to stress the importance of asserting an independent position in the context of the Cold War until Ayatollah Khomeini would assume the position of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution in the 1970s.

[193] *Nabard va Zendegi*, Dey 1337/December 1958-January 1959. pp. 14-23.
[194] *Nabard va Zendegi*, Ordibehesth 1335/April-May 1956. p. 7-8.

The Devotees of Islam

At the same time as negative equilibrium and the third force was being formulated and propagated in response to imperialism within secular circles, The Devotees of Islam (*Fadā'iyān-e Eslām*), a revolutionary movement founded in 1946 in Southern Tehran by the young clerical student, Sayyed Mojtaba Navvab Safavi who sought to radically alter the political order by pursuing the establishment of Islamic government (*hokumat-e Eslāmi*) and justice for the Muslim nation of Iran. Among its founding members were Sayyed Mohammad Emami, Sayyed Ali Emami, Sayyed Ja'far Emami, Khalil Tahmasb, Javad Mozaffar and Ali Fadai, with notable members Sayyed Abdolhossein Vahedi, Vahid 'Araqi and Mohammad Mahdi Abdkhodaei joining the years that followed movement in the early 1950s.[195] Photo-evidence also suggests that Hojjatoleslam Mahmoud Taleqani also took part in the thought collective before becoming active in the Freedom Movement in the 1960s,[196] whilst sources indicate that Hojjatoleslam Morteza Mottahari and Mahdi Araqi were involved with the Devotees.[197] Perhaps one of the less studied oppositional movements in pre-revolutionary Iran, the discourse of the Devotees is often understood to be a precursor to Ayatollah Khomeini's revolutionary politics due to their call for Islamic government.[198] However, as will be apparent below, the Devotees were much more than just an Islamic revivalist movement calling for Islamic government. In fact, they constituted the first thought collective espousing primary resistance in more populist terms, as opposed to

[195] Bahrami, Ruhollah. 1391/2021. *Fadā'iyān-e Eslām; asnād az mobārezāt-e jam'iyat-e Fadā'iyān-e Eslām (h.s 1326-1339)*. Tehran: Khāneh-ye Ketāb. p. 179.
[196] See image of Taleqani welcoming Navvab Safavi on his return from Egypt in 1954, in Khosh Niyat, Sayyed Hossein. 1360/1982. *Sayyed Mojtaba Navvab Safavi: Andisheh, mobārezeh va shahādat-e u*. Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Manshur-e Barādari. p. 147.
[197] Martin. *Creating an Islamic State*. p. 132.
[198] Taghavi, Seyed Mohammad Ali. 2004. *The Flourishing of Islamic Reformism in Iran: Political Islamic Groups in Iran (1941-61)*. London: Routledge. p. 124; Arjomand, Said Amir. 1984. *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*. London: Springer. p. 11.

Mosaddeq and especially Maleki's more elite and less accessible discourses of non-alignment.

In generating a popular discourse of resistance, which revolved around more affective and religious, as opposed to secular, nationalist rhetoric, the Devotees would go on to provide a critical component of State Resistance: a justice-oriented language of defiance with its genealogical ancestry in the religious tradition studied as proto-resistance at the beginning of this Chapter. Contrary to the rest of the thought collectives studied in here, the Devotees operate rather independently of the coup, as they found themselves in diametric opposition to the Mosaddeq and the National Front. This opposition, however, did not prevent them from providing a significant contribution to what would become the country's discourse of State Resistance as an oppositional actor situated outside of formal political institutions.

This is evident in their publications and pamphlets, but especially the weekly newspaper, *Nabard-e Mellat* (The Struggle of the Nation), owned by Amir Abdollah Karbaschian who also was the editor from 1949, and kept publishing it underground after it was banned in 1951 until it was completely shut down after the coup in 1953. However, it is difficult to assess exactly how long the newspaper functioned as a mouthpiece for the Devotees, with numerous sources suggesting that Karbaschian fell out with their leadership and consequently gradually stopped reproducing their discourse from 1951 onwards.[199] My understanding from researching the newspaper is that it kept covering the Devotees until May 1953, with Karbaschian seemingly pursuing its own path afterwards. Incidentally, from April 1953, the Devotees began propagating their discourses through their newspaper *Manshur-e Barādari* (Manifest of Brotherhood), as well as less declarations and pamphlets until the whole organisation was shut down following their failed assassination attempt

[199] Bahrami. *Fadā'iyān-e Eslām*. p. 188.

against the country's Prime Minister, Hossein 'Ala, who was on his way to sign the Baghdad Pact on 17 November 1955.[200]

What distinguished the Devotees from their contemporary movements was their violent radicalism, calls for Islamic government, and the expansion of the subject of resistance to transcend the Iranian nation in the form of pan-Islamism manifested in their support for religious movements in the Muslim world and scepticism to the emerging secular third world states such as Nasser's Egypt and Nehru's India, as well as a discursive toolkit situated outside of the trajectory of non-alignment. However, despite their religious particularism and violent radicalism, the essence of their resistance broadly shared the same commitment to non-aligned resistance and justice for Iran as the previous thought collectives. For example, the day after the Devotees had assassinated the sitting Prime Minister, Hajj Ali Razmara on 7 March 1951, the Devotees published a front page titled 'Razmara Has Gone to Hell' (*razmārā be jahanam raft)* with a picture Razmara with a Union Jack tiara. In the article that accompanied the title, signed by Karbaschian, the organisation claimed that '… for those whose existence is bestowed with courage and piety, there is no difference between Stalin, George, Truman, and you abject slaves (*gholāmān-e halqeh-beh-gush*)', and that this marked the day where these empires no longer would be able to:

> … decide the destiny and existence of millions of Muslims and spend the possessions of the most honourable creatures of God on debauchery and self-indulgence … foreigners no longer have the right to interfere in a Muslim country. America, England, and Russia, know that you should no longer interfere in Iran's domestic affairs … our oil is our blood, and we will fight for this source of life (*māyeh-ye hayyāti*).[201]

In the following weeks, several articles from different writers would be printed in which the assassination of Razmara was defended. On 15 March 1951, an anonymous contributor using the initials M Q (*mim qāf*) claimed that the killing of Razmara was the just outcome of his treason—as he was heavily involved in the oil supplemental oil agreement

[200] Ja'fari, Ali and Yahya Abadi, Morteza. 1391/2012. "Barresi-ye peymān-e Baghdād: zamineh-hā, āsār va natāyej-e ān dar Irān". *Payam-e Baharestān* (17). pp. 183-199. p. 188.
[201] *Nabard-e Mellat,* 17 Esfand 1329/8 March 1951. p. 2.

between the Pahlavi regime and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company—and declared that the 'implementation of the exalted doctrine of Islam, and for the certain victory as this struggle and holy jihad continues … any government, whether Russian or British or American have no right to interfere in our affairs or destiny'.[202] As opposed to the National Front, whose struggle was framed within the context of national liberation, the anti-colonial struggle of the Devotees was instead situated within the context of justice-oriented *jihad*. What is more, the pursuit of religious authenticity also received greater prominence among the Devotees, who declared their intention to 'tear out the roots of hedonism (*kofr*) from this Islamic nation [Iran], and spread Islam as espoused by the family of the Prophet in Iran, and with the help of God, the world.'[203] This particularism resembles the language of the fatwas of the Russo-Iranian Wars, and enables us to situate the Devotees in an alternative intellectual trajectory to that of Mosaddeq and Modarres; namely within the trajectory radical discourses of religious particularism which was to gain increased prominence as the 20th century progressed.

While the stated intention to spread Islam might suggest otherwise, the particularistic discourse of resistance was still firmly situated within the realm of primary resistance as the goals appeared to mostly revolve around the expulsion of foreigners and their servants,[204] but their particularism stands in contrast to Maleki's more flexible resistance which was made possible by distinguishing between the third force in particular and the third force in general when claiming that the Azerbaijan crisis would not have ended in Iran's favour:

> Had it not been the case that the resistance of the brave people of [southern] Azarbaijan against rebels (*motejāsserin*) [led by Ghulam Yahya] and foreigners [the Soviet Union] had the characteristics of an Islamic movement, the objective of expelling foreign troops and suppressing their agents would not have succeeded.[205]

[202] *Nabard-e Mellat,* 24 Esfand 1329/15 March 1951. pp. 2-3.
[203] Ibid. p. 4.
[204] See for example: *Nabard-e Mellat,* 7 Shahrivar 1330/30 August 1951. p. 1.
[205] Ibid. p. 3.

Karbaschian thus states that it was in fact the Islamic character of the popular resistance that enabled it to succeed, resistance—which at the time was expulsion of foreigners from Iranian land—could only accomplish its objective if the subjects performing resistance held the right values; a line of argument that would be reproduced from the 1970s onwards by the religious revolutionaries. As such, Mosaddeq could not be the leader of any resistance, with the Devotees distinguishing themselves from their contemporaries in attributing the leadership position of the resistance to Navvab Safavi instead.[206] Their scepticism towards Mosaddeq's government was not limited to his religious credentials, but also to his nationalist credentials when he invited the United States to mediate in the oil nationalization dispute, as they rhetorically asked 'in the political lexicon of a patriotic nationalist, what do you call sending a letter to a bloodthirsty foreigner to request their mediation with another foreigner?'[207]

The significant focus on oil nationalisation in 1951-2 is another similarity the Devotees shared with the National Front, however, their similarities ended with supporting nationalisation of domestic resources, as the Devotees took a fundamental issue with what they understood to be a pro-American approach of the Mosaddeq government, claiming that 'political war' did not break out so that:

> … one Britain would leave, and another Britain would arrive from the United States … the Muslim nation of Iran will not be aligned with any foreigner, whether Russia, Britain, and the United States … Neither Russia, nor England nor America is the great slogan of the steadfast Muslim nation of Iran.[208]

The Devotees thus espoused a much greater level of scepticism towards the non-Muslim world. On one hand, one of their most famous publications, titled *Islamic Government and Society* (*Jāme'eh va hokumat-e Eslāmi*) from 1949-1950 which had sections frequently reprinted in numerous issues of *Nabard-e Mellat* and later *Manshur-e*

[206] Ibid.
[207] *Nabard-e Mellat,* 16 Shahrivar 1330/ 8 september 1951. p. 4.
[208] *Nabard-e Mellat,* 25 Bahman 1330/ 15 February 1952. p. 3.

Barādari consistently called for Muslim unity and cooperation. More specifically, they called for the establishment of an Congress for Unity and Consultation for Islamic Nations and Governments (*Anjoman-e ettehād va shorā'i-ye miyān-e mellal va hokumat-hā-ye Eslāmi*), amongst Islamic nations, without providing many details beyond that it would serve to prevent evil and corruption.[209] On the other hand, less ambiguous demands continued to be levelled against the West, individuals, and groups the Devotees believed to be their servants within Iran. For example, they forbade the National Front from 'making any commitment (*ta'ahod*) or agreement that relinquishes the wealth of this Muslim nation to foreigners', and those who do it 'shall be destroyed through the firing of a shot' as 'our Muslim nation will no longer under any circumstances be deceived into foreign submission (*taslim-e ajnabi*).'[210] This vision for creating a strong bloc consisting of Muslim countries was reiterated by Navvab Safavi in a rare interview on 6 January 1953, where he stressed that his objective following his release from prison was to establish a 'union of Muslim nations' based on the 'sacred blueprint of Islam' which if realised, would constitute a leading power on the world stage.[211] This suggests that the discourse of resistance espoused by the Devotees, while being a strong example of primary resistance, appears to find itself in the prefatory stages of secondary resistance in its calls for establishing a global revisionist force founded on Iran's religious, rather than nationalistic or ideological character.

As the relationship with the National Front continued to deteriorate, and their populistic rhetoric began to attack Mosaddeq—despite initially exempting him from being a traitor—who they began referring to pejoratively as Mosaddeq al-Saltaneh to emphasise his ancestry to the Qajar court,[212] or as a puppet whose government was cracking down on

[209] Khosroshahi, Hadi. 1393/2015. *Fadā'iyān-e Eslām, Tārikh, 'Amalkard, Andishe*. Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Etelā'āt. p. 265.
[210] *Nabard-e Mellat*, 1 Esfand 1330/21 February 1952. p. 2.
[211] *Nabard-e Mellat*, 16 Dey 1331/January 6 1953. p. 2.
[212] *Nabard-e Mellat,* 29 Esfand 1330/20 March 1952. p. 3-4.

the Devotees in order to 'crush the source of anti-foreign resistance'[213] However, while *Nabard-e Mellat* would continue to escalate its anti-Mosaddeq rhetoric to the point where it directly supported the Anglo-Iranian coup on 19 August, 1953,[214] the Devotees appears to have separated themselves from Karbaschian's paper to continue to propagate their resistance through their newly established publication, *Manshur-e Barādari*, where Vahedi appears to have had a significant influence.

For example, on 25 April 1953, rather than slamming Mosaddeq as a gateway to communism, *Manshur-e Barādari* criticised his pivot to the United States in order to solve the oil nationalisation dispute. In declaring that 'a foreigner is a foreigner', the Devotees warned that the sacrifices and struggle for independence against 'the enemies of Islam' would be futile if the government chose to 'enable the tired colonialist', the British Empire, to be replaced by the 'more powerful and potent' American Empire.[215] It is important that this scepticism to American alignment makes the Devotees rather unique at the time, despite sharing a slogan similar to what was espoused by the Third Force; 'neither Russia, nor Britain, nor the United States', included a much more monolithic policy prescription of rejection and resistance against *all* great powers, irrespective of their record in Iran.

This strict position of *de facto* non-alignment and rejectionism was defended as a continuation of the political tradition of Shaykh Fazlollah Nuri, whose anti-constitutionalism, they believed, represented an indigenous, but more importantly virtuous path towards progress, as opposed to who they claimed to be his 'Western backed' opposition in the form of the Constitutionalists.[216] In particular, they referred to the Constitutionalist's acceptance of British support as an act of treason, and stressed that this foreign interference was gradually being taken over by the United States and the Soviet

[213] *Nabard-e Mellat,* 13 Esfand 1330/4 March 1952. p. 4.
[214] *Nabard-e Mellat,* 29 Mordād 1332/20 August 1953. p. 1.
[215] *Manshur-e Barādari,* 5 Ordibehesht 1332/25 April 1953. p. 2.
[216] *Manshur-e Barādari*, 16 Ordibehesht 1332/6 May 1953. p. 4.

Union, with the author insinuating that the National Front is aligned with the former while the Tudeh Party is aligned with the latter.[217] Thus, contrary to the National Front, and their direct offspring movements that will be studied in the subsequent two sections of this Part, the Devotees did not adhere to, nor did they recognise the Constitutionalist tradition as a legitimate path for a Muslim nation due its foreign backing; the strict criteria for independence rooted in the authenticity of the performers of resistance reflects stronger connections to the proto-resistance tradition than that of their contemporary Majles incumbents. Moreover, another characteristic that distinguishes the Devotees from their contemporaries is perhaps the *intensity* of the antagonism espoused, which would not become mainstream for another decade.

While the broader objectives of the Devotees might appear to be similar to that of the National Front, the emphasis on authenticity espoused in the form of Islam, and presenting it as a prerequisite for independence, would increasingly distinguish them from their contemporaries and continue to dominate the discourse of the Devotees as the years progressed.[218] For example, roughly a month before the coup, Vahedi declared—in what would become more familiar language in the 1970s and 1980s—after having distanced the Devotees from both the Pahlavi court and the Majles, who he perceived to be serving the interests of foreign powers, that the struggle would continue 'until the sacred ordinances of Islam are put into practice and we can protect the *true* independence (*esteqlāl-e vāqe'i)* of the Islamic country of Iran.'[219]

Put simply, the Devotees thus differed from the National Front as their resistance went beyond oil concessions to also include the expulsion of any foreign presence and influence beyond the physical realm. Ideas and ideologies ought to be rooted in Islamic

[217] Ibid.
[218] See *Manshur-e Baradari* various issues.
[219] *Manshur-e Barādari,* 20 Tir 1332/11 July 1953 p. 4.

particularism, which would shift the focus away from Maleki's socialism, or Mosaddeq's attempt to reach out to the United States. For the Devotees, authenticity becomes a prerequisite for independence, as an independent country is a Muslim country, and legitimate inter-state cooperation appears to have only been justifiable in the form of pan-Islamic alliances. It is worth noting here that possibly due to the contentious nature of their politics, and strict particularism, the Devotees would gradually begin to reject even the religious elements of the National Front, with *Manshur-e Barādari* even criticising Ayatollah Kashani for not being Islamic enough and for being backed by foreigners from 1953 onwards.[220]

As will be apparent towards the end of this Chapter, this discourse makes it evident why one of their former members, and later the Leader's Representative at the Revolutionary Guards after the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Fazlollah Mahalati would state that the discourse espoused by Safavi against the Baghdad Pact was 'that of the [Islamic] revolution.'[221] With the Shah acceding to the Baghdad Pact, a declaration signed by Navvab Safavi declared that:

> It has not been in the interests of the Muslims of the world (*moslemin-e donyā*) to accede and align either to one of the two military blocs of the world and [their] security pacts[.] In order to balance the forces of the world and establish peace and security, an independent military and defence alliance (*etehādiyeh-e defā'i va nezāmi-ye mostaqel*) must be established … righteous Muslims (*mosalmān-e sādeq*) possess the strongest invincible force of will and action[.] It is always possible for a small group of righteous Muslims (*mosalmān-e rāstgu*) to shake the pillars of the most powerful oppressive and tyrannical governments in the world and to rub their noses in the dirt... then if Muslims of the world are left to themselves they will return to the path of God and truth and Islamic teachings... and establish an independent defence alliance under the leadership of a upstanding and capable Muslim.[222]

Having done so, former member, Mahdi Iraqi claimed that unsuccessful meetings were held with Mehdi Bazargan—a leading member of the National Resistance Movement

[220] See for example: Manshur-e Barādari, 19 Ordibehesht 1332/9 May 1953.
[221] Mahallati, Fazlollah. 1376/1997-8. *Khaterāt va mobārezāt-e Shahid Mahallāti*. Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Markaz-e Asnād-e Enqelāb-e Eslāmi. p. 32.
[222] Quoted in Khosh Niyat. *Sayyed Mojtaba Navvab Safavi*. *p*p. 155-56.

at the time—for resisting the Baghdad Pact collectively.[223] Thus, the movement would embark on an ambitious attempt to assassinate Prime Minister Hossein 'Ala on his way to sign Iran's commitment to the Western bloc. The failed attempt would prove more disastrous than their previous assassination attempts, as Hossein Khosh Niyat rightly argues, since contrary to the first half of the 1950s when Ayatollah Kashani had utilised his position in the Majles to release Razmara's assassin, this time the Devotees had virtually no backing within the state, nor the opposition with whom they had fallen out, and as such, there was nothing to stop the regime from executing them on 18 January 1956.[224] While the movement as an organisational entity never recovered from the execution of their leadership, the ideology of Navvab Safavi and his Devotees, who would frequently meet Ayatollah Khomeini,[225] would resurface and synthesise within the Revolutionary Movement in the 1970s and leave its mark on the powerful resistance discourse of the Islamic Revolution.

The National Resistance Movement

While the Devotees unambiguously operated as an explicitly religious movement from the onset, other movements witnessed a gradual process of increased sacralisation of their resistance discourses in the post-coup era. The first thought collective to emerge from the coup and take part in this shift was the National Resistance Movement (*Nehzat-e Moqāvemat-e Melli)*. Before doing so, it is important to highlight that several inconsistencies in the existing literature point to a great confusion with regards to the National Resistance Movement, likely as a consequence of the organisation operating underground throughout its existence, but also simply because of lazy scholarship, which simply assumed that it was

[223] Araqi, Mahdi, Moghaddas, Mahmoud, Dahshour, Masoud, and Shirazi Hamid Reza. 1370/1990. *Nāgoftehā: Khāterāt-e Shahid Hajj Mahdi 'Araqi*. Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Khedmat-e Farhangi-ye Rasā. pp. 125-6.
[224] Khosh Niyat. *Sayyed Mojtaba Navvab Safavi*. *p*. 158.
[225] Mahallati. *Khaterāt va Mobārezāt-e Shahid Mahallāti*. p. 37.

the direct continuation of the National Front. For example, there seems to be a scholarly disagreement on the time of its establishment, ranging from 10 days to over a year after the coup.[226] However, Mehdi Bazargan, and Hassan Nazih, two of the founders of the National Resistance Movement claimed the movement was established at Ayatollah Hajj Sayyed Reza Zanjani's house on 20 August 1953, one day after the coup.[227] Similar confusion exists with regards to the duration of the movement's active existence, with claims ranging from four to nine years.[228] Based on the existing archives of its publications, it appears that their movement was only active for four years, until 1957.

Perhaps more significantly, there appears to be confusion with regards to its leadership, with for example Ervand Abrahamian claiming that the movements prominent figures were Karim Sanjabi, Hasebi, Ahmad Zirakzadeh, Zanganeh, Asghar Parsa, Shahpour Bakhtiar, Khalil Maleki, Mehdi Bazargan and Ayatollah Taleqani.[229] However, Nazih—who claims to have been present at the meeting where the organisation was founded on 20 August 1953—has stated that Ayatollah Zanjani was the leader of the movement, while Sanjabi has stressed that he was in hiding during the post-coup crackdown, which lasted for a large part of the National Resistance Movement's existence.[230] Instead, Nazih claims that the individuals involved in the National Resistance Movement were him, Abdollah

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[226] Rajaee, Farhang. 2007. *Islamism and Modernism: The Changing Discourse in Iran*. Austin: University of Texas Press. p. 83 suggest it was established 'within 10 days', Gheissari, Ali. 1998. *Iranian Intellectuals in the 20th Century*. Austin: University of Texas Press. p. 72, suggests within a month, and Abrahamian. *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. p. 457 suggests it was established in late 1954. None of the three provide any evidence for this.

[227] Bazargan, Mehdi, and Gholam Reza Najati. 1375/1996. *Khaterāt-e Bāzargān: Shast sāl khedmat va moqāvemat*. Vol. 1. Tehrān: Mo'asseseh-ye Khadamāt-e Farhangi-ye Rasā. p. 308; Nazih, Hassan, in an interview recorded by Zia Sedghi, April 3, 1984, Paris, France. In Iranian Oral History Collection, Harvard University. Retrieved from: <https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:2891124$24i> Accessed on 27 April 2017.

[228] Unclear when the movement ended, Nazih claims 8 years, until 1959/60, see Nazih, Hassan, in an interview recorded by Zia Sedghi, April 3, 1984, whereas Sanjabi claims it only lasted a few years, see: Sanjabi, Karim, in an interview recorded by Zia Sedghi, October 18, 1983, Paris, France. In Iranian Oral History Collection, Harvard University. Retrieved from: <https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:2900177$180i> Accessed on 27 April 2017.

[229] Abrahamian. *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. p. 457.

[230] Sanjabi, Karim, in an interview recorded by Zia Sedghi, October 18, 1983; Nazih, Hassan, in an interview recorded by Zia Sedghi, April 3, 1984.

Moazami, Bazargan, Yadollah Sahabi, Rahim 'Ata'i, Abbas Sami'i, Abbas Rodnia and Mir Mohammad Sadeghi, whilst explicitly rejecting the suggestion that Ayatollah Taleqani was a member.[231] The same applies to Maleki, who Nazih claims he 'has never had any political cooperation with' and that he had only met him twice in his life.[232] Bazargan has claimed that Shahpour Bakhtiar, being inspired by the French anti-Nazi resistance, came up with the name of the organisation, suggesting that he was at least involved in the establishment of the movement.[233]

Thus, by moving beyond the existing, and rather flawed secondary literature and assessing the limited but largely neglected primary sources, we can identify a thought collective consisting of several—though not exclusively—of religious nationalists with an ideological alignment somewhat situated between Mosaddeq and the 1979 revolutionary establishment. As will be apparent below, while the absence of Maleki, Sanjabi, and secular, more conservative National Front members is reflected in the writings of the National Resistance Movement, this did not by any means equate to support for Iran entering the Eastern bloc, as has been claimed by scholars such as Said Barzin, basing his argument on a single article from the organisation.[234] On the contrary, the organisation's commitment to non-alignment and the intensification of resistance was prominently and explicitly reflected in the principles released by the Central Committee of the National Resistance Movement ten days after the coup, on 29 August 1953, where they announced the three main objectives of the movement:

1. Continuation of the National Movement and the restoration of independence and national government.
2. Struggle against any form of foreign colonialism, whether English, Russian or American.

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[231] Nazih, Hassan. in an interview recorded by Zia Sedghi, April 3, 1984.
[232] Ibid.; Nazih, Hassan, in an interview recorded by Zia Sedghi, May 30, 1984, Paris, France. In Iranian Oral History Collection, Harvard University. Retrieved from: <https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:2891124$173i> Accessed on 27 April 2017.
[233] Bāzargān, Mehdi, and Gholām Rezā Najāti. *Shast sāl khedmat va moqāvemat*. p. 307.
[234] Barzin, Sa'id. 1374/1995. *Zendegināmeh-ye siyāsi-ye Mohandes Mehdi Bazargān*. Tehran: Nashr-e Markaz. p. 122.

3. Fighting against puppet regime (*hokumat-e dast-neshāndeh-ye khāreji*) and agent of corruption (‘*āmel-e fesād*).[235]

While this reflects the pre-coup conceptualisation of non-alignment as indiscriminate resistance to colonialism, the fight against ‘puppet regimes’ and especially ‘agents of [moral] corruption’ is particularly important as this proves another example of resistance—emerging in tandem with non-alignment—transcending simply being a Cold War and anti-colonialist doctrine to instead become a more comprehensive discourse of independence conditioned by an emerging emphasis on authenticity domestically. Another statement by the Central Committee was released nine months later, seeking to further clarify the objectives of the movement.[236] This time, the movement declared Mosaddeq the legitimate Prime Minister of the country, and the ‘greatest servant of the homeland’, as well as stating clear allegiance to his path for independence and emancipation from the chains of colonialism.[237] In an extensive eight point plan, the movement further elaborated its position on a wide range of policy issues, notably foreign policy:

a. The foreign policy of Iran must be based on the *adherence to the principle of neutrality and consolidation of full economic and political and territorial independence*, and rejection of greedy colonialists and the prevention of any foreign influence[.] Supporting national and independence seeking movements, and therefore, to adhere to the principle of complete neutrality in international conflicts, Iran shall not enter any political or military bloc, whether Eastern or Western.
b. Economic and political cooperation with other governments to the extent … that [it] does not harm our national freedom and independence. [238] (Emphasis my own)

Therefore, as early as 1954, the National Resistance Movement had iterated explicit adherence to the principle of non-alignment as understood in mainstream International Relations scholarship – a view that remained consistent in their press despite major domestic and international challenges and concerns which could have justified increased allegiance

[235] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*, 29 Ordibehesht 1333/May 19, 1954. p. 54. retrieved from Nehzat-e Azadi-ye Iran, 1363/1985. *Nashriyāt-e Rāh-e Mosaddeq va zemāyem-e ān: Asnād-e Nehzat-e Moqāvemat-e Melli*. Tehran: Chāpkhāne-ye Narāqi, will hereafter be abbreviated as *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*, date, page number of the book when applicable; Bazargan, Mehdi, and Gholam Reza Najati. *Shast sāl khedmat va moqāvemat*. p. 308.
[236] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq,* 29 Ordibehesht, 1333/May 19, 1954. p. 54.
[237] Ibid. p. 55.
[238] Ibid. p. 56.

towards the Western bloc. The same applies with regards to the movement's perception of the Eastern bloc, which could have become an appealing response to the bitter experience with the Western bloc during the Mosaddeq premiership. Instead, the movement adhered to the position of non-alignment, as was reflected in their refusal to cooperate with the Tudeh Party following their request to form an anti-imperialist resistance front at the peak of Western interference.[239] The National Resistance Movement chose to resist independently as propagated by the National Front.

The revival of the word 'neutrality' (*bitarafi*) which had been largely absent from the discourses studied above after Modarres, is perhaps a testament to Maleki's absence, but should nevertheless be understood as a comprehensive discourse of non-alignment rather than a return to Modarres and Mosaddeq's minimalistic neutralism. While explicit use of Maleki's terminology is notably absent, his comprehensive understanding of non-alignment is present in the National Resistance Movement's discussions on neutrality, and the importance of economic independence for the Central Committee suggests that Maleki's influence in transcending simple resistance to concessions and immediate threats and into a revisionist project for asserting independence in the colonial world had been consolidated among the younger followers of Mosaddeq. As will be apparent below, this is reflected in the dual rejection of both blocs by the new movement, a rejection which was accompanied by the call for resistance, which had often been implied, or invoked sporadically in the National Front, but would become a policy mantra for the newly established movement. Therefore, neutrality alongside the call for resistance marks a transition away from the more idle doctrines of non-alignment and neutralism espoused by Modarres and Mosaddeq.

A central debate which is revealing in relation to the movement's discourse of non-alignment was the debate regarding Iranian membership in a security arrangement with the

[239] Barzin. *Zendegināmeh-e siyāsi-ye Mohandes Mehdi Bāzargān*. p. 121.

Western bloc. On 29 June 1954, the newspaper's official publication *Rāh-e Mosaddeq* (the Path of Mosaddeq), likely edited by Third Force member Mohammad Ali Khonji, criticised the United States' proposal for a West Asian security organisation aligned with the Western bloc, claiming that the United States and Great Britain's recent endeavours in Iran had been a source of instability.[240] However, it does not reject security arrangements in their totality, as could be legitimate when respecting the independence and sovereignty (*haqq-e hākemiyat*) of the country, something they believed would not be the case with the Western bloc as the coup had effectively compromised Iranian sovereignty.[241]

The movement traces its position on security arrangements to the foreign policy of Mosaddeq and claimed that former Minister of Finance and Economy Taqi Nasr had opened negotiations with Iran at the United States Embassy with Ambassador Henry F. Grady during the 16th Majles.[242] Despite Taqi Nasr guaranteeing that the National Front would be willing to align itself with the United States, the newspaper proudly stated that

> … the national front under the leadership of Doctor Mosaddeq, who was the executer of the will of the people and considered himself reliant on them, was not willing to align (*ta'ahod*) Iran politically to a foreign government.[243]

Instead, they wrote that Mosaddeq believed that the people's commitment to patriotism and the fight for freedom would suffice in resisting Soviet expansionism, as well as stating that public opinion today is opposed to such security arrangements.[244] After the Shah had acceded to the Baghdad pact in November 1955, the National Resistance Movement—contrary to Sanjabi and the more secular members of the National Front—condemned it as a continuation of 'British imperial policy' in Iran, which was not legitimate as the government that had ratified it was illegitimate and illegal.[245] The apparent conflict

[240] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*, 8 Tir 1333/June 29, 1954. p. 78.
[241] Ibid.
[242] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*, 2 Khordād 1334/May 24, 1955. p. 98.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid. pp. 99-100.
[245] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq,* 24 Ābān 1334/November 16, 1955. pp. 283-286.

of opinion between Sanjabi and the National Resistance Movement, who were allies during the Majles era of resistance, was later highlighted by Bazargan in his memoirs, in which he criticised Sanjabi's position, providing further evidence of Sanjabi's lack of involvement in the movement.[246] This, combined with Bazargan's negotiations with the Devotees discussed above, suggests that the lines between the path of Mosaddeq and the religious particularists was increasingly fading in the 1950s.

Nonetheless, the National Resistance Movement remained committed to the path of Mosaddeq, which was apparent in their almost prophetic utilisation of Mosaddeq in *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*. For example, a slogan stating that 'the path of Mosaddeq is for the betterment (*sa'ādat*) of the Iranian nation and any deviation from this path is considered treason against the nation and the country', is conveniently placed under an article on the Baghdad Pact, alluding to the idea that the regime's alignment constitutes treason.[247] While the second National Front began to accept submission and alignment to the West in the post-coup period, the National Resistance Movement declared that:

> In the fight we are currently engaged in, no more than two paths exist: either resistance (*moqāvemat va pāydāri*) which will end in success, true independence (*esteqlāl-e vāqe'i*) and greatness for the Iranian nation — or subjection and submission that will result in eternal disgrace and dishonour and the lack of national rule, as well as the endurance of the corrupt oppressive one-man dictatorship.[248]

The National Resistance Movement thus continued to give non-alignment and resistance the same prominence as it had in the Third Force press and situating resistance and independence in a comprehensive fashion similar to the Devotees, albeit with more nationalist and ideological, rather than religious criteria for authenticity. This was evident in their emphasis on 'true independence' as opposed to the minimalist understandings of independence espoused by Mosaddeq, and the claims that that Mosaddeq would have been

[246] Bāzargān and Najāti. *Shast sāl khedmat va moqāvemat*. *p*. 400.
[247] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*, 2 Khordād 1334/May 24, 1955. p. 104.
[248] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*, 29 Khordād 1334/June 20, 1955. p. 133.

the leader of the non-aligned world if he had not been imprisoned.[249] Whilst covering the developments of Nehru and Nasser, who they perceived to be striving for the establishment of a 'neutral bloc', in order to avoid the broader trend of either succumbing to communism or receiving conditioned aid from the United States or being coerced into their security organisations,[250] they nevertheless highlight that:

> If Iran was ruled by a national leadership (*zemāmdārān-e melli*) which was in line with public opinion, it could have utilised the current international situation greatly in the interest of the nation, and in addition to prevent the re-emergence of infiltrating colonial policies and taken a great opportunity on the international stage for Iran to assume an important position and gain unprecedented prestige.[251]

Therefore, whilst supporting the resolutions of the Bandung Conference of 1955, which is generally considered to be one of the forerunners to the non-alignment movement,[252] they confidently stated that Mosaddeq would have led the conference had he not been deposed.[253] Indeed, they believed that Mosaddeq had become the face of non-aligned anti-colonial resistance in the world as he 'demonstrated the possibility of liberation from the claws of Western colonialists without succumbing to another [Eastern, Soviet] colonialism', and similar to the Third Force, argued that pro-Soviet factions describing themselves as anti-imperialists were in fact themselves the 'friends and helpers of colonialism' who fight with the West to undermine the 'Mosaddeqs' of Asia and Africa.[254]

With Mosaddeq—understood as the embodiment of ideal resistance—in prison, the National Resistance Movement paid significant attention to Nasser's Egypt, more so than Nehru's more 'pacifistic' India which appear to have been one of Maleki's role models for non-alignment and resistance. This was evident in articles comparing the achievements of

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[249] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq,* 2 Khordād 1334/ May 24, 1955. p. 92; *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*, 10 Mehr 1334/October 3, 1955. p. 227.
[250] Ibid. pp. 134-6.
[251] Ibid. p. 138.
[252] Vitalis, Robert. 2013. "The Midnight Ride of Kwame Nkrumah and Other Fables of Bandung (Ban-Doong)." *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 4 (2). pp. 261–88. p. 277.
[253] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*, 2 Khordād 1334/May 24, 1955. p. 92.
[254] Ibid. p. 95.

the Shah and Nasser, where they would argue that that Nasser was demonstration of the 'power of the East' whereas the Shah was understood to be a mere reflection of Western imperialism in Iran.[255] In particular, they reference Nasser's successful coup against the Western-backed monarchy, his support for Sudanese independence, the nationalisation of the Suez canal, improving relations with Arab countries and strengthening Arab unity,[256] and resisting Israeli aggression as sources of pride for the non-aligned world.[257] The Shah on the other hand, was condemned for his 'worthless' trips to his Western masters and his inability to exploit 'the contradictions [rivalry] between East and West and reap the benefits of neutrality.'[258]

As the movement progressed, increased in membership, and gained currency, *Rāh-e Mosaddeq* began publishing more theoretical conceptualisations of resistance and non-alignment. For example, in a two successive series, the Central Committee presented their theory of an ideal Iranian foreign policy, which is very revealing of their view on contemporary events and their perception of recent history. It provides us with valuable insight into the collective memory of the movement, and the discourse they generated from it. Whereas this Chapter has traced the intellectual roots of resistance and non-alignment to the 4th Majles, the National Resistance Movement portrayed the 1st and 2nd Majles as the golden era of Iranian policy making, and claimed that Mosaddeq's doctrine of negative equilibrium—which the movement considered their guiding principle (*khat-e mashi*)—was derived from the foreign policy of the first two parliaments in Iranian history.[259] Moreover,

[255] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*, 29 Shahrivar 1335/September 21, 1955. p. 312; p. 316.
[256] The arms deal with Czechoslovakia was regarded as the possibility of obtaining arms without aligning the country with either bloc, see: Hinnebusch, Raymond. 2003. *The Middle East in The International System,* Manchester: Manchester University Press. p. 24.
[257] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*, 29 Shahrivar 1335/September 21, 1955. p. 315; Interestingly, while the National Resistance Movement was explicitly condemning Israeli occupation and encouraging resistance against it, Khalil Maleki's publications were explicitly supporting it, see: *'Elm va Zendegi,* Farvardin 1338//March-April 1959. pp. 50-2.
[258] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*, 29 Shahrivar 1335/September 21, 1955. p. 314.
[259] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*, 21 Shahrivar, 1334/September 13, 1955. p. 208.

their proposed theory of an ideal Iranian foreign policy stated that the principal objective of the Iranian nation was 'the attainment of political and economic independence and ensure sovereignty (*ta'min-e haqq-e hākemiyat*)', whilst stressing that its foreign policy doctrine has taken into account the fact that 'Iran is a part of the world' that power asymmetries that exists with regards to the great powers.[260]

Despite this, the Resistance Movement stressed the limitations of supposed 'realism' by claiming that the question of choosing an appropriate foreign policy 'based on the actual circumstances cannot be mistaken with questions with regards to Iranian sovereignty', which are never negotiable, and must 'unconditionally be transferred to the Iranian nation.'[261] Establishment arguments of Iran's relative weakness and the need to rely on foreign powers was criticised as enabling foreigners to undermine Iranian sovereignty under pretexts such as the 'necessity considering the capabilities of the superpowers' and 'accepting limits on the nation'.[262] Such justifications, they believed, would result in the total eradication of Iran's sovereignty and independence.[263]

The emergence of the concept of sovereignty in *Rāh-e Mosaddeq* appears to have been a post-coup addition to the existing political vocabulary discussed so far, which was largely constructed and popularised by Modarres, Mosaddeq and Maleki. The Resistance Movement defined sovereignty in rigorous terms as 'a unitary, absolute and indivisible matter' that would perish in face of any form of foreign intrusion in the affairs of the state.[264] The importance of resisting foreign interference, they believed, was that independence and sovereignty are crucial prerequisites for a nation before it can create an appropriate foreign policy based on international circumstances.[265] The significance of the principle of genuine

[260] Ibid.
[261] Ibid. p. 209.
[262] Ibid. p. 209.
[263] Ibid.
[264] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq,* 3 Ābān, 1334/October 26, 1955. p. 261.
[265] Ibid.

sovereignty and independence appears to have emerged from their references to firstly, the Anglo-Russian rivalries of the past, and secondly, to what they at the time perceived to be an Anglo-American rivalry within Iran at the time, suggesting the existence of a dialectic between Cold War and colonialist dynamics that shaped the non-aligned resistance discourse of the movement.

In their analysis of Iran's past, the movement followed the line of Modarres, and criticised the Qajar court's resort to playing powers against each other *within* the country, known as the third power strategy discussed previously in this Chapter, denouncing it as self-defeating as they believed it united the empires within the country against Iran.[266] Instead, the Movement called for the adherence to what they believed were the principles of the Constitutional Movement:

> 1. Ending any form of foreign colonial infiltration or domination by ejecting foreign powers from their economic and political bases which they had attained and consolidated over the years.
> 2. Creation of friendly relationships with all foreign countries based on equal rights and mutual respect.
> 3. Seeking to adhere to a third policy (*siyāsat-e sāles*) appropriate for Iran and taking advantage of international contradictions for the betterment of the country.[267]

Point three appears to similar to Maleki's theory of a third force, which is not even mentioned once in their writings that I have been able to access. However, Mosaddeq's doctrinal developments are heavily emphasised, and the movement identifies his incumbency in the 14th, 16th, and 17th Majles as a 'foreign policy revolution' which revised the doctrine of the first two parliaments:

> 1. Rejecting any form of colonial interference by ending foreign economic and political domination.
> 2. Maintaining the security of Iran against any foreign aggressor or the preparation for future attack through solidarity between the nation and the army … and expanding good relations with Middle Eastern countries, in addition to supporting the strengthening of anti-colonial movements across the region …
> 3. Encouraging friendly relations with countries in favour of Iranian independence, and acting accordingly, and seeking to use great power rivalries for the benefit of the Iranian nation.[268]

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[266] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq,* 21 Shahrivar 1334/September 13, 1955. p. 211.
[267] Ibid. p. 212.
[268] Ibid. p. 215.

It might be worth noting that while the third point might resemble the widely criticised third force strategy of the Qajar monarchs, the exploitation of great power rivalries was conditioned upon the principle of non-alignment as a part of its concept of true independence. To the Resistance Movement, this foreign policy revolution, conceptualised as negative equilibrium, and its commitment to non-alignment constituted the principal reason for the coup.[269] The significance they attach to this foreign policy position, I believe, reflects the normative nature of non-alignment, as it appears to have gained an increasingly central position in their normative appraisal, and condemnation, of the Pahlavi regime. Thus, they argued that contemporary Iranian political life in 1955 consisted of a Western-installed ruling elite that was foreign, and had created fertile ground for the growth of another fifth column of the East in the form of the Tudeh Party and the pro-Soviet left; a mutually constitutive development that had provoked natural resistance (*moqāvemat-e tabi'i)* by the people.[270] The certain success of this resistance, they argued, would eventually culminate in the aforementioned foreign policy doctrine, which stressed an independent non-aligned resistance against any great power, whether the Soviet Union, the United States or Great Britain.[271]

As mentioned above, it is unclear when the movement ceased to operate, but the last edition of *Rāh-e Mosaddeq,* was published in the spring of 1957. By then, the newspaper had adopted an increasingly religious position, where oaths resembling slogans of the Islamic Revolution, swearing allegiance to God, the 'martyrs on the path of freedom', freedom and justice, and 'the calloused hands and faces of the oppressed nation (*mellat-e mazlum)',* were published.[272] In 1956-7, another regime crackdown against the opposition resulted in the imprisonment of central figures such as Nazih and Bazargan, and the

[269] Ibid. p. 218.
[270] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq,* 3 Ābān 1334//October 26, 1955. pp. 258-268.
[271] Ibid. pp. 255-273; p. 268.
[272] *Rāh-e Mosaddeq*, 29 Esfand 1335/March 20, 1957. p. 336.

movements activity appears to have been limited as the era of dictatorship continued into the 1960s, while Western alignment remained a fact until 1979.[273]

However, the movement had succeeded in bringing religious nationalists individuals to the forefront of oppositional politics, thereby reducing the wide gap that had existed between the religious radicals and the National Front, as well as keeping a comprehensive non-aligned discourse of resistance alive amidst the decline of the secular opposition.[274] In the 1960s, its central members who had been released from prison would break away from the failure that was the Second National Front, and establish another crucial thought collective; the Freedom Movement of Iran.

The Freedom Movement of Iran

Whereas the National Front and the National Resistance Movement mostly operated within Iran's specific domestic context, the Freedom Movement of Iran cannot be understood outside of its international setting. The 1958 revolution in Iraq which resulted in the country's withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact and the United States' subsequent occupation of Lebanon, the Cuban revolution of 1959 which overthrew the pro-American regime, both serving as big blows to the Western bloc, and became a source of concern for the monarchy, as it revealed the fragility of pro-Western dictatorships, while introducing anti-colonial resistance movements across the world to the discourse of revolution and armed resistance.[275] The limited liberalisation that enabled the emergence of the Second National Front and the Freedom Movement appears in hindsight to have been an attempt by

[273] Abrahamian. *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. p. 459.
[274] Rajaee. *Islamism and Modernism*. p. 84.
[275] Parsa, Misagh. 1994 "Mosque of Last Resort: State Reform and Social Conflict in the Early 1960s", in Foran, John (ed.) *A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in Iran*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. pp. 135-159. p. 139; Hinnebusch. *The International Politics of the Middle East*. *p*. 27; Halliday, Fred. 2005. *The Middle East in International Relations Power, Politics and Ideology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 103.

the Pahlavi regime, most likely with the encouragement of the Kennedy Administration in the United States, to make some measures to prevent similar setbacks for the Western bloc in Iran.[276] However, despite the limited liberalisation of political space, the Second National Front was unable to repeat the success of the early 1950s, partially due to internal issues discussed previously in this Chapter, as well as operating within the limitations of a military dictatorship.[277]

Almost two years before Mosaddeq's symbolic letter to the Second National Front, Mehdi Bazargan contacted Mosaddeq and successfully received his blessing to form the Freedom Movement of Iran,[278] with the gesture reflecting the symbolic role of Mosaddeq, despite his having spent half a decade under house arrest.[279] According to Bazargan, the Freedom Movement, which was established in the late spring of 1961,[280] sought to preserve of the essence of the National Front whilst operating within the framework of the emerging Islamic movement in Iran.[281] Primarily operating within Iranian universities in its early stages, the movement would go on to produce several publications, pamphlets and speeches until its leadership was arrested after the notorious *Pānzdah-e Khordād* uprising on 5 June

[276] Ramazani. "Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-73". p. 361; Rajaee. *Islamism and Modernism*. p. 93.
[277] Bazargan claims that political space was severely limited between the Coup in 1953 and 1967 when he claims Mohammad Pahlavi took a step back and declared 'open political space' in Iran: See Bazargan and Najati. *Shast sāl khedmat va moqāvemat*. p. 339.
[278] Importantly, according to Nazih, the freedom movement was not meant to be in opposition to the Second National Front, but instead a movement under its umbrella. See: Hassan Nazih, in an interview recorded by Zia Sedghi, April 3, 1984.
[279] *Asnād neveshtāri-ye Nehzat-e Āzādi*, Vol. 1. Ordibehesht 25, 1340/May 15, 1961. *Payām-e jenāb-e āqā-ye Doktor Mosaddeq be Nehzat-e Āzādi-ye Irān*. Retrieved from: <http://www.mizankhabar.net/asnad/archive/archive.htm> Accessed on 16 April 2017, and will hereafter be abbreviated as Nehzat-e Āzādi, followed by the volume, part of volume, date, and title of declaration/speech/statement when applicable; Bāzargān and Najāti. *Shast sāl khedmat va moqāvemat*. *p*. 385.
[280] Similar confusion with regards to the details with regards to the date and individuals involved in the establishment of the Freedom Movement exists, however, contrary to the literature on the National Resistance Movement, there seems to be a correlation between the primary sources and the secondary literature with regards to its membership, leadership ideological discourse: Maliki and Katouzian. *Khaterāt-e Siyāsi-ye Khalil Maleki*. *p*. 126; Rajaee. *Islamism and Modernism*. p. 142; Abrahamian. *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. p. 462.
[281] Bāzargān and Najāti. *Shast sāl khedmat va moqāvemat*. pp. 374-5.

1963, before returning in the mid 1970s to play a critical role in overthrowing the Pahlavi regime and establishing the Islamic Republic of Iran.[282]

Bazargan and Hassan Nazih would immediately stress the importance of resistance and non-alignment, in their joint speech declaring the creation of the Freedom Movement in May 1961, with Bazargan continuing the discourse of the National Resistance Movement by stating that 'we are Mosaddeqists' as Mosaddeq is 'the great servant and pride of Iran and the East, but not [East] in the sense of the ignorant smear that regards his doctrine as strengthening communism, and being anti-foreign and isolationist.'[283] In presenting the first manifesto of the Freedom Movement, Nazih separated the objectives with regards to domestic and foreign policy:

> 1. With regards to domestic politics: returning the rights of the people based on the constitution, with the creation of a rule by the people for the people, and limitations of authorities and institutions based on separation of powers; extension of ethical principles based on Islam into the social and political realm while taking into account contemporary political and cultural circumstances.
> 2. With regards to foreign policy: struggle (*mojāhedat*) for assuring Iran's neutrality (*bitarafi*) between the Eastern and Western bloc and increasing solidarity between countries with whom we have historical, geographical, social, or religious links.[284]

In an era where the issue of free elections dominated the political debates in Iran,[285] the Freedom Movement would still emphasise the important of strengthening the role of Islam in the social and political fabric of the country, while also affirming the commitment to non-alignment. What is more, the Freedom Movement appears to have continued the terminology of the National Resistance Movement and to have used the word 'neutrality' to describe non-alignment.

As mentioned above, Iraq witnessed a revolution in 1958, and the revolutionary regime of Iraq withdrew from the Baghdad Pact in 1959, which resulted in the headquarters

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[282] Dabashi, Hamid. 1993. *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*. New York: New York University Press. p. 337.
[283]Bāzargān and Najāti. *Shast sāl khedmat va moqāvemat*. p. 380; Nehzat-e Āzādi, Vol. 1. *N/A*. *Matn-e sokhanrāni-ye mohandes Mehdi Bazargān, gharz az ta'sis-e Nehzat-e Āzādi-ye Irān*.
[284] Bāzargān and Najāti. *Shast sāl khedmat va moqāvemat*. p. 383-4; Nehzat-e Āzādi, Vol. 1 *N/A*. *Matn-e sokhanrāni-ye Mohandes Mehdi Bazargān, gharz az ta'sis-e Nehzat-e Āzādi-ye Irān*.
[285] Hassan Nazih, in an interview recorded by Zia Sedghi, April 3, 1984.

being relocated to Ankara and the security arrangement renamed the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).[286] Whereas the Second National Front members such as Sanjabi only level constructive criticism against the content of the treaty, the Freedom Movement condemned CENTO in May 1961, as they believed that it 'does not benefit the interest of any of the signatory countries, and nor does it benefit world peace.'[287] Instead, they believed that Iran's problems could be solved by the world powers and the monarchy by 'accepting Iranian neutrality' as it was seen as the 'appropriate solution', both for Iran's domestic and foreign challenges.[288] While conceding that 'no nation is able to confine its country' from international dynamics, Nazih stressed that international relationships should be based on mutual respect and agreements 'based on the recognition of the neutrality of countries like Iran'[289] Similar to the National Resistance Movement, the Freedom Movement reiterated that the illegitimate nature of both the Baghdad pact and CENTO meant that they were doomed from the outset, with sarcastic comparisons being made to the understandably forgotten 1938 Treaty of Sa'adābād between Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Afghanistan.[290]

Whilst deriding the utility and legitimacy of the security arrangement for the Western bloc, the Freedom Movement nevertheless stressed the significance of non-alignment as the increased 'fear of the outbreak of a brutal war [with the Soviet Union] makes the doctrine of neutrality increasingly necessary, and from the perspective of the small nations such as Iran; increasingly appealing.'[291] This appears to be a direct reference to two contemporary developments: Firstly, on 5 March 1959, Iran signed a bilateral defence agreement with the United States which further affirmed the Pahlavi regime's official alignment with the West

[286] Gasiorowski, Mark J. 1990. "Security Relations between the United States and Iran 1953-1978", in Keddie, Nikki R. and Gasiorowski, Mark J. (eds.) *Neither East nor West: Iran, The Soviet Union and the United States,* London: Yale University Press. pp. 145-165. p. 158.
[287] Nehzat-e Āzādi, Vol. 1, N/A. *Matn-e sokhanrāni-ye Hassan Nazih*.
[288] Ibid. pp. 25-6.
[289] Ibid. p. 26.
[290] Ibid. p. 44.
[291] Ibid. p. 45.

whilst putting the relatively peaceful relations with the Soviet Union at risk.[292] Secondly, as tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States continued to increase, an American military jet was shot down over Soviet territory, and on 5 May 1960 Nikita Khrushchev warned CENTO members that there would be 'serious repercussions' if it was discovered that one of its members states had provided a base for the jet.[293] Thus, amidst these uncertainties, the Freedom Movement conceded that the neutrality it was propagating could not be a foreign policy doctrine similar to that of Switzerland, but instead a foreign policy position that would make Iran 'a place free of provocation and conspiracy of one country against another.'[294] The position of neutrality was further clarified in their internal publications, where they stated that 'by neutrality we mean not joining and acceding to military alliances.'[295] However, their objectives would often transcend this minimalist understanding of non-alignment espoused by Modarres to also include ensuring 'the freedom and independence of smaller countries' as well as 'international justice' while:

> Striving towards increased solidarity between neutral peace-seeking countries with historical, geographical, cultural, social, or religious commonalities and working towards a union of Islamic countries in the form of effective support for achieving the aforementioned objectives.[296]

The emphasis on alliances based on collective history and identity marks the increasing trend to perceive Islam to be the appropriate path for ensuring a just status quo, with the Freedom Movement in 1961 also starting to argue for an Islamic alliance similar to what the Devotees had been arguing for over a decade earlier. This marks a continuation of the National Resistance Movement's focus on more local and religiously based alliance building, while showing a discrepancy with the discourse of Maleki and the Third Force that stressed the importance of the third force being global, as opposed to particularistic.

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[292] Bill, James A. 1989. *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*. London: Yale University Press. p. 119.
[293] Blake. *The U.S.-Soviet Confrontation in Iran*. p. 140.
[294] Nehzat-e Āzādi, Vol. 1, *N/A*. *Matn-e sokhanrāni-ye Hassan Nazih*.
[295] Keyhān 30 Khordād, 1340/June 20, 1961.
[296] Nehzat-e Āzādi, Vol.2 (1), Mordād 14, 1340/August 5, 1961. *Nashriyāt-e dākheli-ye Nehzat-e Āzādi-i Iran*.

The Freedom Movement thus condemned what they believe was the Pahlavi regime's betrayal of non-aligned unity, and unity with Muslim majority countries, who viewed the regime's pro-British position during the Suez Crisis of 1956, as 'embarrassing' and stated that the regime had sold 'Iran's strategic situation to the imperialists', claiming that rather than developing the country, the international security arrangements with the Western bloc would result in the draining of the nation's wealth.[297]

While the specific historical context the movement operated within granted more attention and criticism to the Western bloc, and the expansionism of the Eastern bloc with their 'aggressive Marxist culture' still remained a driving force in the normative dimensions of the non-aligned resistance discourse of the Freedom Movement.[298] For example, in their 'Ashura ceremony in June 1962, Ayatollah Taleqani stressed the equally dismal nature of the two blocs:

> … do you think anyone claims to be despotic? Regimes and leaderships, whether in the Eastern bloc or the Western bloc keep talking about freedom, equality, human rights, and democracy. But everywhere we see the rule of uncertainty, the creation of façades, propaganda, lies and schisms.[299]

Similarly, writing for the anniversary of the oil nationalisation bill in June 1962, the internal publication of the Freedom Movement praised Mosaddeq and stated that the bill marked the end of a century of Western foreign infiltration and domination, but added that:

> Any nations independence is based on economic independence … any country that is unable to stand on its own feet financially will eventually lose its independence by drifting towards either the Eastern or Western bloc.[300]

Thus, besides military alliances, economic independence was also seen as a crucial pre-requisite for maintaining non-alignment. What is more, the significance of the inclusion of the Eastern bloc despite having ceased direct involvement after the Azerbaijan crisis, and

[297] Nehzat-e Āzādi, Vol. 1, Tir 1340/June-July 1961. *Tahlili az tahavolāt-e siyāsi-ye akhir-e Irān*.
[298] Dabashi. *Theology of Discontent*. p. 336.
[299] Nehzat-e Āzādi, Vol. 1, 23 Khordād, 1341/June 13, 1962. *Sokhanrāni dar Majles-e Āshurā-ye Nehzat-e Āzādi dar Hosseiniye-e Dezāshib*.
[300] Nehzat-e Āzādi Vol. 2(1), 25 Esfand 1340/ Mach 16, 1962. *Nashriyāt-e dākheli-ye Nehzat-e Āzādi-i Iran*.

having lost its main tool for indirect involvement with the debilitation of the Tudeh Party during the era of dictatorship, is that the rejection of the two blocs suggests that non-alignment began developing as a discourse rather than a mere response to contemporary circumstances in the search for survival; it was the opposition's assertion of a normative middle ground between the two blocs. Nevertheless, as petrolic despotism intensified, and popular unrest finally reached a new height in the 5 June 1963 uprising, Bazargan, Taleqani, Sahabi and several key members were arrested, tried for treason, and received prison sentences of between two and ten years.[301] At the same time, the Freedom Movement's internal publications were halted by SAVAK, resulting in an era of silence for oppositional movements inside Iran.

However, the crackdowns forced the Freedom Movement to go abroad, with headquarters established in Egypt, where their radio station would continue to spread their message, while their members received military training before expanding internationally across European universities and to the point that by 1965, the movement had headquarters operating from Baghdad under Mohammad Tavasoli and Parviz Amin, Beirut under Ebrahim Yazdi, and Paris under Sadeq Qotbzadeh, with London becoming its main headquarters following the crackdown in 1963.[302] By the 1970s, the National Freedom Movement of Iran returned and took part in a broader thought collective in the form of the Revolutionary Movement, which would go on to overthrow the Shah and make its own particular understanding of non-alignment the official doctrine of the newly established Islamic Republic.

[301] *Keyhān*, 29 Mehr, 1342/October 21, 1963; *Keyhān*, 18 Dey, 1342/January 8, 1964.
[302] Gheissari. *Iranian Intellectuals*. p. 76; Bazargan and Najati. *Shast sāl khedmat va moqāvemat*. *p*. 381.

Part 3: Resistance and Revolution (1970-1989)

The period after the era of dictatorship has today been characterised as the era of 'petrolic despotism', in particular after 5 June 1963, which witnessed the dual process of increased authoritarianism domestically, and further alignment with the West internationally.[303] The former was witnessed in the widespread arrest of members of the National Front, Freedom Movement, and Ayatollah Khomeini's deportation to Turkey,[304] while the latter was evident in the regime enjoying the United States' 'perimeter defence strategy', which essentially called for a military build-up and surge in conditioned military and economic aid to the country. [305] As the Iranian economy grew in the 1960s, a relationship akin to the current relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States emerged, with military aid being substituted with arms trade agreements that 'grew from a negligible amount in 1964 to USD 127.7 million in 1970.'[306] U.S. arms sales to Iran would then grow a total of 600 per cent between 1972 and 1977.[307] Nonetheless, it was within this context that Mohammad Reza Pahlavi also managed to declare that Iran would have an 'independent national foreign policy' (*siyāsat-e mostaqel-e melli*),[308] which has strangely been compared by some scholars to the revolutionary slogan of 'Neither East nor West'.[309]

In reality, however, the Shah was never able to escape the shadow of Mosaddeq, and his image as a puppet of the West persisted.[310] Existing scholarship notes that the opposition continued to radicalise in tandem with the increasingly authoritarian tendencies of the Shah,

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[303] Ramazani. "Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-73". p. 311; Katouzian. *Political Economy of Modern Iran*. p. 234
[304] Abrahamian. *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. p. 426.
[305] Gasiorowski. "Security Relations Between the United States and Iran". pp. 146-7.
[306] Saikal, Amin. 1991. "Iran' Foreign Policy, 1921-79", in Avery, Peter, Arberry, Arthur, J. and Melville, Charles (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Iran. Vol. 7: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 426-56. p. 449; Gasiorowski, 'Security Relations Between the United States and Iran'. p. 153.
[307] Gasiorowski. "Security Relations Between the United States and Iran". p. 153.
[308] Ramazani. "Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-73". p. 311.
[309] See: Marschall, Christin. 2003. *Iran's Persian Gulf Policy: From Khomeini to Khatami*. London: Routledge Curzon. p. 6.
[310] Rajaee. *Islamism and Modernism*. p.92

with justifications for armed resistance and increasingly religious discourse became more prevalent as the secular opposition became severely damaged by the Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's authoritarian policies in the 1970s.[311] As is often noted in the literature, notable examples of pre-revolutionary radicalisation can be seen in the two movements *Sāzmān-e Mojāheddin-e Khalq* (The People's Mojahedin), who emerged from the Freedom Movement, and *Sāzmān-e Cherik-hā-ye Fadā'i-ye Khalq-e Irān* (The Guerrilla Organisation of the People's Devotees).[312] However, while impossible to exclude them from a study of revolution in Iran, the focus of this work is on one particular discourse of State Resistance. While their centrality in the former can be seen in their role in overthrowing the Shah, and responsibility for infusing Marxism into the revolutionary politics of Iran, as well as post-revolutionary debates on social and economic policy, their role in the latter is hard to identify, as I have not been able to identify noteworthy influence by the two movements on the discourse of State Resistance that is the focus of this thesis. To the contrary, their resistance resembled often that of the one undisputed enemy of the thought collectives studied so far; while arguing for resistance against the United States and the Shah, these movements appeared mostly ambivalent—if not favourable—towards the Eastern bloc, something which possibly can be explained by their strong ideological alignment to Marxism or Marxist-Leninism in the case of the latter, as opposed to for example Maleki's European-Iranian hybrid known as 'Iranian socialism'.[313] As such, while not denying that

[311] Mirsepassi. *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*. pp. 82-3; Chehabi. *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism*. p. 225; Behrooz, Maziar 2004. "The Iranian revolution and the legacy of the guerrilla movement", in Cronin, Stephanie (ed.), *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran: New perspectives on the Iranian left,* London: Routledge. pp. 189-206. p. 190; Mirsepassi. *Intellectual discourse and the politics of modernization*. p. 52.

[312] Dabashi. *Theology of Discontent*. p. 337; Rajaee. *Islamism and Modernism*. p. 144.

[313] See for example: written sources such as *Sāzmān-e Mojāhedin-e Khalq*. 1352/1973. *Bayāniyeh-ye sāzmān-e mojāhedin-e khalq dar pāsokh ba tohamāt-e rezhim*; 1353/1974. *Ehtezār-e emprātori-ye dollar,* which consistently references American imperialism, without virtually no mention of Soviet encroachments. The same trend is followed by the People's Devotees, regarded as non-aligned communists by Mirsepassi. *Intellectual discourse and the politics of modernisation*. p. 166. While they are unequivocal in their criticism of the United States but are limited to internal communist ideological critiques of the Soviet Union.

these Iranian actors have performed political and intellectual exercises that can qualify as resistance, they nevertheless find themselves situated outside the genealogical ancestry of what I have termed State Resistance.

Thus, when it comes to State Resistance, the decade that preceded the Islamic Revolution was the decade in which the language and values of Iranian proto-resistance, reformed through the Devotees' revolutionary politics and supplemented by the discourses of revolutionary intellectuals in the 1970s becomes formulated into more specific revisionist discourse of secondary resistance by synthesising with the resistance doctrines of non-alignment espoused by pre-1953 Members of Majles and their successors after 1953. The synthesis of the 'path of Mosaddeq' with the trajectory of revolutionary religious particularism during the 1970s would be formulated as 'Neither East nor West: An Islamic Republic' during the revolution in 1979.

The 'physical' explanation of this synthesis, rather than cynical conceptual appropriation, or intellectual theft,[314] can be understood through the journey of individuals and the formation of thought collectives. By the mid 1970s, we see that individuals situated in thought collectives which had previously been in diametric opposition to each other start to form a broad and short-lived thought collective that I have termed 'The Revolutionary Movement'. However, a key consequence of this amalgamation for the secular trajectory is the rejection of Khalil Maleki's dichotomisation of non-alignment, in which he divided the idea of a third force into a domestic struggle (the third force in particular), and a foreign struggle (the third force in general). Instead, 'Neither East nor West', in line with the discourse of the Devotees, emphasised the importance of the religious dimension of those who resist, and conditioned independence on authenticity. On the other hand, the international outlook and the language of this religiously driven resistance would attain the

[314] See for example: Arjomand. *Turban for the Crown*. p. 98.

characteristics of the non-aligned resistance discourses espoused by the seculars in various terminology from neutrality to the third force and negative equilibrium. Importantly, understandings of Islam, and the Islamic Republic in this context need to transcend the binaries of modernity-tradition or Islamism vs secularism, and instead be understood as a strict component of the State Resistance subjectivity; Islam as a source of authenticity becomes the discursive framework of independence, the Islamic Republic of Iran therefore means an independent Iranian state. As the Revolutionary Movement took over the state, the process of the Islamic Republic's consolidation was also reflected in the crystallisation of the discourse of State Resistance, which by then revolved around Ayatollah Khomeini and his experience as the first Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

Rejecting the Separation: 'Neither East nor West'

At the time when the Freedom Movement were espousing more neutralist discourses of resistance, a new trend emerged in intellectual circles in the form of a monolithic discourse of non-alignment conditioned by strict religious particularism. The intellectual groundwork for this search for authenticity appears to have been initiated by the famous revolutionary intellectual, associate of Khalil Maleki, Jalal Al-e Ahmad in 1963 through his famous concept of 'westoxification' (*gharbzadegi*), also translated as 'weststruckness' or 'occidentosis'. Conceptualising the influence and control of the West over Iran as a sickness, Al-e Ahmad argued that Iran had been 'been unable to preserve our historicocultural character in the face of the machine and its fateful onslaught' spearheaded by the West.[315] The question of authenticity, and the extent to which it has been undermined in Iran according to Al-e Ahmad for two centuries has rendered Iranians 'the crow mimicking the

[315] Al-e Ahmad, Jalal. 1984. *Occidentosis: A Plague from the West* (trans. R. Campbell). Berkley: Mizan Press Berkley. p. 31.

partridge', as it is entirely dependent both ideologically and materially on the West.[316] A lack of independence in economic, political and cultural terms, according to Al-e Ahmad would persist as long as Iranians 'remain consumers, so long as we have not built the machine' thereby being 'occidentotic'.[317] Whilst the details of Al-e Ahmad's key revolutionary discourse is beyond the scope of this Chapter and has been discussed extensively elsewhere,[318] one aspect of Westoxification that has remained missing in existing scholarship is that for Al-e Ahmad, Westoxification was not an illness transmitted from the geographic West:

> All I will say here is that "East" and "West" are no longer geographical or political concepts for me. For a European or an American, The West means Europe and America and the East, the USSR, China, and the Eastern European nations. But for me, they are economic concepts. The West comprises the sated nations and the east, the hungry nations. To me South Africa is a part of the West. Most of the nations of Latin America are a part of the East, although they are on the other side of the world … Thus the day is past when we could divide the world into two blocs, East and West, or communist and noncommunist … The political compass of leftists and pseudoleftists around the world has swung ninety degrees to the Far East, from Moscow to Beijing, because Soviet Russia is no longer the "vanguard of the world revolution" but rather sits around the conference table with other members of the nuclear club.[319]

Thus, whilst identifying an illness coming largely from the geographical West, as most of the book is concerned with various kinds of influence and ideological domination coming from Europe and the United States, Al-e Ahmad still makes the effort to also try to unify the Soviet Union as a part of the 'economic West' and thereby as a part of the illness that is Westoxification. Whilst claiming that this onslaught from the West has been less successful in the Muslim Majority World due to the 'Islamic totality' that defines it, Al-e Ahmad argues that Iran still remains westoxified due to the 'the aggregate of events in the life, culture, civilization and mode of thought of a people having no supporting tradition, no historical continuity, no gradient of transformation, but having only what the machine brings to

[316] Ibid.
[317] Ibid.
[318] See for example: Mirsepassi. *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization*. pp. 96-114; Dabashi. *Theology of Discontent*, 39-101.
[319] Al-e Ahmad. *Occidentosis*. pp. 28-30.

them.'[320] Thus, Al-e Ahmad endeavours on the question if there is 'a third possibility' for Iran, and argues for a complete socio-cultural and political uprooting of the westoxified elements and individuals in the country to the benefit of an authentic way of life.[321]

It is the perhaps greater reliance on nativism and rural authenticity that makes Al-e Ahmad only the first contributor, rather than the main instigator, of the discourse of particularism that would culminate into Neither East nor West, which had a much greater focus on Islamic particularism. This was particularly reflected in the writings of the religious intellectuals, Jalal al-Din Farsi and Ali Shariati, two colleagues briefly involved in the Freedom Movement, while the former was involved with the Devotees too.[322] In Farsi's 1965 book, *Takāmol-e mobārezeh-e melli* (Evolution of the National Struggle), we can identify what would become a key characteristic of the more religiously-oriented literature concerned with the Cold War; to provide a comprehensive assessment of the moral character of both the Eastern and Western bloc,[323] and identifying the threat from the Eastern bloc as mostly ideological, whereas the Western threat was perceived to be both ideological and military.[324] Similar to the arguments of the National Resistance Movement, and the Freedom Movement, Farsi also claimed that the United States' primary objective in Iran was to 'establish military bases on the soil of other countries', and that it did so through military coups, as well as conspiring against national liberation movements by providing 'shameless support' to submissive dictators and despots and forming military alliances with anti-national regimes (*hei'at-hā-ye zed-e melli*) that are imposed upon the people who now loathe them.[325] Such military expansionism, he claimed, enables the propaganda machinery of the

[320] Ibid. p. 34.
[321] Ibid. p. 133
[322] Safarharandi, Morteza. 1391/2011. *Nimeh-ye Penhān: Naghsh-e Āfarinesh-e 'Asr-e Tāriki*. Tehran; Daftar-e Pazhuhesh-e Mo'aseseh-ye Keyhān. p. 174; Martin. *Creating an Islamic State*. p. 132.
[323] See for example: Khamenei, Ali. 1345/1966. *Āyandeh dar qalamrow-e*. Mashhad: Chāpkhane-ye Khorasan; Mottahari, Morteza. 1362/1983-1984. *Ensān-e Kāmel*. Qom: Daftar-e Enteshārāt-e Eslāmi.
[324] Farsi, Jalal al-Din. 1345/1964-1965. *Takamol-e mobarezeh-e melli*. Paris: Abuzar. pp. 220-34.
[325] Ibid. p. 234.

Eastern bloc that he termed 'invisible rockets' (*mushak-hā-ye nāmar'i*), to convert this disdain into popular support for communism and consequently Soviet expansionism.[326]

Whereas the above-mentioned critique overlaps significantly with the secular trajectory studied thus far, Farsi's work stood out in the strong attention paid to the spiritual impact of the Cold War. While condemning the arms race between the two blocs, which smaller nations were forced into, thereby robbing 'them of their logic and judgement', he also stressed the great 'spiritual costs' (*ziyānhā-ye ma'navi*) inflicted upon them for the sake of material benefits and military expansionism.[327] Thus, unlike Maleki whose concern with the Soviet Union's ideological machinery was its role in creating a physical threat to Iranian independence and sovereignty through fifth columns, Farsi also identifies an equally significant moral and spiritual threat to the authentic Iranian self in the from materialist ideologies of the two blocs. As such, Farsi rejects the idea of Nehru's India being independent as he claimed it adhered to a socialist philosophy, which he believed meant that it constituted a part of the Eastern bloc.[328] Moreover, he criticised Nehru's doctrine of peaceful co-existence—one of the mantras of the early non-aligned movement—as too passive, and believed that the discursive challenges had to be resisted proactively, thereby pushing his call for resistance *towards* the realm of secondary resistance.[329]

Shariati produced similar discourse in more abstract and theoretical terms. For example, in a series of secret lectures held in the early 1970s that were widely circulated during the revolution, Shariati raised scepticism against the leftist struggles that sought to liberate Iran. While conceding that when 'the intention is to deny the West, to resist it, Marxism is considered the most effective weapon against it',[330] Shariati perceived this

[326] Ibid. pp. 234-5.
[327] Ibid. pp. 236-7.
[328] Ibid. p. 236.
[329] Ibid. pp. 239-246.
[330] Shariati, 'Ali. 1980. *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies: An Islamic Critique*. Berkeley: Mizan Press. p. 49.

resistance to be futile and self-destructive, as he pointed out that the Soviet Union itself sought to dominate those peoples who have 'fled the oppression and exploitation of Western capitalism.'[331] More importantly, however, was that 'Marxism itself is utterly a product of … this same West', and that it inevitably confronts religion, which is 'the most powerful obstacle and source of resistance to these [resistance] movements.'[332] The importance of the religious character of those who perform resistance is thus revived, though this time it is not espoused by a group of religious radicals based in southern Tehran, but instead by one of the indisputably most important intellectuals in modern Iranian history.

Therefore, rather than succumbing to the 'blank wall of communism' as a response to the bitter experiences with Western capitalism, Shariati called for a liberation struggle by pursuing 'a third road which it is the mission of the Third World to set out upon.'[333] Just like Farsi, Shariati claimed that spirituality, in particular Islam, could provide the third road that would result in emancipation, and called upon the religious intellectuals to fulfil their duty in constructing a doctrine, as well as encouraging a struggle, for the realisation of Islam as a 'living ideology'.[334] Shariati would then go on to describe the characteristic of the Islamic nation and consequently its resistance as being 'Neither East nor West', [335] instead it ought to be authentic; Islamic.

Similar discourses were apparent in the writings of the future revolutionary establishment, and more political figures appeared to utilise the introductions of translated foreign works as a means to (unsuccessfully) circumvent the heavy censorship at the time. A notable example is Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's translation of Jordan's Ambassador to Tehran, Akram Zeitar's book on the Palestinian Resistance in 1964 where he declared

[331] Ibid. p. 92.
[332] Ibid. pp. 49-51.
[333] Ibid. p. 93.
[334] Ibid. p. 96.
[335] Quoted in Lafraie, Najibullah. 2009. *Revolutionary Ideology and Islamic Militancy: The Iranian Revolution and Interpretations of the Quran*. London: Tauris Academic Studies. p. 123.

full support for global third world uprisings, including the Algerian War of 1954-1962, the Cuban Revolution of 1959 and the Palestinian struggle against Zionist occupation since 1948.[336] From the mid 1960s onwards, the current Leader of Iran, Hojjatoleslam Ali Khamenei began translating works by Sayyed Qutb, such as *Al-Mustaqabal li-hadha al-Din* (The Future of This Religion) under the title *Āyandeh dar qalamrow-e Eslām* (Future in the Realm of Islam), and *Ede'ā-nāmeh beh tamaddon-e gharb* (Indictment of Western Civilisation).[337] In the introduction to the former, Khamenei clearly adhered to the discourse of dual rejection, as he applauded Sayyed Qutb for giving 'a voice to an Islam that was inextricably interwoven with every aspect of society and politics' and concurred with Qutb's belief that the 'need to oppose the West was just as strong as the need to oppose Communism'.[338] The ultimate objective of this resistance, was Islamic government, which would be separate from the two; independent.[339]

The dual rejection of both the Eastern and Western bloc in their totality and the emphasis on Islam as the only correct middle way of resistance prevailed amongst the religious intellectuals, and this was evident in Ayatollah Khomeini's earlier declarations. For example, in a 1972 declaration to Muslim students in North America, Ayatollah Khomeini decried the current state of the Muslim majority world and identified absence of piety and reliance on the Western and Eastern (cultural) orders as its main symptom when he stated that:

> If the Muslim states and peoples had relied on Islam instead of relying on the Eastern or Western bloc—had placed before their eyes the luminous and liberating teachings of the Noble Qur'an, and then practiced those teachings—they would not be enslaved today by the Zionist aggressors, terrorized by American Phantoms, and at the mercy of the satanic cunning of the Soviet Union. It is the gulf between the Muslim states and the noble Qur'an that has plunged our people into

[336] Hashemi Rafsanjani, Ali Akbar. 1383(AHq)/1964. *Sargozasht-e Felestin*. Qom: Chāpkhāneh-ye Hekmat. p. 11.
[337] Hosseinian, Ruhollah. 1383/2004. *Chāhārdah Sāl Reqābat-e idiolozhik dar Irān*. Tehran: Markaz-e Asnād-e Enqelāb-e Eslāmi. pp. 704-706; Hovsepian-Bearce, Yvette. 2016. *The Political Ideology of Ayatollah Khamenei: Out of the Mouth of the Supreme Leader of Iran*. London: Routledge. p. 33.
[338] Quoted in Hovsepian-Bearce. *The Political Ideology of Ayatollah Khamenei*. p. 34.
[339] Khamenei. *Āyandeh dar qalamrow-e Eslām*. p. 2.

> this dark and catastrophic situation and placed the destiny of the Muslim peoples and countries in the hands of the treacherous policies of imperialism of the right and the left.[340]

Whilst providing a far more politicised and radical condemnation of the superpowers, Ayatollah Khomeini nevertheless adhered to the religious particularistic tradition in presenting Islam as the solution to the Cold War rivalry and imperialism, though without giving it a conceptual or political framework,[341] let alone a doctrine of non-alignment. However, by 1975 when oppositional movements such as the Freedom Movement began to seek Ayatollah Khomeini's blessing from his place of exile in Najaf, and began propagating his message within Iran, [342] the interaction between the clerical and non-clerical religious, and nationalist opposition began to increase, thereby establishing the broad and short-lived thought collective that I have termed the 'Revolutionary Movement'.

The Revolutionary Movement

Notable members of this movement who also contributed significantly to the discourse of resistance were Mehdi Bazargan, Yadollah Sahabi, Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleqani, Ebrahim Yazdi, from the National Front, National Resistance Movement, and the Freedom Movement, as well as religious laymen such as Abolhassan Bani Sadr, Mostafa Chamran, and political and intellectual clerics such as Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, Hojjatoleslam Ali Khamenei, Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazari, and Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Moffateh united under the leadership of Ayatollah Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini.[343] The result of this broad membership is evident

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[340] Khomeini, Ruhollah. 1981. *Islam and Revolution*. New Jersey: Mizan Press. p. 211.
[341] Of course, Khomeini did create a theory of Islamic Government and the theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist (*velāyat-e faqih),* however, this was mostly focused on the domestic structure of the state and its jurisprudential duties with virtually no attention being given to resistance and non-alignment. See: Khomeini. *Islam and Revolution*. *p*p. 27-150.
[342] Dabashi. Hamid, *Theology of Discontent*. p. 389.
[343] Chehabi. *Iranian politics and Religious Modernism*. p. 214; Hovsepian-Bearce. *The Political Ideology of Ayatollah Khamene*i. p. 13.

in Ayatollah Khomeini and his more religiously-oriented followers adopting the vocabulary of the non-aligned movement. This reformulated synthesised discourse of non-aligned resistance was conditioned by the rigid particularistic framework of Islamic authenticity established by the proto-resistance clergy, the Devotees, and the religious intellectuals such as Farsi and Shariati and would be espoused as 'Neither East nor West: An Islamic Republic'.[344]

With the Revolutionary Movement gaining momentum, the Shah succeeded in pressuring Saddam Hussein to expel Ayatollah Khomeini from Najaf. He moved to the French town of Neauphle-le-Château outside Paris, accompanied by Qotbzadeh and Ebrahim Yazdi from the Freedom Movement.[345] From France, Khomeini would go on to be interviewed and questioned by foreign governments and media and thereby further influence the political discourse of the revolution.[346] For example, in an interview with *Time Magazine*, on 21 December 1978, the reporter reflected the general Cold War concerns held by the West, when asking Ayatollah Khomeini what the future foreign policy of post-revolutionary Iran would look like, to which he responded 'our Islamic Republic will have friendly and respectful relations with all countries, as long as the respect is mutual.'[347] When asked about its relations with the superpowers, Ayatollah Khomeini, used the same word for non-alignment as Modarres, the National Resistance Movement and the Freedom Movement when he stated that Iran 'will not align itself with any bloc and will preserve its neutrality

[344] It appears to be the case that 'Neither East nor West' was likely adopted from Nasser's slogan for Egyptian non-alignment in the 1960s as it was used in its Arabic form by revolutionaries such as Ayatollah Khomeini and Mostafa Chamran, see for example in Nasser's speech at Salahdin Ayubi's grave in Syria in 1958 where he declared 'the state [the United Arab Republic] was established in the East, but is neither Eastern nor Western (*la sharqiyah la gharbiyah*), defends and does not threaten, preserve and not damage…'. See excerpt from the speech at: Ahram.org.eg. N/A. *Nasr va al-'arab biriz va al-jama'at*. Online: <http://www.ahram.org.eg/News/192042/4/554041/قضايا-واراء/جمال-والعرب-بيريز-والجماعات.aspx> Accessed on 29 April 2017, see also: Adie, W. A. C. 1968. "China's Foreign Policy." *The World Today* 24 (3). pp. 111–120. p. 111.

[345] Chehabi. *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism*. p. 242.

[346] Hovsepian-Bearce. *The Political Ideology of Ayatollah Khamenei*. p. 11.

[347] Khomeini, Ruhollah. 1389/2010-2011. *Sahifeh-ye Emām*. Vol. 5. Tehran: Mo'asseseh-e Tanzim va Nashr-e Āsār-e Emām Khomeini. p. 257.

(*bitarafi*).'[348] On 23 December 1978, Ayatollah Khomeini rejected CENTO as another form of 'imperialism' and indicated that the post-revolutionary state would immediately leave the security organisation.[349]

With regards to discursive changes, Ayatollah Khomeini's stay in Neauphle-le-Château also marked the evolution in the terminology of non-alignment used by the Iranian opposition, as it changed from neutrality (*bitarafi*) to non-alignment *('adam-e ta'ahod*), marking one of the earliest instances in which the Iranian opposition, and the Revolutionary Movement, adopts the official language of the non-aligned movement. In early January 1979, the Freedom Movement released a new manifesto, whose sixteenth principle declared:

> 16. Adopt a national policy based on the national interest and the needs of Iran with the current circumstances considered, and non-alignment (*'adam-e ta'ahod*) and refrain from of dependency and participation in military alliances as well as the pursuit of the political and economic interests of the greedy superpowers, [but instead] friendly relations with foreign countries based on the principle of negative equilibrium.[350]

The influence resulting from the interaction and cooperation with the Freedom Movement is striking when Ayatollah Khomeini, a couple of weeks later, on 17 January 1979 declared that:

> Our Islamic government will be independent … we will neither drift to the East, nor to the West as we want to become an independent non-aligned (*gheyr-e mote'ahed*) republic. We want friendly relations with all countries, as long as they do not interfere in our domestic affairs.[351]

Non-alignment, in its internationally recognised form, had thus by early 1979 become both a part of the political discourse of the Revolutionary Movement, and a promise of the revolution itself. Similar promises were also made internationally, such as on 18 January 1979, roughly a month before the final triumph of the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini met with a delegation from the government of India. The delegation congratulated

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[348] Ibid.
[349] Khomeini deflected the question and simply responded that the support for the revolution constituted a 'human duty', Ibid. p. 267.
[350] Nehzat-e Āzādi, Vol. 11 (1) Dey 1357/January 1979, *Marāmnāmeh va usul-e barnāmeh-ye Nehzat-e Āzādi-ye Iran*.
[351] Khomeini, Ruhollah. 1368/1989. *Siyāsat-e Khāreji va Ravābeṭ-e Beynolmellal Az Dīdgāh-e Emām Khomeini*. Tehran: Mo'asseseh-e Tanzim va Nashr-e Āsār-e Emām Khomeini. p. 28.

the revolutionary movement for 'choosing an independent policy', whilst stressing that it was important for Iran to join the non-aligned movement as soon as possible, and that Iran and India ought to improve relations as non-aligned independent countries.[352] In response, Ayatollah Khomeini concurred that post-revolutionary Iran 'will have the same independent [non-aligned] policy and will not allow any interference from either superpower.'[353]

This trend was affirmed by Ayatollah Taleqani in a speech marking the anniversary of Mosaddeq's passing on 5 March 1979, where Ayatollah Taleqani presented a more internationally recognised doctrine of non-alignment, in which he linked his past contributions to the present discourse when declaring that:

> Doctor Mosaddeq, like a skilled physician, put his finger on the sore spot and said that we ought to remain neutral (*bitaraf*) between the Eastern and Western world, [thereby] declaring the doctrine of non-alignment (*tez-e 'adam-e ta'ahod*). A doctrine which was later followed by Nasser, Nehru and Sokarno … Mosaddeq, in cooperation with the late Modarres opened this path, and this doctrine showed it is neither for Russia nor Britain, but for the nation.[354]

Ayatollah Taleqani thus identified a trajectory starting from Modarres to the non-aligned movement and believed that the Pahlavi regime had prevented Iran from taking part in the path pursued by other third world statesmen.[355] However, as will be apparent below, the decentralised nature of the Revolutionary Movement created a dialectic relationship between the path of Mosaddeq and the religious particularists, who both conceived non-alignment differently. Ayatollah Khomeini dodging of the Indian delegation's request for Iran to adhere to their doctrine of positive neutrality and not to interfere in the affairs of other states,[356] were early signs that a more revisionist conceptualisation formulated in the language of non-alignment would begin to surface as the Islamic Revolution became

[352] Khomeini. *Sahifeh-ye Emām*. Vol. *5*. p. 490.
[353] Ibid. p. 491.
[354] Enghelabe-Eslami.com. 1393/2014. *Sedā va matn-e sokhanrāni-ye Ayatollah Taleqani bar sar mazār-e zende yād Doktor Mohammad Mosaddeq: be Āyaollāh Kāshāni goftam puste kharboze zir-e pāiyat migozārand*. Online: <https://www.enghelabe-Eslāmi.com/component/content/article/21-didgagha/tarikhi/10664-2014-09-09-14-14-45.html> Accessed on 28 April 2017.
[355] Ibid.
[356] Khomeini. *Sahifeh-ye Emām*. Vol. *5*. p. 491.

victorious on 11 February 1979. Having returned to Iran on 1 February 1979, and the army submitting to the revolution ten days later, Ayatollah Khomeini and the revolutionaries arranged a referendum by the end of March where the 98.2 per cent of the people voted in favour for the establishment an Islamic Republic.[357] The day after the referendum, on 1 April 1979, 'the first day of God's government', Ayatollah Khomeini declared that:

> God Almighty has granted us His favour and destroyed the regime of arrogance by His powerful hand, which has shown itself as the power of the oppressed. He has made our great people into leaders and exemplars for all the world's oppressed, and He has granted them their just heritage by the establishment of this Islamic Republic … *I ask the [interim] government that, fearing neither East nor West and cultivating an independent outlook,* it purge all remnants of the tyrannical regime, which has left deep traces upon all the affairs of our country ... *thus demonstrating to the world true social justice and true cultural, economic, and political independence*.[358] (emphasis my own).

The first day of God's government also marked the first day since 1953 where resistance had become state policy, though significantly different now, as the resistance would be directed against cultural, economic, and political threats to Iranian independence; the foreign policy of non-alignment was accepted but supplemented by rigid requirements of true independence rooted in the Revolutionary Movement's understanding of Islam.

One of the earliest foreign policy measures taken by Bazargan's interim government which was established on 4 February 1979 was to withdraw Iran from CENTO on 12 March 1979 and seek membership in the Non-Aligned Movement a fortnight later,[359] to which Iran was admitted on 9 September 1979.[360] Just like the National Front government of Mosaddeq, Bazargan, a National Front, National Resistance Movement, Freedom Movement veteran, as well as a key member of the of the Revolutionary Movement, was to initiate the second era of independent, non-aligned foreign policy in modern Iranian history, an era which has lasted until today. Having been appointed as the managing director of the National Iranian

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[357] Dabashi. *Theology of Discontent*. p. xxiv; Katouzian, Homa. 2010. *The Persians: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Iran*. London: Yale University Press. p. 328.
[358] Khomeini. *Islam and Revolution*. *p*. 266; p. 268.
[359] Behnoud, Masoud.1377/1998-1999. *275 Ruz-e Bazargān*. Tehran: Nashr-e 'elm. p. 339; Hiro, Dilip. 1985. *Iran under the Ayatollahs*. London: Routledge. p. 283.
[360] *Documents of the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries*. p. 6.

Oil Company by Mosaddeq on 20 June 1951 to implement the doctrine of 'negative equilibrium', Bazargan was in 1979 appointed by Khomeini to lead the interim government under the banner 'non-alignment' for 275 days, before resigning in protest against the United States embassy siege where 52 diplomats and citizens were taken hostage on 4 November 1979.[361] Therefore, in many respects, Bazargan's career is reflective of both the trajectories of the 'path of Mosaddeq', which perhaps more accurately should be called the 'path of Modarres', and the 'path of Khomeini' and the point at which they intersected, contradicted, reformulated and thus generated the discourse of 'Neither East nor West' which the post-referendum governments would strive towards up until today.

This discourse was to become one of the key discourses of the newly established state, as was evident on the inaugural day of the 1st Majles on 28 May 1979 of the Islamic Republic of Iran, where the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini issued a statement that was read in parliament by his son, Hojjatoleslam Ahmad Khomeini, in which he declared that it was the duty of the elected officials to:

> Preserve the policy of neither East nor West in domestic, as well as foreign affairs. Guide those who, God forbid, are inclined towards the East or the West and, if they do not concede, isolate them. Moreover, if within ministries and other governmental bodies such views are upheld, which are against Islam and the nation, first of all resort to guidance and if such guidance is resisted then impeach those officials since the existence of seditious officials in high-ranking governmental positions could lead to the destruction of the country.[362]

The leader of the revolution thus valued true independence, espoused through 'Neither East nor West' to the point that it even justified the country's isolation, as he stated in response to sanctions imposed following the seizure of the United States embassy that 'we cannot become independent until we become isolated'.[363] However, contrary to some

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[361] Kinzer, Stephen. 2003. *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*. Hoboken: Wiley and Sons. p. 93; Mir-Fakhra'i, Hossein. 1393/2014. "siyāsat khārejeh-ye dowlat-e movaqat: az 'adam-e ta'ahod ta asl-e na sharqi na gharbi". *Faslnāmeh-ye pazhuhesh-hā-ye rāhbordi-ye siyāsat* (8), pp. 61-81.

[362] *Mashruh-e Mozākerat-e Majles-e Shorāye Eslāmi, Dowreh-ye 1,* Meeting number 1, p. 3. Retrieved from <http://www.ical.ir/index.php?option=com_contentandview=articleandid=2378andItemid=13> Accessed on 2 May 2017.

[363] Khomeini, Ruhollah. 1389/2010-2011. *Sahifeh-ye Emām*. Vol. 13. Tehran: Tanzim va Nashr-e Emām Khomeini pp. 274-281.

interpretations of this quote,[364] Ayatollah Khomeini did not espouse isolationism as a long-term policy, but instead as a step towards achieving and maintaining true independence, as he also stressed that if 'we remain in an enclosed environment we shall definitely face defeat'.[365] This becomes clear when contextualising the above-mentioned speech to the Majles to Articles 152, 153, and 154 of the 1979 Constitution, officially known today as the 'principle of neither East nor West' (*asl-e na sharqi na gharbi*).[366] Article 152 stresses the commitment to 'non-alignment with respect to the hegemonist superpowers' whilst called for 'mutually peaceful relations with all non-belligerent states.'[367] Article 153 prohibits any agreements resulting in 'foreign domination over the natural resources, economy, army, or culture of the country'.[368] The more recent additions stipulating (secondary) resistance against the world order is reflected in Article 153, where the objective of State Resistance is altered spatially to transcend Iranian border as it declared the Islamic Republic's support for 'the just struggles of the oppressed and deprived in every corner of the globe'.[369] Thus, the discourse which was once a slogan of protest against the state, had now become the law of the state; justice-oriented revisionism was codified in law.

Despite the legal ratification of Iranian secondary resistance, no consensus regarding the exact meaning of 'Neither East nor West' existed at the time. For Ayatollah Khomeini and his political inner circle which we will discuss below, the Iranian people and their Islamic Republic were the exemplars for all the world's oppressed, and ought to create a

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[364] Ramazani, Ruhollah K. 2008. "Iran's Foreign Policy: Independence, Freedom and the Islamic Republic", in Ehteshami, Anoushiravan and Mahjoob Zweiri (eds.) *Iran's Foreign Policy from Khatami to Ahmadinejad*. Reading: Ithaca Press. pp. 1-16. p. 9

[365] Merip.org. 1980. "Khomeini: "We Shall Confront the World with Our Ideology"'. Retrieved Online: <https://merip.org/1980/06/khomeini-we-shall-confront-the-world-with-our-ideology/> Accessed on 3 October 2021.

[366] Khamenei.ir. 1383/2004. *Asl-e Siyāsat-e Khāreji dar Qānun-e Asāsi*. Online: <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/others-article?id=17340> Accessed on 4 May 2017.

[367] The Islamic Republic of Iran. 1980. *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran*. Berkeley: Mizan Press. p. 82.

[368] Ibid.

[369] Ibid. p. 83.

new path for non-alignment where they would demonstrate *true* cultural, economic, and political independence. In Ayatollah Khomeini's *Nowruz* (New Year) message on 21 March 1980, he elaborated further on the new conceptualisation of independence and the resistance required for achieving this comprehensive independence:

> It is our duty to stand firm against the superpowers, as we are indeed able to do, on condition that the intellectuals stop following and imitating either the West or the East and adhere instead to the straight path of Islam and the nation. We are at war with international communism no less than we are struggling against the global plunderers of the West, headed by America, Zionism, and Israel … Dear friends! Be fully aware that the danger represented by the communist powers is no less than that of America; the danger that America poses is so great that if you commit the smallest oversight, you will be destroyed. Both superpowers are intent on destroying the oppressed nations of the world, and it is our duty to defend those nations.[370]

Unlike the resistance encouraged by the National Front, the National Resistance Movement, and the Freedom Movement which was limited to the political and economic domination and presence of foreigners, first the Russian and British Empires, then the Soviet Union and finally the United States, Ayatollah Khomeini amalgamates the religious particularistic discourse into the concept of non-alignment. This marks another break with the past, as this interpretation of non-alignment could no longer be limited to resisting concession, foreign military presence and alliances as it was according to Mosaddeq and his followers, nor could the resistance be dichotomised between a domestic and foreign struggle as was done in the case of Khalil Maleki's theory of the third force. Therefore, according to the Revolutionary Movement, without Islam, there is no independence, without independence, one cannot be non-aligned; Islam becomes the power of resistance and the solutions to the country's problems is also reflected in Mohammad Mofatteh's speech from 23 July 1979 at Saheb al-Zaman Mosque in Tehran:

> thus, neither East nor West … [it is] incredible (*'ajib*) [that] we have our own asset that we are not aware of! Islam, Islam. We want justice, equality, anti-discrimination, anti-exploitation (*zed-e estesmār*), anti-colonialism (*zed-e este'mār*). This exists in our Quran and our Islam, and in our clergy, why have we distanced ourselves from this valued asset? [371]

[370] Ibid. p. 287.
[371] Moffateh, Mohammad. n/a. *Hokumat-e Eslāmi*. Tehran: *Hezb-e Jomhuri-ye Eslāmi*. p. 22

This new particularistic conceptualisation of non-alignment was not limited to Ayatollah Khomeini and Mofatteh, but also theorised in the writings and lectures of Bani Sadr and Chamran, who would go on to specify how the future revolutionary state ought to perceive non-alignment. The former, who would go on to become the first President of the Islamic Republic on 8 January 1980, frequently wrote editorials for the newspaper '*Enqelāb-e Eslāmi'* (The Islamic Revolution)*,* in the immediate post-revolutionary era.[372] On 8 August 1979, he wrote a warning to Bazargan's interim government with regards to the future of the revolutionary state's relationship to the Non-Aligned Movement, in which he highlighted the following shortcomings of the movement in its current form:

- A portion of the non-aligned countries are non-aligned in name, but not non-aligned in practice.
- An even larger number of these countries do not extend the concept of non-alignment to include full independence. They refrain from participating in military treaties but are dependent in every other sense of the word.
- Another group of these countries seek to use the weakness of other non-aligned countries and exploit global political circumstances to assume a leadership role over the 'third power' (*qodrat-e sevvom*). Meaning they take the decision-making authority of these countries in their own hands and whenever necessary intervene in the affairs of these countries and follow the footsteps of the superpowers in mobilising forces (*lashkarkeshi*) against them.
- And none of these countries possesses a correct understanding of independence, and as a result, none of these countries, whether individually or collectively, strive for leaving and removing the international order built on the domination of the great powers.[373]

By accepting the international order, Bani Sadr believed that the non-aligned countries would become 'the arena for competition between the two superpowers', and as such, persistent resistance is crucial for maintaining true independence, without specifying the desired change in the international system.[374] This stands in sharp contrast to the secular thought collectives who were more inclined towards gaining an equal position in the international community. However, Bani Sadr argued instead that resistance would no longer be directed towards imminent threats to the political and economic independence of

[372] For a collection of his articles, see: Bani Sadr, Abolhassan. 1358/1979. *Sad maqāleh az sarmaqālehā-ye ruznāmeh-ye Enqelāb-e Eslāmi Eslāmi*. Tehrān: Payām-e Āzād.
[373] Bani Sadr. *Sad maqāleh*. *p*. 118.
[374] Ibid.

Iran (primary resistance), but that the post-revolutionary state instead ought to embark on an ambitious revisionist project against the unjust international order as a whole, marking the Revolutionary Movement's transition towards secondary resistance. Unlike Ayatollah Taleqani and the previous thought collectives that consistently stressed their solidarity with the global non-aligned movement, Bani Sadr claimed that countries such as India, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Algeria and Cuba are on the path to becoming 'fully dependent to an extent in which it is impossible for them to speak of themselves as non-aligned'.[375] The reality, he argued, was that 'the non-aligned countries, in comparison with the era of Mosaddeq and Nehru are more aligned, dependent and further attracted and integrated into the hegemonic (*soltegar*) world order.'[376] He was therefore reluctant to espouse international non-aligned solidarity and stressed that the Islamic Revolution should not be associated with these non-aligned countries as it pursued its own path, and that Iran's experience ought to serve as a lesson for the non-aligned world, as 'the successful experience of our Islamic Revolution is the total rejection of the idea that one ought to choose between the world powers' rivalries'.[377]

In rejecting both superpowers based on the understanding that they are both equally unjust forces of domination and subordination, Bani Sadr cited their historic records in invading, overthrowing and dominating foreign countries, and sated that non-alignment is simply 'empty words on a piece of paper' if the presence of the superpowers is not removed, both in the form of their military bases, political alignment and the presence of their corporations.[378] Instead, he encouraged non-aligned countries to 'genuinely accept and together take part in a program for full political, economic, social and cultural independence'

[375] Ibid.
[376] Ibid. p. 120.
[377] Ibid. pp. 119-120.
[378] Ibid. p. 119

and rid themselves of dependence so they can 'support each other in taking charge of their own destiny.'[379]

Whilst this might appear as a call for global resistance, as espoused by Maleki and Bazargan, Bani Sadr follows Ayatollah Khomeini in the new conceptualisation of dependence and independence that reflects the break with the past as he did not only mean political and economic dependence, but instead he highlights the importance of creating unity by resisting the social, cultural and political forces of the great powers as well, and argued that only 'the monotheistic society' (*jāme'eh-ye towhidi*),[380] would be able to do so as there was no other social blueprint (*tarh*) 'compatible with the theory of negative equilibrium or true independence (*esteqlāl-e vāqe'i*).'[381] This proves another example in which the meaning of the same vocabulary is transformed as it moves between thought collectives. In this version, negative equilibrium is equated to the emerging concept of true independence. However, unlike negative equilibrium, true independence could only be achieved by means of Islam, as only Islam was able to eliminate the physical and ideational presence of both East and West that was highlighted and condemned by the religious intellectuals. Without Islam as the guiding revisionist tool for resistance against both the Eastern and Western bloc, non-alignment becomes an empty slogan.

Chamran would produce a similar line of argument during his Ramadan lecture series in the summer of 1980 at *Kānun-e Towhid* in Tehran. Chamran, who at the time was serving as the Islamic Republic's first Minister of National Defence, followed the trend set by the religious intellectuals by providing an analysis of the two blocs, in which he criticised the Eastern bloc for lack of 'spirituality', meaning a lack of Islam, and the Western bloc for excessive materialism as well as the general points made with regards to aggression,

[379] Ibid. pp. 119-20.
[380] The 'monolithic society' is a theory of an ideal classless Islamic society presented Ali Shariti in his lecture at Hosseiniyeh-e Ershād during 1960s and 1970s, for a summary see: Dabashi. *Theology of Discontent*. *p*. 130.
[381] Ibid. p. 120.

imperialism and colonialism.[382] Having done so, Chamran went on to explain the meaning of Neither East nor West:

> In our opinion, both East, and West are rejected. The slogan 'Neither East nor West' (*lā sharqi lā gharbi*) is our slogan. Contrary to those who think that Soviet Russia or the Eastern Order (*nezām-e sharqi*) are their friends and that only the Western Order (*nezām-e gharbi*) is their enemy, for us both are the same, and no system except for the Islamic system is acceptable.[383]

By referring to *nezām* (order, regime), rather than blocs, Chamran also operated with a more comprehensive understanding of 'true independence', in which the cultural, ideological, and economic nature of the state is considered, as well as the physical presence of foreigners. As such, 'the Communist Soviets and China represent the Eastern order, and the Capitalist United States represents the Western order', and it is between these two orders that the revolutionary state of Iran, he argued, intended to establish a 'middle bloc' (*boluk-e miyāneh*) or a 'third world' (*donyā-ye sevvom*). Unlike Maleki's third force in general, and similar to Bani Sadr, Chamran was also critical to Tito, Nasser, Sukarno, and Nehru's position in the third world, as he also that the 'third world must be comprehensive, and not only find itself between the two blocs politically, but also have a philosophy independent from the two orders.'[384]

As such, Chamran appears more sceptical than for example Rafsanjani when it comes to global third world victories such as the Cuban revolution, as he believed that Fidel Castro, despite his attempts to 'remain independent from the two blocs' was nevertheless in philosophical terms dependent on the 'Russian order', and consequently, he concluded that 'Cuba cannot be considered a middle country or a part of the third world.'[385] Revolutionary Iran, he argued, accepted neither the Eastern order nor the Western order, and its philosophy 'remains authentic as it rejects the two philosophies [of the Eastern and Western orders] and

[382] Chamran, Mostafa. 1366/1988. *Ensān va Khodā*. Tehran: Bonyād-e Shahid Chamrān. pp. 115-121.
[383] Ibid. p. 122.
[384] Ibid.
[385] Ibid. p. 123.

relies on its own philosophy [Islam].'[386] The particularistic conceptualisation of non-alignment, which merges the cultural and ideological discourses of the domestic realm with foreign policy, meant that:

> in the current world, nobody can be truly politically or economically independent from the two world blocs unless they are philosophically independent and find themselves in the third world … [but] unfortunately a large group of revolutionaries in the world, and from industrial countries only see one side of the issue, but not the other.[387]

The 'other side' Chamran is referring to is the competing bloc that the revolutionaries would receive support from in order to resist the encroaching superpower. He therefore criticised revolutionary movements who 'sell themselves to Soviet Russia and take part in their front' in fighting the United States, and perhaps surprisingly, cites the resistance of the Palestinian Liberation Movement—revered by Rafsanjani—as an example of dependent and futile resistance, as he believed that the Palestinian resistance at the time adhered to Soviet policy on important political questions in the West Asia.[388] Thus, according to this new definition, only 'real Islamic governments' can be non-aligned, since only they can be considered as members of the 'middle bloc'.[389] Emphasis on *real* Islamic governments is of particular importance, as all versions of Islam do not fit Chamran's criteria for resistance and independence:

> Indeed, America talks about Saudi Islam, it praises it, strengthens it, because it does not fear that type of Islam. That religion is the opium of society, it is the shackles and chains of captivity that keeps the desolate Arabs chained and shackled while their vast oil resources are poured into the pocket of foreigners … But the Islam of Iran, which started a revolution against East and West, frees humans from the servitude of the superpowers and materialism. Iranian Islam brought down the 2500-year-old *tāghuti*[390] regimes of this land, expelled the colonialists, and put the future of the nation in the hands of the people.[391]

Whereas Bani Sadr presented a theory of the monolithic society, Chamran appears to leave the question regarding the exact nature of Islam open. However, an assumption in his

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[386] Ibid. p. 123.
[387] Ibid.
[388] Ibid.
[389] Ibid. p. 122.
[390] Quranic term that was applied to the Pharaoh, meaning idolatrous.
[391] Bonyad-e Shahid Chamran. 1361/1982. *Avvalin sālgard-e shahādat-e shahid doktor Mostafā Chamrān*. N/A: Bonyād-e Shahid Chamrān. p. 119

argument is that authentic Islam constitutes a force of resistance and independence. This resembles Bani Sadr's statement from 24 July 1979 that the most pressing issue for Iran in order to regain its military independence was to cut off its 'cultural dependence on the West', before cutting off the other forms of dependence such as military equipment and training.[392] According to Bani Sadr, only then would the army become 'the army of the oppressed people of Iran (*artesh-e khalq-e mostaz'afin-e Iran*).[393]

Seven months later, he was to assume the Presidency, as the government of the country was transferred to the newly established republican institutions of the state, and the Islamic Republic's discourse of non-aligned resistance, which had been brewing amongst the Iranian opposition for six decades, was immediately put to the test as the international sanctions regime from 1979, the foreign invasion in 1980 and geopolitical tensions became a consistent feature of the life of the newly established revolutionary state. However, as it entered the state, 'Neither East nor West' would remain an essentially contested dictum. For example, in 1983, Mehdi Bazargan presented the 'ideal' foreign policy doctrine of the Freedom Movement to President Ali Khamenei, where he stated that:

> … our foreign policy in general is based on independence, national rule, territorial sovereignty of Iran, mutual respect, and friendship with other countries, and with regards to the superpowers, we should follow Mosaddeq's policy of negative equilibrium with the slogan of 'Neither East nor West' of the revolution.[394]

Despite being nearly three years into a war of attrition against Saddam Hussain's Iraq, Bazargan's recommendation remains loyal to the secular pre-revolutionary discourse of non-alignment, in which the doctrine of negative equilibrium is equated to the revolutionary slogan of 'neither East nor West' as the ideal foreign policy doctrine for the recently established revolutionary state. However, the tension between the secular and religious tradition of resistance would continue as his interpretation was challenged by other

[392] Bani Sadr. *Sad Maqāleh*. p. 80.
[393] Ibid.
[394] Nehzat-e Āzādi, Vol. 13 (2), *Nāmeh-ye Mohandes Bāzargān be Hojjatoleslām Khamenei, Dabir-e Koll-e Hezb-e Jomhuri-ye Eslāmi*, 21 Tir 1361.

aspects of the Revolutionary Movement, which would gradually dissolve as many of its members would spread across institutions, factions, and opposition groups within, and outside of the Islamic Republic.

The Thought Collective of the Imam

Perhaps the most central thought collective for understanding the Islamic Republic of Iran's discourse of State Resistance today, the final thought collective, which I have defined 'the Thought Collective of the Imam' during a five-year period between 1983-1988, is also the most erratic one. Due to the major historical events, namely the Ba'athist invasion of Iran on 22 September 1980, as well as a chain of assassinations conducted by movements and organisations opposing the political clergy during the first half of the 80s, few individuals will feature as consistently as for example Mosaddeq, Maleki and Bazargan did in the earlier parts of this Chapter. Still, I have chosen to continue the use of thought collectives for this period as I believe that in analytical terms it is more helpful to study the discourse of State Resistance espoused by Ayatollah Khomeini and his close associates, rather than that of the post-revolutionary institutions which still found themselves in the process of reidentification, formation and consolidation. As such, Khomeini's inner circle becomes the final thought collective, as the period that followed reflected a greater level of consolidation, both discursive and institutional with regards to resistance to the point that it is more appropriate to discuss the evolution of the discourse from an institutional perspective. Therefore, the Thought Collective of the Imam constitutes the bridge between oppositional and establishment resistance in Iran and is the final piece of the resistance subjectivity of the Islamic Republic which would be espoused by the establishment after his passing on 6 June 1989. However, while the discourse is studied as oppositional, the reality of having control over the state apparatus and the responsibilities that comes with it makes

it crucial to note that practical considerations and issues of expediency would become increasingly important during this time, reaching its crux with 'Iran's secret contacts and deals with the United States' related to the purchase of arms, which were exposed in 1986 as the Iran-contra affair.[395] Nevertheless, pragmatism and issues of expediency during the first decade were more related to domestic politics rather than resistance, as it was being practiced and espoused in its most fundamental sense against Saddam Hussain and his allies.

By 1983, radical changes in personnel had occurred to the point that speaking of the 'Revolutionary Movement' as a thought collective is no longer viable as an analytical category. Notable departures were Ayatollah Morteza Mottahari and Mofatteh, who were assassinated by Forqan on 1 may and 18 December 1979. Ayatollah Taleqani had passed away on 9 September 1979, and President Bani Sadr was impeached by the Majles on 20 June 1981 and escaped the country with the leader of the Mojahedin, Masoud Rajavi the next day, the same day that Chamran was killed on the battlefield against Ba'athist Iraq. Ayatollah Beheshti was assassinated in a bomb plot by the Mojahedin on 28 June 1981.

Amidst this violence and instability, notable individuals such as Ayatollah Mohammad Mousavi Khoeiniha, Ali Akbar Velayati, Ali Akbar Mohtashamipur, Hojjatoleslam Ali Khamenei, and Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani start to gain increased prominence in the politics of the Islamic republic. The main difference between Khomeini's inner circle and the Revolutionary Movement is that the former transforms the resistance discourse firmly into the realm of secondary resistance; by becoming a state discourse where the ideology is espoused as an international actor, resistance is no longer meant to only achieve justice for Iran domestically. Instead, the spatial change of resistance becomes more evident as resistance is increasingly meant to change the existing world order, as Ray Takeyh points out:

[395] Katouzian. *The Persians*. p. 345.

> … Khomeini and his slogan of "neither East nor West" must be differentiated from the typical Iranian reaction against the superpower struggle. His ideal governing order, his third way, called for a militant strategy of exporting the revolution. Thus, Iran's Islamist message would contest both American capitalism and Soviet communism.[396]

Contrary to Takeyh and the neoconservative, Orientalist and other reductive approaches to Iranian politics, this revisionist discourse is not simply 'fundamentalist' or 'traditionalist' thinking.[397] For example, the nodal points of Khomeini's discourse were not simply 'Muslim' vs. 'infidel', as they often were in the Qajar era and by the Devotees, and it will be made clear that suggestions that his world view was solely dichotomised into the oppressed (*mostaz'afin*) and the oppressors (*mostakbarin*) is an unsophisticated simplification. Instead, an Islamic particularism was espoused as the most efficient, if not *only,* appropriate vehicle for resisting empires and elevating the Muslim world on the world stage. However, this particularism is not rooted in a sense of superiority, but instead strives towards authenticity achieved through Islam; authenticity means true independence, and only the truly independent can produce true resistance.

Domestically, the Thought Collective of the Imam would use the various arenas made available following the revolution, such as Friday prayers, public speeches, and official publications to further produce and refine the discourse of the post-revolutionary state. A notable publication which included writings and speeches by nearly all the individuals mentioned above was *Pāsdār-e Eslām* (Guardsman of Islam), a monthly magazine owned by The Publicity Office of the Qom Seminary *(Daftar-e tablighāt-e howzeh-ye 'elmiyeh-ye Qom*), which began publishing in February 1982 and is still active at the time of writing. Managing editor, Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Hassan Rahimian, an active proponent of the particularistic interpretation of 'Neither East nor West', wrote in 1983 that all states today were to a varying extent dependent on either superpower, and as such 'there

[396] Takeyh. *Guardians of the Revolution*. p. 20.
[397] See for example: Chehabi. *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism*. p. 214; Takeyh. *Guardians of the Revolution*. p. 74.

are no signs of true independence (*esteqlāl-e vāqei*).[398] According to Rahimian it was within this context that the Islamic Revolution, with the slogan of 'Neither East nor West' which meant only dependence on the 'power of god' (*qodrat-e ellāhi*) and the self-sacrifice of the masses, was able to rise up against the superpowers and resist them. He further argued that this was an example set by Iran for the rest of the world to follow.[399]

The Islamic Revolution, and the slogan of Neither East nor West as the ideal third path for the rest of the world to emulate was also emphasised as the crux of State Resistance by Mousavi Khoeiniha, who at the time was a notable student activist with close ties to Ayatollah Khomeini:

> … against the truth of the revolution in which the whole umma shouted and is still shouting 'neither East nor West: Islamic republic', the westerners, especially the United States propagates that the Islamic Republic of Iran is gravitating towards the Soviet Union in order to reduce the appeal of the revolution among Muslims and the oppressed.[400]

Similar to Rahimian, Khoeiniha argued that the Islamic Revolution's roots are heavenly, 'not eastern, nor western and is opposed to both' of the superpowers.[401] Non-alignment was thus seen as a natural extension of Islam, which had generated an 'independent policy' that is 'neither eastern nor western', but instead a religious blueprint for an ideology 'independent from all ideologies (*makāteb*) based on materialism'.[402] Ideological independence thus meant political independence, and as such, the Thought Collective of the Imam believed that they had devised an 'international policy of Islam' which served as the only 'redemptive (*nejātbakhsh*) ideology for humanity'.[403]

Having increasingly transcended the realm of primary resistance after the success of the revolution which brought an end to Western military presence and domination of the country, expelling the empires from the minds of the people gained increasing prominence

[398] *Pāsdār-e Eslām* No.40 Mehr 1366/September-October1983. p. 3..
[399] Ibid.
[400] *Pāsdār-e Eslām* No.18 Khordād 1362/May-June 1983. p. 47.
[401] *Pāsdār-e Eslām* No.20 Mordād 1362/July-August 1983. p. 24.
[402] Ibid.
[403] *Pāsdār-e Eslām* No.69 Shahrivar 1366/August-September 1987. p. 7.

among the priorities of Ayatollah Khomeini's inner circle, as is reflected in Rafsanjani's speeches, who at the time served as chairman of the Majles. In his defence of the Cultural Revolution which was initiated during the spring of 1980 in order to 'changing and compiling new university courses and curriculum appropriate for the system of Islamic Republic',[404] he declared that Iran was not as harmed by 'cultural colonialism' (*este'mār-e farhangi*) as African and Latin-American countries due to the 'authenticity and the depth that Islam has in Iran, as well as the strong presence of the clergy' in Iranian society which had prevented the minds of the people from getting colonised.[405] However, the process of a cultural revolution was still necessary, not only in Iran but in the rest of the Muslim majority world, and as such, an authentic, decolonised mind, achieved through culture and education became the essence of the 'export of the revolution':

> My emphasis on exporting the revolution is not meant to mobilise the military (*lashkarkeshi rāh biandāzim*), or even dispatch guerrilla fighters (*cherik*) to other countries. However, if it happens to be necessary, we will send dispatch guerrillas, though this path is a limited one which is unlikely to be needed … this need might occur in a country like Lebanon, but what is important is that Lebanon is under the influence of our culture and Islamic Revolution, not the presence of a few hundred [revolutionary] guardsmen.[406]

Having succeeded on the national stage in establishing a truly independent system in accordance with Islam, the Thought Collective of the Imam began to metamorphose State Resistance into a more concrete and active revisionist policy. In dialogue with the international community, it becomes clearer that Neither East nor West as the discourse of State Resistance is a justice-oriented worldmaking discourse as it seeks to revise the current international order. In subsequent speeches at the United Nations' General Assembly during his tenure as Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1981 and 1997, Ali Akbar Velayati would

[404] *Jahād* No.21 Ābān 1360/November 1981. p. 24.
[405] *Dāneshkadeh-ye enqelāb* No.40 Mehr 1366/August-September 1987. pp. 21; Khomeini also shared this view of exporting the revolution See: Ramazani, Rouhollah K. 2013. *Independence without Freedom: Iran's Foreign Policy*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press. p. 81.
[406] Ibid. p. 26.

present a clearer understanding of the objectives of the Islamic Republic's resistance discourse that it is seeking to export to the (Muslim) world:

> Today a very basic question that we must ask ourselves is where are we heading … can we have any hope that the United Nations will be able to combat the monsters of hunger and poverty, aggression and war, colonialism, and exploitation while most members of the organisation are being squeezed in the claws of one super-power or the other? It is very unfortunate that some of us, as representatives of our nations, have even lost the most natural human sensibilities with regard to the most horrendous acts of the super-Powers today.[407] [408]

Citing the Zionist occupation of Palestine which at the time had lasted for 36 years, and the more recent occupation of Lebanon as the epitome of this injustice, Velayati claimed that 'the imperialist oppressors have decided to oppose the freedom and independence of all Muslim nations of the world', and called upon the international community, but especially the Muslim nations to support the Palestinian cause in ending the occupation.[409] Fighting against these injustices was not purely ideological, but a broader part of the proactive resistance espoused by the newly established Republic:

> The great danger inherent in failing to confront aggressors forcefully is not only that it helps the continuance of aggression in a particular case; the great danger lies also in the fact that such an attitude will persuade and encourage all other potentially aggressive forces. If some of the regimes ruling over Islamic countries had not adopted a submissive, impotent attitude with regard to the Zionist non-entity and its gun-toting supporter, the big satan, surely the atheist government of the Soviet Union would not have dared enter the Islamic land of Afghanistan … thus, the armed resistance of an invaded nation will not only benefit those fighting against aggression but also guarantee the independence and national sovereignty of all other nations.[410]

Whereas the export of the revolution would enlighten the oppressed and enable their resistance, a more physical aspect of it—resistance to aggression—is also encouraged as the only way to prevent further aggression, a mantra which would characterise the revolutionary

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[407] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Thirty-Eighth Session,* 13th Plenary Meeting 30 September 1983 A/38/PV.13. p. 187 Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/38/PV.13> Accessed on 16 February 2019.

[408] It is worth noting that the English translations of the United Nation's speeches used here are the official translations provided by the Iranian delegation and is why they are used here despite their inconsistent quality. The reader is warned that these translations, especially the earlier ones, have been translated by individuals with limited language proficiency and a strong ideological bias that sometimes compromises their accuracy. For example, '*rezhim-e sahiyunisti va hāmi-ash, sheytān-e bozorg'* (the Zionist regime and its supporter, the Great Satan) is translated 'the Zionist non-entity and its gun-toting supporter, the big satan'. I have tried to avoid using examples in which the translations do not accurately reflect the statements made in Persian, but the reader is advised to review the Persian versions if possible.

[409] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Thirty-Eighth Session*. p. 188.

[410] Ibid.

state's foreign policy discourse in the 1980s. Explaining that the Islamic Republic of Iran 'rejects the present international order, in which our world is divided into the two poles of East and West', [411] as superpower aggression justified on the pretext of their pursuit of vital interests, but in fact rooted in a sense of racial superiority, Velayati declared:

> The government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran, inspired by the divine teachings of Islam, believe that all human beings are equal … we believe, therefore, that our only hope lies in the collective movement of the oppressed nations of the world in the direction of ending the hegemony of the super-powers.[412]

Velayati would continue to justify Iranian revisionism in subsequent appearances, such as in 1985 where claimed that the United Nations 'has always been mainly concerned with the preservation of the status quo',[413] and that its inability to enforce justice constitutes its main shortcoming.[414] While the immoral character of imperialism and neo-colonialism was condemned consistently from the Modarres era, the Iranian experience during the Iran-Iraq War constituted another influence on the State Resistance discourse and introduced direct aggression as a grave injustice to the political vocabulary. Velayati condemned the international community's silence regarding Saddam Hussain's frequent use of chemical weapons against Iran from 1983 onwards,[415] and claimed that Iran was forced to achieve justice on its own, by revising the current regional order and removing Saddam, as:

> Those who simple-heartedly recommend an armed cease-fire must know that, if we put a lid on this fire temporarily, it will at a later date flare up in a far more destructive and devastating manner. We have no choice, therefore, even if we have to go through fire and water, but to extinguish it for ever. *The Islamic Republic of Iran is therefore determined to continue its just struggle for the full realisation of justice, and by this, we mean circumstances in which the aggressor is properly punished and long-term peace and security in the region is firmly guaranteed*. (Emphasis my own).[416]

Thus, in the absence of functioning international organisations that preserve the independence and territorial integrity of all members, Iran appears to attempt to revise

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[411] Ibid. p. 192.
[412] Ibid.
[413] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Fortieth Session,* 20th Plenary Meeting 3 October 1985 A/40/PV.20. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/40/PV.20> Accessed on 16 February 2019. p. 47.
[414] Ibid. pp. 53-55.
[415] Ibid. p. 62.
[416] Ibid. pp. 63-65.

international customs and practice and establish a practice for implementing justice following unjust aggression outside of the United Nations. It is within this context that Velayati called upon the United Nations to at least 'support those nations determined to resist aggression of any kind' such as Iran.[417] In fact, post-revolutionary Iran, with its 'message of resistance against any manifestation of domination' was a 'a lesson of sacrifice in the cause of independence, justice and truth' that ought to be welcomed by the international community,[418] as the Islamic Revolution had established a 'system free of domination by the super-powers'.[419] Having previously been an American stronghold in the region, the 'policy of non-alignment' was now being 'carried out and experienced in the *true* sense of the world in the Islamic Republic.'[420]

The current Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Hojjatoleslam Ali Khamenei, who served as President between 1981-1989, would also utilise the General Assembly to propagate State Resistance. In his 1987 speech, he also argued that the current imperial order was rooted in racial superiority, which has caused death and destruction in the world, and that the prophets 'invited people to submit to God',[421] and taught man to prevent 'corruption and perversion', as well as:

> … neither to oppress nor to let others oppress him … they also taught him that surrendering to enemies of justice, virtuousness and charity only results in the destruction of these values and amounts to acquiescence to evil, oppression and corruption.[422]

As was made clear by revolutionaries such as Chamran, true Islam was a blueprint for resistance, as the Imam's inner circle took on institutional duties, this framework of this

[417] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Forty-first Session,* 19th Plenary Meeting 1 October 1986 A/41/PV.19. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/41/PV.19> Accessed on 16 February 2019. p. 98.
[418] Ibid.
[419] Ibid. p. 108.
[420] Ibid.
[421] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Forty-second Session,* 6th Plenary Meeting 22 September 1987 A/42/PV.6. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/42/PV.6> Accessed on 16 February 2019. p. 22.
[422] Ibid. pp. 23-25.

Islamic resistance would be specified, with non-alignment and true independence also constituting a key quality, since:

> … non-reliance on either east or west was another exceptional characteristic of this revolution and is now the fundamental policy of our revolutionary system. This in itself is one of the manifestations of the belief and trust in God in all spheres of our individual and social life … our revolution proved that the imperial-minded powers may be ignored, that their bullying tactics may be resisted and that blackmailing may not be effective provided that there is belief in a power much more powerful than all material powers: the belief in God Almighty …we know quite well that for this belief and in this struggle we have to pay a heavy price and we are prepared for it. Let this experience illuminate the path of nations to *true independence* and the total rejection of the hegemony of the big powers; the present division of power threatens humanity with a very bitter future.[423] (emphasis my own)

The first international task of this revolutionary state which marked a new chapter in the current world order was to 'punish and remove the aggressor' by continuing the war against Iraq in order to deter future aggressors from violating other countries' independence.[424] In rejecting calls for cease-fire, Khamenei claimed that while 'peace is, without a doubt, a beautiful and attractive word', even to the great powers, Iran believed that 'justice, a word that the powerful and the oppressors regard with fearful caution, is even more important and beautiful.'[425] Seeking to achieve justice, the third world ought to unite in order to preserve their rights on the international stage, and they could only do so by following the Iranian example in rejecting reliance on the great powers.[426]

This path of resistance, however, was understood to be precious, and required both prudence and fortitude—key characteristics of resistance outlined in Chapter 1—a path nevertheless worth taking, as declared by Ali Mohammad Basharati, one of the founding members of the Revolutionary Guards of the Islamic Revolution in 1985 when discussing the vast human and financial cost inflicted by the Iran-Iraq War:

> This is the cost that we have paid for freedom, independence and the establishment of the Islamic Republic and we are ready to spend more than that to preserve this Republic … The day America smiles at us is the day that, God forbid, we have deviated from the path of Islam, since America's imperialist character is a part of its nature (*zāt*) and its satellites (*aqmār*), and neither East nor West is a part of our nature. Either we must depart from our nature, or America must depart from its. Of course, they will not depart from their nature, and we have neither thought about, nor will

[423] Ibid. p. 32.
[424] Ibid. pp. 40-1.
[425] Ibid. p. 42.
[426] Ibid. p. 53; p. 57.

> we think about departing [from our nature]. As such, this animosity (*khosumat*) will continue and it is our duty more than previously to increase our prominence (*barāmedegi*), fasten our seatbelts stronger than before, and to preserve this blessing bestowed upon us by God almighty [and] strive towards a great and valuable legacy.[427]

With regards to international politics, the Islamic Revolution was thus perceived to be a revolution of resistance manifested in the slogan of neither East nor West as the righteous doctrine for a subaltern state in the currently unjust international system. Importantly, rejecting the great powers was only part of this resistance, as the role of authenticity gradually gained importance and made the discourse more comprehensive. Still, the intellectual framework of non-alignment constituted the basis on which this resistance and authenticity was espoused, as was reflected in the later speeches of Ayatollah Khomeini who brought the two trajectories together in his rigid particularistic discourse of non-aligned resistance. For example, in 1987 he rejected the validity of Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia—official members of the Non-Aligned Movement—as non-aligned states, stating that 'if these states are non-aligned, then all states are non-aligned'.[428] He went on to specify his understanding of non-alignment:

> Just as Iran does not and will not beg from anyone, its men and women in the last few years have stood up independently against the United States, the Soviet Union, and against any oppressor. These are the genuinely non-aligned (*gheyr-e mota'hed*), without cultural alignment, without military alignment, or any form of alignment[.] But if one were to say that we do not have any military alliances, but are aligned culturally, this would be worse as cultural alignment is worse than military alignment; it is dependence, not alignment … [429]

Ayatollah Khomeini thus argued that for a state to be non-aligned, it should transform not only its military and political base, but also the country's industry and culture in order to rid itself of all forms of dependence.[430] All parts of the state have to be non-aligned (*gheyr-e mote'ahed*) for a state to be independent (*gheyr-e vābasteh*) and stand on its own feet.[431]

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[427] Basharati, Ali Mohammad. 1364/1985-6. "Moqe'iyat-e jahāni-ye Enqelāb-e Eslāmi", in Larijani, Mohammad Javad (ed), *Maqulāt-e siyāsat-e khāreji*. Tehran: Chāpkhāneh-ye Daftar-e Nashr-e Farhangi-ye Enqelāb-e Eslāmi. pp. 49-67. p. 67.
[428] Khomeini, Ruhollah. 1389/2010-2011. *Sahifeh-ye Emām*. Vol. 17. Tehran: Tanzim va Nashr-e Emām Khomeini. pp. 363.
[429] Ibid. pp. 363-365.
[430] Ibid.
[431] Ibid.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution had thus declared that non-alignment was not simply attained by leaving CENTO, or nationalising the oil industry, but through a social, cultural, political, economic and ideological revolution that achieves true independence. In other words, non-alignment—at least in the Muslim majority world—was contingent upon Islam, manifested in the Iranian case as 'Neither East nor West':

> Indeed, our slogan of 'neither East nor West' is one of the principal slogans of the Islamic Revolution in the world of the hungry and oppressed, as well as being the manifestation of a *genuine non-alignment policy of Islamic countries*, as well as countries who in the near future—with the support of God—will accept *Islam as the only vindicating doctrine for humanity*. We will not depart the slightest—due to the help of God, the Prophet, and the Imam of the Time—from this policy as neither Islamic countries nor the Muslim people of the world should be dependent on the West, Europe, and America, or on the East, the Soviet Union … There should be no question about the longevity of this slogan, as it is the eternal practice for our people, the Islamic Republic, and Muslims across the world.[432] (emphasis my own)

Unlike Bazargan who perceived Neither East nor West and negative equilibrium to be two sides of the same coin, Khomeini believed the former represented a more comprehensive, genuine, and authentic policy. Like the Revolutionary Movement and the Thought Collective of the Imam, he believed that the performers of genuine resistance ought to be truly independent, or authentic (Islamic), and unlike Maleki's separation of the domestic and international arena of resistance (the third force in general and the third force in particular), he believed that the 'particular' ought to be Islamic for the 'general' struggle to succeed. Nevertheless, the Islamic character of resistance was constructed with the political discourses of non-aligned resistance espoused by the secular movements who produced a vast intellectual foundation of resistance during Iran's experiences with colonialism, imperialism, military occupation during the World Wars, and the Cold War. The synthesis of the two trajectories was evident as the Islamic Republic presented itself to the world as a revisionist power that sought to achieve justice by actively altering the existing world order by any means possible. The banner for this revisionism, Neither East

[432] Khomeini, Ruhollah. 1389/2010-2011. *Sahifeh-ye Emām*. Vol. 20. Tehran: Tanzim va Nashr-e Emām Khomeini. p. 318.

nor West, was thus the product of nearly half a century of resistance by the Iranian opposition, which Ayatollah Khomeini would pass on for the state to produce, reproduce and further shape as the Islamic Republic edged towards the 21st century. When the Iran-Iraq War ended, with Ayatollah Khomeini reluctantly accepting United Nations Resolution 598 on 22 September 1988, diverging views on ending the war existed among the inner circle, with Ayatollah Khomeini describing it as drinking a chalice of poison (*jāme zahr ālod-e qat'nāmeh rā keshidam*),[433] Hojjatoleslam Rafsanjani argued that 'we should think that the revolution just started'.[434] Less than a year later, on 3 June 1989, the leader of the Islamic Revolution and the founding father of the Islamic Republic of Iran passed away, and left the revolutionary establishment and the people of Iran with the following guidelines in his famous *vasiyat nāmeh-ye hazrat-e Emām Khomeini* (The Will of his Excellency Imam Khomeini):

> …. In foreign policy to maintain the independence and interest of the country and have good relations with governments that do not intend to interfere in our domestic affairs. And strictly avoid all impurities (*shāyebeh*) and dependency in all its forms. And you must know that dependence in some affairs, even though it might appear beneficial or rewarding in the short term, will tear up the country from its roots (*risheh-ye keshvar rā be tabāhi khāhad keshid*) and strive towards improving relations with Islamic countries and awaken their statesmen and call for unity as God are with you. My will to the people of Islamic countries is to not expect someone from abroad to help you achieve your goals which is Islam and implementing the ordinances of Islam. You have to rise up for the vital edict which realises freedom and independence … and my will to all is that with the memory of God, pursue self-awareness, self-sufficiency and independence in all respects… and with all that I see in the beloved nation [of Iran] from awakening and vigilance, commitment and sacrifice and spirit of resistance and determination to pursue the path of justice (*rāh-e haq*), I do have hope that with the grace of God almighty that this purpose of humanity will be passed on the descendants of this nation, and generations to come.[435]

It was from the Islamic Republic's second decade onwards that the discourse of State Resistance would become institutionalised and begin to reproduce itself as an establishment discourse of secondary resistance. Iran's great refusal on the world stage, formulated across an idiosyncratic political landscape until 1989, would now be reproduced and transformed

[433] *Pāsdār-e Eslām* No.80 Mordād 1368/ July-August 1988. p. 49.
[434] Quoted in Ehteshami. *After Khomeini*. p. 27.
[435] Khomeini, Ruhollah. 1393/2014. *Vasiyat nāmeh-ye siyāsi-ellāhi-ye Emām Khomeini*. Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Tanzim va Nashr-e Āsār-e Emām Khomeini. pp. 55-56.

by a political establishment in charge of a consolidated state, which continues to propagate and perform State Resistance today as its worldmaking project has entered the 21st century.

Chapter 3: Establishment Resistance After Khomeini (1989-2021)

Introduction:

By 1989, the slogan of Neither East nor West: An Islamic Republic had not only become codified in law, but also integrated into the establishment discourse of the victorious revolutionaries who were governing the young republic. Despite having been a constitutional obligation for over a decade, the discourse of State Resistance, particularly its revisionist dimensions, was rather restrained by internal political turmoil, and the Iran-Iraq War which was discussed in Chapter 2. As a result, resistance had become primarily limited to material and moral support for national and religious movements in the Muslim majority world, with Iran's prominent role in establishing Hezbollah in 1982 following the Israeli occupation being the main case of comprehensive and active support.[436] Therefore, while it is often suggested that the Islamic Revolution of 1979 marked Iran's transformation from the 'guardian of the status quo under the patronage of the United States to [a] revisionist power' in the world, [437] the true colours of Iranian revisionism and its worldmaking discourse was not to become apparent until the post-Khomeini era. With the war ending on 20 August 1988, Ayatollah Khomeini had only enjoyed a brief spell of peace in the months before, and after Saddam's invasion, moments of peace which were nonetheless blighted by political turmoil domestically. Still, the late Imam would be remembered by the political establishment (*nezām*) as the champion of State Resistance, as was reflected in Ayatollah

[436] Halliday, Fred. 2005. *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and ideology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 63.
[437] Adib Moghaddam. 2006. *International Politics of the Persian Gulf*. p. 22; see also Chubin, Shahram. 2009. "Iran's Power in Context". *Survival*, 51(1), pp. 165–190. p. 166.

Khamenei's first statement after being appointed as the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, on 8 June 1989:

> He [Ayatollah Khomeini] brought respect to Islam and waved the flag of the Quran in the world, and he rescued (*nejāt dādan*) the Iranian nation from the captivity of foreigners and gave them pride, character and self-esteem … with no doubt, we trust that the ultimate victory (*piruzi-ye nahāyi*) will be bestowed upon the devout resister[.] And by keeping their faith and spirit of resistance (*ruhiye-ye moqāvemati*), they shall be trusted.[438]

Thus, while attributing the initial success and the restoration of greatness to Ayatollah Khomeini, the 'ultimate victory' was yet to be achieved. In the Friday prayers sermon marking the 40-day anniversary of Ayatollah Khomeini's passing, the new head of state would recall Iran's traumatic past, and the legacy of the founder of the Islamic Republic with regards to resistance when recalling that:

> ... Dear brothers! Despotic and autocratic governments (*hokumat-e fardi*) had for several years turned our nation into a punchbag of a nation (*mellat-e tusari khor*), a nation that possesses effervescent talent and outstanding qualities, a country that had achieved great national and political honours in its post-Islamic history, became a weak, oppressed and conked nation[.] Foreign powers—in one period the British, in another the Russians, and in yet another the Americans, and alongside them, some other European governments—humiliated our nation. Our nation believed that it was nothing, that it was inadequate, unworthy of great things … our dear Imam [Khomeini] awakened and revived the spirit of national pride and honour in the Iranian nation … not only is our nation today unafraid and does not feel weak against the collective conspiracies of the East and the West, and the reactionaries (*ertejā'*), but our youth feel that they can build their own country, our people feel that they have the capability to resist impositions (*tahmilāt*) and coercion from East and West … they [the world] did not think that a nation would be able to say 'no' to both East and West while standing firm and enduring (*beistad va bemanad*), and becoming better established every day (*roz be roz rishedārtar kard*). But Imam [Khomeini] proved this [is possible].[439]

Here, Ayatollah Khomeini is attributed again with restoring pride and greatness, but also providing a path for true independence. Having thanked the Assembly of Experts for electing him and the Iranian people and their allies declaring their support for the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khamenei shifted the focus to the future and argued that Iran would continue to follow the path of Khomeini and strive against the new challenges that he expected post-war Iran to face.[440] Specifically, he used the occasion to distinguish between

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[438] *Pāsdār-e Eslām* No.91 Tir 1368/June-July 1989. pp. 42-3.
[439] Iran.Shia Komak. *Avvalin namāz jom'eh ba'd az rehlat-e E mām Khomeini*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mL8Tb-5UpYU> Accessed on 8 September 2021.
[440] Ibid.

what he saw as the façade of power, such as wealth, propaganda machinery and modern weaponry that Iran's enemies possess and had been utilising throughout the 20th century. Contending this understanding of power, Ayatollah Khamenei argued that if this constituted genuine power, 'the Islamic Republic would have been a fantasy'.[441] However, unlike Modarres, Mosaddeq and *all* the other individuals and thought collectives studied in Chapter 2, Ayatollah Khamenei argued that part of the legacy of Ayatollah Khomeini was that Iran had become 'more powerful than its enemies', as it now possessed 'genuine power' (*qodrat-e vāqe'i*) derived through awareness, belief in their rights and course of action, and determination to pursue it:

> If a nation has these three characteristics. No power in the world will be more powerful. We are defending our own rights, we do not want to interfere in the rights of other [nations], we do not want to engage in conspiracies, we do not want to send troops to the other side of the world. Our enemies do that, and they are doomed to fail.[442]

The self-confidence of the political establishment stands in sharp contrast to the pre-revolutionary movements, likely due to the successfully overthrow of the Western installed and backed Pahlavi monarchy, and surviving eight years of war against Ba'athist Iraq in which Saddam Hussain had enjoyed political and material support both the Eastern and Western bloc.[443] In many respects this marked the ultimate victory for primary resistance in Iran, and the period that followed was characterised by the full transition into secondary resistance where the state would seek to protect its authenticity and actively engage in revisionism and worldmaking, rather than devising strategies for survival.

This transition to secondary resistance against external threats and challenges also overlapped significant developments on the domestic scene. Most notable was the process of constitutional reform which appears to have been based on the aforementioned

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[441] Ibid.
[442] Ibid.
[443] Yaphe, Judith. 2012. "Changing American Perspectives on the Iran-Iraq War", in Ashton, Nigel & Gibson, Bryan (eds.) *The Iran-Iraq War: New International Perspectives*. London: Routledge. pp. 178-195. p. 178; Kalinovsky, Artemy. 2012. "The Soviet Union and the Iran-Iraq War", in Ashton, Nigel & Gibson, Bryan (eds.) *The Iran-Iraq War: New International Perspectives*. London: Routledge. pp. 230-242. pp. 230-232.

experiences of turmoil and instability during his decade in charge of the Islamic Republic's that Ayatollah Khomeini on 25 April 1989, ordered President Hojjatoleslam Khamenei to establish a Constitutional Review Panel (*hei'at-e bāznegari-ye qānun-e asāsi*) to consider reforms and revisions to the existing constitution.[444] Ayatollah Khomeini himself would not live long enough to witness the outcome of these deliberations, which included extensive institutional reforms seeking to clarify and rectify institutional and legal ambiguities and uncertainties of the young republic. The structural reforms were the most notable—the details of which are beyond the scope of this Chapter—and marked the final consolidation of the revolutionary state where the position of Prime Minister, last held by Mir Hossein Mousavi, was removed, and the Presidency formalised as the head of the executive which is to be held accountable by the Majles.[445]

This final restructuring of the Islamic Republic, and the political stability enjoyed by the establishment in the decades that followed marks the conclusive consolidation of the Islamic Republic to the point where institutions, and the individuals within them, become a more appropriate focus of analysis than thought collectives which have been used thus far. In fact, state consolidation not only changes the research object, but it also forces the appreciation of expedient policy making, or *realpolitik*, into the historiographical accounts that accompany the Islamic Republic's intellectual history of State Resistance. Whereas resistance espoused from an oppositional position imposes few limits related to immediate material needs, political and fiscal responsibilities and considerations on its propagators, these factors are inevitable consequences of statehood, and have undoubtedly been critical in informing the establishment evolution of State Resistance in post-revolutionary Iran. Still, as this is primarily a work of intellectual history, it is worth noting that the realpolitik of *any*

[444] Ehteshami. *After Khomeini*. p. 36.
[445] Ibid.

state is more often than not manifested mainly in its behaviour rather than its discourse. It is also worth noting another significant constitutional reform from 1989 which addresses this aspect of governance, namely the Council for Discerning the Expediency of the System (*majma'-e tashkhis-e maslahat-e nezām*). Based on the **jurisprudential concept** of expediency (*maslahat*), this entity aims at settling unresolved disputes between the Majles and the Guardian Council of the Constitution that is supposed to verify that legislation does not contravene the constitution or Sharia. In other words, post 1989, the Islamic Republic of Iran institutionalised the possibility of transcending the limitations of both the constitution and sharia if it is deemed expedient for the Islamic Republic—understood as the vehicle of resistance and worldmaking—by the members of the Council.[446]

As will be apparent below, besides being forced to question and re-evaluate normative boundaries due to practical considerations, becoming an establishment of a consolidated state also meant that former ideas and slogans would have to be translated into operable and enforceable policies. While practical considerations initiated the process of highlighting contending and opposing understandings of revolutionary objectives, as well as policy prescriptions and visions for the post-revolutionary state that were held by the revolutionaries, the absence of the late Imam also meant that there was no final arbiter on the path of the Islamic Republic. In the absence of its founding father, the disagreement over the future path of the state would manifest itself in the form of 'factionalism'[447] or elite contestation for power,[448] as the former-revolutionaries-turned-establishment-politicians would begin to pursue and espouse their contending visions of the Islamic Republic.

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[446] Hashemi, Sayyed Mohammad. 1400/2021. *Hoquq-e asāsi-ye Jomhuri-ye Eslāmi-ye Irān* (2). Tehran: Nashr-e Mizān. pp.548-563. For more, see: Ali Dust, Abolqassem. 1399/2019. *Ketāb-e feqh va maslahat*. Tehran: Pazhuheshgāh-e farhang va andisheh-ye Eslāmi.

[447] See for example: Moslem, Mehdi. 2002. *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*. New York: Syracuse University Press.

[448] Keshavarzian, Arang. 2005. "Contestation Without Democracy: Elite Fragmentation In Iran", in Marsha Pripstein Posusney and Michele Penner Angrist (eds.), *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes and Resistance*, Colorado: Rienner. pp. 63-87.

As a result, establishment figures who I have identified as being in ideological and discursive proximity to each other might be political opponents due to the factional considerations and elite contestation which continue to divide the establishment. While these concerns have contributed to the idea that the state has entered a period of 'de-revolutionisation' or 'thermidor' of the Islamic Republic,[449] I understand the shift that occurred following state consolidation to be in line with Angelo Panebianco's theory of party politics in which he states that:

> The relation between aims and behaviour never completely disappears; it attenuates. The correspondence of a party's behaviour to its official aims is constantly reaffirmed by its leaders, but only these courses of action – amongst the many possible that the party may choose to achieve its official aims – which are compatible with the organisation's stability will be selected. For instance, that recurrent pattern we find in the history of socialist and communist parties, i.e. the split between reformist praxis and revolutionary language, is better understood as the result of an articulation, rather than a substitution, of aims: on the one hand the original goal (the revolution/socialism) is constantly evoked as it is the basis of the movement's collective identity; but on the other hand, the chosen courses of action, pragmatic and reformist, guarantee organisational stability without taking credibility away from the notion that one is still "working" towards the official aims: daily reformist praxis is, in fact, always justified with the explanation that reforms do not deviate from, but are rather intermediate steps towards socialism.[450]

As a result, the importance of studying the ideas and objectives espoused by the establishment continues to remain relevant as the Islamic Republic enters the 21st century, despite discrepancies with these discourses on the policy level. Thus, policies and actions that fall outside of the scope, or might appear as moderate versions, of the revolutionary discourses espoused should not simply be rejected as power politics, primacy of material considerations or realpolitik, but rather understood as the natural outcome of transcending oppositional politics and entering the realm of the establishment.

Moreover, unlike some of the individuals and entities studied in Chapter 2, substantial amounts of scholarship have already been written on key individuals and

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[449] Moslem. *Factional Politics*. p. 144; Rajaee, Farhang. 1999. "Thermidor of Islamic "Yuppies"? Conflict and Compromise in Iran's Politics." *Middle East Journal* 53 (2): pp. 217-31; Wells, Matthew C. 1999. "Thermidor in the Islamic Republic of Iran: The Rise of Muhammad Khatami". *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 26 (1): pp. 27–39.

[450] Panebianco, Angelo. 1988. *Political Parties: Organisation and Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 16-17.

institutions that will be covered in this Chapter. However, as mentioned in Chapter 1, while this era has attracted considerable amounts of scholarship as Iran remained a consistently important actor in international politics, which has grown in stature and power over the past four decades, dominant understandings suffer from politicised, reductive readings and vague categorisations that undermine our ability to attain a sophisticated understanding of the country's post-revolutionary politics in general, and its resistance politics in particular. Rather than resorting to pejorative language and problematic simplifications such as 'fundamentalism', 'state sponsored terrorism', and 'fanaticism',[451] or flawed generalisations such as 'third worldism' whose meaning and policy implications are simply assumed, this Chapter intends to overcome this academic and media trend and examine the evolution of State Resistance over the three decades that followed the passing of Ayatollah Khomeini. What is more, it will seek to overcome the tendency to perform selective analysis based on a limited number of media sources, and instead dive into the vast textual and media sources which the Islamic Republic of Iran has produced over the past three decades, and importantly, treat the establishment's post-revolutionary propagation and pursuit of State Resistance as an intellectual discourse.

Specifically, this Chapter will demonstrate how the establishment of the Islamic Republic in the post-Khomeini era sought to (re)formulate its discourse of resistance through the state apparatus which it now possessed. Whereas the thought collectives of Chapter 2 consisted of rather small groups of individuals with a limited number of short-lived publications which were often unofficial, the post-revolutionary discourse of resistance is characterised by a proliferation of source material emanating from a wide range of

[451] See for example: Gheissari, Ali, and Vali Nasr. 2006. *Democracy in Iran: History and the Quest for Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 108, Levitt. *Hezbollah, The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God*; Shultz, Richard. H., Jr., 1994. "Iranian covert aggression: Support for radical political Islamists conducting internal subversion against states in the Middle East/Southwest Asia region." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 6 (3), pp. 281– 302.

individuals, institutions and organisations that constitute the establishment for several decades. Amidst the pool of journals, newspapers, speeches, interviews and monographs written on various aspects of the Islamic Republic's State Resistance, I have sought to identify the most significant propagators of resistance, and I will argue that Iranian revisionism—a product of the idiosyncratic political landscape of the pre-revolutionary opposition—espoused through 'Neither East nor West', manifested itself both in the domestic and international politics of the Islamic Republic as it transformed itself from being a weak fragile revolutionary entity which was only 'to continue in power so long as Khomeini is there to guide it',[452] to a powerful actor in international politics, and an influential force in West Asia as it entered the 21st century. Importantly, due to this consistency, discourses covered here have continued to be reproduced for over three decades and covering their total lifespan up until today both exhaustive and not necessarily beneficial for our understanding of the establishment's resistance politics. Instead, it will seek to capture the time and context where key establishment discourses concerned with keeping Iran 'neither East nor West', or truly independent, emerged, and cover them up until they crystallise into their current form.

Having overcome most of its grave external challenges after 1989, the international context differs from the period studied in Chapter 2, which was situated within the dynamics of colonial and imperial interference, two World Wars and the Cold War. Instead, the post-Khomeini era was dominated by the Cold War being brought to an end with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the emergence of the American world order in the early 1990s, and its relative decline that we find ourselves in today.[453] Whereas the alignment of the Pahlavi

[452] *The New York Times*. 1984. "Iran: Five Years of Fanaticism", 12 February 1984. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/02/12/magazine/iran-five-years-of-fanaticism.html> Accessed on 2 April 2019.
[453] Molstad, Darcy. 2015. *Managing Relative Decline: An Analysis of Foreign Policy Alternatives for the United States*. United States: Air War College.

regime constituted a dominant issue during the pre-revolutionary era, the post-revolutionary era is characterised by Western attempts aimed at manifesting their hegemony, which includes countering Iran and other revisionist forces in the region. This has been manifested by a drastic increase in the United States' military presence in the Muslim majority world during the 1990s and early 2000s, as well as the intensification of foreign policy measures by subsequent United States' Administrations from the mid 1990s onwards aimed at challenging Iran's growth.[454] With the northern threat which significantly shaped oppositional understandings of resistance and independence in Chapter 2 evaporating into the Russian Federation and a number of smaller post-Soviet states, the direct foreign presence of the Western bloc within the country was also removed, and the Islamic Republic's discourse of State Resistance would become more focused on the United States and smaller allies such as Israel and Europe, and more recently some of the oil monarchies of the Persian Gulf.

At the same time, besides state consolidation and the transition towards conventional governance, the domestic context would present new challenges as the country's economy recovered from war and witnessed the emergence of a growing urban middle class who would put forward demands in the context of globalisation and American hegemony as the Islamic Republic entered the 21st century.[455] As a result, a new generation posing new demands to the state that would challenge the establishment's notion of authenticity in the cultural and political sphere would result in recurring epsiodes of public protest, riots and unrest that would impact the establishment discourse on resistance, whilst also influencing

[454] Kane, Tim. 2004. "Global U.S. Troop Deployment, 1950-2003". *The Heritage Foundation*. Retrieved online: <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/global-us-troop-deployment-1950-2003.> Accessed on 18 July 2021.
[455] Adelkhah, Fariba. 2000. *Being Modern in Iran*. London: Hurst. pp. 79-100.

parts of the establishment as certain political platforms would begin to be excluded by the state apparatus.[456]

As I will argue here, despite these rapidly changing circumstances within which it emerged, 'Neither East nor West' continued to be a key component of the discourse of State Resistance in the post-Khomeini era. Moreover, 'Neither East nor West' as espoused by the establishment is not a minimalist discourse of non-alignment, or a discourse confined to Cold War dynamics, whether internationally or domestically,[457] which would simply lose 'its meaning after the end of the Cold War'.[458] Instead, the establishment has for the past three decades propagated Neither East nor West as a discourse of defiance and worldmaking which would impose rigid requirements upon the post-revolutionary state to achieve and maintain what Ayatollah Khomeini had termed *true independence*; a comprehensive understanding of independence that goes beyond simple non-interference and sovereignty as stipulated by the United Nations and liberal political thought, or 'political and economic independence' as propagated by the National Front and their successor movements. Instead, it constituted a more radical and far-reaching form of independence which has also been named 'hyper-independence'.[459]

Therefore, independence in the context of Neither East nor West in the post-Khomeini era has remained ambitious and comprehensive despite its propagators transitioning into the realm of more conventional policy making. Independence continues to be understood in its revolutionary context to go beyond protecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iran, but also includes economic independence and authenticity in the

[456] Rajaee. *Islam and Modernism*. p. xi.
[457] Karsh, Efraim. 2002. *The Iran-Iraq War*. Wellingborough: Osprey. p. 313; Panah. *The Islamic Republic and the World*. pp. 56; 68; Dorraj, "Populism and Corporatism in Post-Revolutionary Iranian Political Culture." p. 158.
[458] Ramazani. "Iran's Foreign Policy". p. 1
[459] Moshirzadeh, Homeira. 2007. "Discursive Foundations of Iran's Nuclear Policy". *Security Dialogue* 38 (4). pp. 521–43. p. 536

religious and cultural sphere. Whereas political independence is maintained and protected by resisting aggression, unilateralism, and domination, it also requires worldmaking in order to establish new international structures and mechanism that ought to prevent injustice and domination. At the same time, the establishment seeks to protect Iran's religious, cultural, and ideological independence through discursive engagement, while the country's pursuit of economic independence continues.

Covering the subsequent 30 years on the political level, this Chapter will cover the presidencies of Rafsanjani, Khatami, Ahmadinejad and Rouhani discussed alongside the discourses of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, member of Majles, but also other prominent individuals and organisations that constitute the political establishment, such as high-ranking officials from the Revolutionary Guard of the Islamic Revolution (*sepāh-e pāsdārān-e enqelāb-e Eslāmi*) and The Organization for Mobilization of the Oppressed (*sāzmān-e basij-e mostaz'afin*). Here it will identify the emergence of new discourses that identify new objectives of resistance as Iran enters the 21st century.

The First Part of this Chapter will start by looking at the establishment's visions of a new world order which were explicitly declared in the early 1990s as the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union became the centre of international debates. Here, it will demonstrate how the Islamic Republic on one hand argued for the realisation of values and objectives espoused by the United Nations Charter, a trend easily traceable back to Iran's commitment to the non-aligned movement and the Mosaddeqist trajectory discussed in Chapter 2. On the other hand, the Islamic Republic in the immediate post-Khomeini era began to also present more sophisticated conceptualisation of pan-Islamic alliance building and Muslim inter-state relations and leadership in the form of *omm al qorrā* (lit. the mother of the villages) and argue that the idiosyncratic nature of State Resistance remained true well over a decade after the revolution.

Having done so, it will analyse the discourse of *estekbār-e jahāni* (world arrogance) and *tahājom-e farhangi* (cultural invasion) and argue that these constituted the main additions to the discourse of State Resistance during the era of reconstruction (1989-1997). While world arrogance was concerned with transgressive practices which violated states' territorial integrity in the strict sense, the Chapter will proceed by looking at how State Resistance sought to challenge the discursive threats posed by the United States, and Western hegemony through the discourse of cultural invasion. Whereas world arrogance is particularly concerned with political sovereignty, cultural invasion emphasises what the establishment understands to be threats to Iran's cultural and religious authenticity.

The section on Reconstruction, Resistance and Reconciliation will end with the Khatami administration's (1997-2005) discourse of 'dialogue among civilisations' (*goftogu-ye tamaddon-hā)* and argue against prevalent understandings which perceive it as a part of Iranian 'thermidor'. Instead, it will argue that the discourse reflected a synthesis of the three aforementioned discourses, as it constituted a discourse of worldmaking which is largely a synthesis of the previous three discourses studied thus far in this Chapter; it calls for a new just world order, which seeks to end the practices of world arrogance and bring the cultural invasion to an end by accepting Iranian particularism.

The Second Part of this Chapter will look at more explicit Iranian revisionist and resistance politics during the first two decades of the 21st century. Starting with the Ahmadinejad administration (2005-2013), the section will discuss the revisionist discourse of the political movement I have named the 'Justice-Seeking Principlists'. Here, I will argue that the controversial, transgressive, and radical discourse of the administration remained committed to the overall objectives of the state discussed in the First Part, while contributing to expanding the scope of State Resistance to also include Latin-American countries. Having done so, it will look at the emergence of a discourse of soft war (*jang-e narm)*, which calls

for more active engagement against the symptoms identified by the cultural invasion. Finally, this section will discuss the discourse of the resistance economy (*eqtesād-e moqāvemati*) and demonstrate how the economic situation inflicted upon Iran following the United Nations Security Council sanctions regime as well as significant developments in the global economy instigated a revitalised pursuit of economic independence, which until today remains a key objective of the establishment as they seek to resolve the idiosyncratic nature of its political landscape on the issue of the economy.

The third Part of this Chapter will look at the Rouhani administration's (2013-2021) and argue that their diametric shift in discourse did not constitute a shift in objectives. In fact, the objectives pursued by the Khatami, Ahmadinejad and Rouhani administration were largely the same, with the strategies pursued to achieve those objectives being the key difference. While Ahmadinejad pursued radical revisionist discourses to challenge the existing status quo, the Rouhani administration pursued a worldmaking policy of multilateral diplomacy as a tool for changing the world order in its own image, with the famous nuclear deal between Iran, the permanent members of the United Nation Security Council and the European Union being a product of this discourse. This part will end with a three-decade analysis on perhaps Iran's most important and consistent establishment discourse of resistance; the discourse of Islamic Resistance (*moqāvemat-e Eslāmi)* and demonstrate how alongside Iran's worldmaking efforts, the establishment also pursued a campaign of 'regional primary resistance' where it sought to expel what they understand to be illegitimate foreign presence in West Asia.

Part 1: Reconstruction, Reconciliation and The World Order (1989-2005)

Perhaps due to the prominent role enjoyed by the Islamic Revolution's charismatic Leader and the aforementioned reforms that were implemented after his passing, it is generally suggested that the post-Khomeini era marked the beginning of Iran's 'second republic'[460] or that it was the 'end of the first phase of the Islamic revolution'.[461] The power transition that followed saw the last President of the Khomeini era, Ayatollah Khamenei, being elected as Ayatollah Khomeini's successor by the Assembly of Experts, and former Speaker of Majles, Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani—who had been elected as the Speaker of Majles for the eight consecutive time in June 1989—elected President in an overwhelming electoral vote, running against former member of the left wing of the Islamic Republic Party (IRP) Abbas Sheybani in September 1989. While the power transition went more smoothly than most pundits expected, the task at hand for the post-war republic was characterised by major political and economic challenges as the Islamic Republic entered its second decade. With an estimated US$ 400 million in damages caused by the war, and oil revenues at around 40% of what they had been before the revolution,[462] 'construction' (*sāzandegi*) would become the dominant idea of Rafsanjani's two terms as president, which in English has become known as the 'era of reconstruction'.[463] The next two presidential terms that followed are often associated with Iran rolling back on its ideological policies and rhetoric and turning towards 'pragmatism' due to his consistent emphasis on rebuilding the economy, implementing fiscal reform and engaging with the world.[464]

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[460] Ehteshami. *After Khomeini*. p. 27.
[461] Amanat, Abbas. 2017. *Iran: A Modern History*. London: Yale University Press. p. 1044.
[462] Pesaran, Evaleila. 2011. *Iran's Struggle for Economic Independence: Reform and Counter-Reform in the Post-Revolutionary Era*. New York: Routledge. p. 64.
[463] Ehteshami. *After Khomeini*. p. 42.
[464] See for example: Abrahamian. *History of Modern Iran*. p. 183; Wells. "Thermidor in the Islamic Republic of Iran".

While there is no doubt that Rafsanjani pursued more consolidatory policies, which were *possible* because the war—in which Iraq was backed by both the Eastern and Western bloc—had ended, and also *necessary* due to the financial burden of reconstruction following eight years of war and a growing young urban population who would raise new demands to the state that had spent its formative years in war, suggestions that 'Rafsanjani debunked the slogan "Neither East nor West" after the demise of the Soviet Union',[465] are simply incorrect and most likely based on the reductive understandings of the discourse that Chapter 2 sought to challenge and replace. Instead, this section will demonstrate that the period of reconstruction is characterised by the changing nature of State Resistance from an oppositional discourse to an establishment discourse as it sought to ensure and protect Iran's true independence while also attempting to revise the global status quo. As mentioned above, this transformation is evidently significant for the nature of the discourses espoused, as they are increasingly informed by the expediency of the state, which was not the case for an oppositional movement. As the Islamic Republic edged towards more conventional governance in which contending understandings of revolutionary slogans had to be translated into particular policies that also had to take into consideration a radically changing demography now characterised by a growing middle class and increased urbanisation.[466]

Specifically, the Rafsanjani era was characterised by not only major changes within the country but also a rapidly changing world; with Saddam Hussain's defeat following Operation Desert Storm in early 1991 and the subsequent fall of the Soviet Union at the end of the same year constituted 'two shocks of unprecedented magnitude' which would alter the way in which Iran perceived the world.[467] Specifically, it marked the beginning of an unipolar American world order that altered the objectives of State Resistance, which had

[465] Ramazani. *Independence Without Freedom*. p. 198.
[466] Adelkhah. *Being Modern in Iran*. p. x.
[467] Parsi, Trita. 2007. *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*. New Haven: Yale University Press. p. 139.

been primarily shaped against the dual rejection of both the Eastern and Western blocs. What is more, the nature of the threats also changed during this period, as the threats posed against Iran would no longer be imperial occupation and *coup d'état* as it was during the Pahlavi era, or military invasion as it was during the first decade of the Islamic Republic. Instead, the forces the Islamic Republic's State Resistance would be directed towards in the era of reconstruction would become much more diffuse and indirect, and as such, with State Resistance adapting accordingly.

The Just World Order

Ayatollah Khomeini's passing as was characterised by its proximity to major changes in the geopolitical landscape. With Mikhael Gorbachev assuming the role of General Secretary of the Soviet Union, it became increasingly clear that the Communist power which Iran had been shaping its resistance politics against was in rapid decline, which instigated several debates in which individuals within the establishment would put forward their visions of a *just* world order which was to succeed the unjust one which was about to end. Writing on the first-year anniversary of the passing of Ayatollah Khomeini, then Minister of Culture, Hojjatoleslam Sayyed Mohammad Khatami assessed the Imam's concept of 'Neither East nor West' before situating it into the context of the changing world order. Before doing so, he would present the perceived understanding of the concept's genealogy, as he understood it:

> Neither East nor West was not disseminated for the first time through the Islamic Revolution or by the Islamic Republic. This principle has a long record (*sābeqeh*). In our Iran, we have the late Modarres' principle of negative balancing, the National Movement's negative equilibrium, and globally, the Non-Aligned Movement, with all three claiming to be neither East nor West, meaning that they believe their fundamental objective is to cut their dependence on the dominant poles of global power (*aqtāb-e qodrat-e mosallat-e jahāni*). However, bar the late Modarres' principle of negative balancing … the other two principles, negative equilibrium of the National Movement (*nehzat-e melli*) and the non-aligned movement, except for their names, do not have any relation or similarity to the principle of Neither East nor West: An Islamic Republic.[468]

[468] *Pānzdah-e Khordād*. Khordād 1369/May-June 1990. p. 8.

Imposing a somewhat arbitrary distinction between Mosaddeq and Modarres' neutralist discourses, the crucial part of Khatami's argument lies in his critique of the non-aligned movement. Specifically, he argued that while Nehru, Tito and Naser—all heroes of the National Front successors in Chapter 2—had 'good intentions', they nonetheless failed to achieve their objectives. Like Chamran's critique of Cuba and the Palestinian resistance for their reliance on the Soviet Union, Khatami cites Tito's socialism as an example of ideological dependence, Naser's synthesis between socialism and Arab nationalism as a short-lived unsuccessful project, and Nehru's 'passion and commitment' to liberal democracy as being oxymoronic to independence due its Western roots. According to Khatami, all three suffered from having their 'roots in arrogance (*estekbār*).'[469]

The message of the Imam, and the task of the 'second republic' was to free itself from the Western worldview which had caused the two blocs to emerge, whilst emphasising that 'Neither East nor West' did not entail the total 'rejection of everything that is East and West'.[470] Instead, according to Khatami, the heart of Neither East nor West is authenticity and the likelihood of not succeeding in an inauthentic endeavour, citing Communists who 'did not want to become Russia, but wanted to become Russian' or the monarchy who wanted Iran to not become 'America but American'.[471] The fundamental flaw of these inauthentic and aligned approaches according to Khatami were that the United States constituted the epitome of the capitalist order, just as the Soviet Union was the best example of the Soviet Union. Therefore, Khatami argued that 'no matter how much we strive towards becoming the United States and the Soviet Union' both regimes will be more advanced than any Iranian attempt.[472]

[469] Ibid. p. 9.
[470] Ibid.
[471] Ibid.
[472] Ibid.

Anticipating significant challenges for Iran, Khatami claimed that Ayatollah Khomeini's call to 'return to spiritual authenticity (*esālat-e elāhi*)' will enable Iran to rise up against the 'immoral' Western world order.[473] This emergence, however, will not be successful unless Iran takes 'the positive elements of the previous civilisation to make itself complete and lasting.'[474]

The continuous theorising and debate regarding the rise of Iran as state, civilisation and a global force of change also intersected with the decline of the Soviet Union, a decline so evident that it paved the way for discussions regarding what kind of world order that should follow it. Perceiving itself to be in a transitionary phase in human history in which the unjust order would decline and one of justice and authenticity would emerge, the message of the establishment after the passing of the founder of the revolution was the continuation of the struggle and the revision of the status quo as summarised by Velayati in his first General Assembly speech after the passing of Ayatollah Khomeini on 29 September 1989:

> During many years of relentless struggle, he [Ayatollah Khomeini] spared no effort to oppose exploitation, tyranny and injustice. Our people have entered the second decade of their revolution with precious experience gained from 10 years of resistance against aggression, political propaganda and economic pressure, and we are now making great strides towards national reconstruction with resolute determination and reliance on the fundamental principle of the Islamic revolution.[475]

Believing that the world was on the path of relaxation in tension, Velayati argued for a struggle towards altering 'the unjust international relations' and providing a 'basis of justice and respect for international law.'[476] The end of the 'first republic' also overlapped with the end of the Cold War, out of whose ashes Iran sought to shape the world in its own image of justice, which was heavily informed by the idiosyncratic political ecosystem in

[473] Ibid. pp. 11-12.
[474] Ibid. p. 11.
[475] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Forty-fourth Session,* 13th Plenary Meeting 29 September 1989 A/44/PV.13. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/44/PV.13> Accessed on 16 February 2019. p. 91.
[476] Ibid.

which resistance emerged, and legacy of the non-aligned internationalists that followed the path of Mosaddeq would become evident when Iranian delegates spoke to the world. This shift towards perhaps more familiar foreign policy discourses, ought to be understood as an impact of the practical considerations that shaped foreign-policy-making in Iran following the end of war, as the country's political and economic circumstances shifted following the end of revolution and war-time emergency considerations. Instead, the expediency of the state played a more significant role in shaping its discourse, and the globally familiar neutralist language of the opposition became an appropriate vehicle for conveying State Resistance.

A useful example of this can be seen in Velayati's United Nations General Assembly speech from September 1990, where he stressed that the world was 'undergoing rapid transition', citing the victory of the Islamic Revolution, resurgence of Islamic revivalism, decline of Marxist thought and unification of Germany as evidence that the Cold War was coming to an end, and that the transition ought to 'embody the principle of justice' in order to avoid future instability since 'for the subjugated nations there exists no other choice but to overturn an [unjust] imposed situation.'[477]

One year later, after the formal collapse of the Soviet Union, Velayati congratulated the Soviet leadership in bringing the Soviet Union to an end.[478] The 'crashing collapse of communism' according to Velayati, was a golden opportunity for the international community to forge a new world order:

> The world after the Cold War needs a new world order; this is indisputable for the simple reason that the past order governing international relations has been unjust and inherently unstable. Therefore, now that the bipolar world that used to exist has all but crumbled — and gone with it, albeit not fully, the past suspicions and rivalries which overshadowed the principles of the [UN] charter … there seems to exist a golden opportunity for a new world order: a new world order founded on the United Nations Charter and the principles of justice, peace, security,

[477] United Nations General Assembly: *Provisional Verbatim Record of the Fifth Meeting,* 28 September 1990 A/45/PV.5. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/45/PV.5> Accessed on 28 July 2019. pp. 38-40.
[478] United Nations General Assembly: *Provisional Verbatim Record of the Fifth Meeting,* 26 September 1991 A/46/PV.5. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/46/PV.5> Accessed on 28 July 2019. p. 47.

> equality, mutual respect for sovereignty and the territorial integrity of states, and for the cultural and moral values of all nations.[479]

What Velayati is arguing for here is largely in line with the aspirations of the National Front and its successor movements studied in Chapter 2. Calls for equality, mutual respect and justice are also aspects of the Islamic Republic's resistance discourse that Chapter 1 demonstrated has been labelled as third worldism; an opposition to the *de facto* world order which is incompatible with the one the United Nations has been calling for since 1945.[480] Within this framework, Velayati largely espoused the line of the Non-Aligned Movement, and in the same speech he would go on to call for a strengthened United Nations to 'play a central role in guiding and coordinating the new world order.'[481] Having done so, Velayati would—also in line with what is generally known as third worldism—stress the importance of human rights to be expanded to include social and cultural rights, economic justice for the sake of international stability, environmental concerns and disarmaments and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction as key issues the new world order ought to resolve.[482]

Velayati would also go on to criticise the rise of a neo-colonial order led by the United States, which was increasingly emerging in the region. Speaking roughly a year after the Ba'athist invasion of Kuwait which was followed by an American led 'coalition of the willing', which not only brought Saddam's invasion to an end, but also marked the beginning of an increased United States' military presence in the region, Velayati stressed the importance of the region solving its own issues 'without any foreign presence' based on their 'deep rooted bonds of religion, culture, history and commerce'.[483] At a time when several members of the 'third world', and more specifically, the Non-Aligned Movement

[479] Ibid. pp. 47-48.
[480] Strydom, Hennie. 2007. "The Non-Aligned Movement and the Reform of International Relations". *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law Online* 11 (1). pp. 1–46. pp. 15-30.
[481] Ibid. p. 52.
[482] Ibid. pp. 52-55.
[483] Ibid. pp. 56-57.

not only showed were acquiescent, but in fact took part the United States' coalition in Iraq, Velayati clearly reflected the Iranian establishment's concern with the increased United States' presence in their unrivalled position in the new emerging world order, and discontent with this trend was evident in his speech to the General Assembly in September 1994 where he stated that:

> … a few self-proclaimed victors of the Cold War feel entitled to dictate the new criteria that determine international relations and guide the United Nations and, more specifically, the Security Council, arrogating to themselves the right to impose their own vision and self-serving interpretations on the rest of humanity. The transformation of the Security Council into an instrument for justification or enforcement of policies of a number of permanent members is not at all compatible with the spirit of the Charter … A body charged with the grave responsibility of maintaining international peace and security must not be influenced and manipulated by those Powers that have historically sought to serve their own self-interest at the expense of international peace.[484]

Thus, Iran appears to be holding a dual position with regards to the United Nations and its role in the just world order; on one hand, it affirms belief and acceptance of the United Nation's charter, particularly its position on non-interference and sovereign equality. On the other hand, it calls for reforming its decision-making structure and democratise it as its current form was understood to constitute a great power dictatorship. Therefore, while opposition to United States hegemony was never a secret of the establishment's resistance politics, this reflects another aspect of their discourse traceable to the intellectual trajectory of the neutralist and non-aligned thought collectives discussed in the previous Chapter. Citing the United Nation's inability to bring the Zionist occupation of Lebanon and Palestine to an end, and what Iran perceived to be apathy towards the genocide of the Bosnian Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Velayati argued that 'there is no further justification for holding on to privileges granted to the war victors of that time'[485]

By virtue of the examples used to highlight the shortcomings of the United Nations, Velayati demonstrates that Iranian 'third worldism' was not simply comparable to that of

[484] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Forty-ninth Session,* 5th Plenary Meeting 26 September 1994 A/49/PV.5. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/49/PV.5> Accessed on 29 July 2019. p. 37.
[485] Ibid. p. 39.

the non-aligned movement, but instead constituted a synthesis with its religious particularistic trajectory. The focus on the Palestine and plight of Muslims in general reflect a form of pan-Islamic solidarity which cannot be traced to the National Front, but instead to the Devotees and the Revolutionary Movement. Another notable example of the synthesis is also evident in Ayatollah Khamenei's speech to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) **(**now known as Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) in 1997 where he on one hand followed the Devotees in calling for an 'interparliamentary union of the Islamic countries' and the creation of a common Islamic market, while on the other hand calling for the OIC to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.[486]

The particularistic dimensions of Iranian revisionist visions of what it perceived to be a just world order is also reflected in the doctrines presented by Majles representative and establishment intellectual, Mohammad Javad Larijani. First presented in the 1980s, but turned into a seminal work on Iranian political strategy in 1989, Larijani presents a normative doctrine for Iran's position as an Islamic state, to which he attributes the term *omm al qorrā,* literally meaning the 'mother of the villages' in Arabic, a term previously used to describe Mecca and Medina in older Persian texts. [487] In this doctrine, Larijani argues that the Islamic *ummah* transcends national borders today, as its previous authority structures, namely the imamate and caliphate also transcended national and political boundaries.[488] As it is unfeasible to conduct '*ummah*-wide' elections to choose the leader of the Muslim world, Larijani presents the pragmatic *omm al qorrā* (*omm al qorrā-ye prāgmātik)* as a solution to the leadership problem of the *ummah,* defined as:

> A country becomes the *omm al qorrā* of the Islamic world (*jahān-e Eslāmi*) when it possesses leadership which in fact qualifies it to lead the whole ummah. As is evident, strategic positioning, population, race, and such are not relevant, rather the criterion [for becoming *omm al qorrā*] is guardianship (*melāk dar velāyat ast*). In other words, if a country has the pretension to be the

[486] Mo'āvenat-e āmuzesh va parvaresh-e vezārat-e omur-e khārejeh. 1379/1997. *Gozāresh-e mosavvar-e hashtomin ejlās-e sarān-e sāzmān-e konferāns-e Eslāmī*. Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Tamāshāgarān. p. 94.
[487] See for example: Ja'farian, Rasul. 1373/1994-1995. *Beh su-ye omm al qorrā*. Tehran: Mas'ar.
[488] Larijani, Mohammad Javad. 1369/1990-1991. *maqulāti dar estrāteji-ye melli*. Tehran: Markaz-e Tarjomeh va nashr-e ketāb. p. 57; pp. 46-47.

> *omm al qorrā*, it ought to raise the level of its leadership (*sath-e rahbari*) beyond its geographical borders.[489]

Thus, *omm al qorrā* is a transnational doctrine for leadership of the Muslim world, which is purely based on an entity's ability to defend the interest of the *ummah*.[490] This was achieved by Iran in 1979 after:

> … the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and the leadership of the symbol of justice (*āiyāt-e haq*), Emam Khomeini, Iran has become the *omm al qorrā* of the Islamic world (*dār al Eslām*) [.] it became its duty to lead the Islamic world and it had the responsibility towards the ummah to be their guardian.[491]

Omm al qorrā is therefore not only an ideal doctrine, but a duty for a capable Muslim state, which in the case of Iran creates the dual responsibility of it the Leader of the Islamic Revolution as having the 'legal position' of the leader of the Islamic Republic based on the framework of the constitution, and that of the guardian of the Islamic world with its duties prescribed by shariah.[492] The implications of this dual responsibility is that 'the expediency (*masāleh*) of the *ummah* takes precedence' unless the existence of the *omm al qorrā* is at stake, since defending its existence 'is the duty of the whole *ummah.'*[493] Calling it a dialectic relationship between the duties of *omm al qorrā* and the duties of the *ummah,* Larijani argues that since the former is obliged to lead the defence of Muslims across the globe when in danger, the latter will be more prepared to defend the *omm al qorrā* when it faces threats. The synthesis of this dialectic is a 'great ummah of billions' (*ommat-e azim-e milliardi)*[494] which can defend the interests of Muslims and shape the world in its own image.[495]

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[489] Ibid. pp. 47-48.
[490] Ibid. p. 48.
[491] Ibid. pp. 48-49.
[492] Ibid. p. 49.
[493] Ibid.
[494] Due to the mainstream and hegemonic position of the discourse of sectarianism in the study of West Asian politics in Western academia today, it is worth noting that Shia-Sunni unity is a position emphasised by revolutionaries and members of the establishment for the past four decades in various arenas. The end of this chapter will cover parts of this discourse in the form of the Islamic Resistance. These claims are challenged by opponents of the Islamic Republic who believe that these claims are both implausible and hypocritical, see for example: Iranwire.com. 2021. "Four Decades of Discrimination Against Sunnis in Iran". Online: <https://iranwire.com/en/religious-minorities/70849> Accessed on 21 July 2022.
[495] Ibid.

This proves another example of the idiosyncrasy in State Resistance, which appears to show a synthesis of its diverse intellectual trajectory which both espouses values classic values of non-alignment and religious particularism when presenting its revisionist visions of international justice and what it perceived to be a just world order. What is more, it is also a further example of the increased self-perception held by the establishment that Iran had become a powerful actor in the world. While the sense of power would remain, visions of a just world order would increasingly fade away as American hegemony consolidated itself. With the New World Order on the rise, new challenges to Iran's true independence emerged and would dominate the discourse of State Resistance after Khomeini.

World Arrogance

As should have been clear by now, the evolution of State Resistance has been a continuous feature of the discourse since its emergence with Ayatollah Modarres, and the period that followed the passing of the founder of the Islamic Republic was no exception. As mentioned above, a particular transformation of the post-Khomeini era is the international context in which it was espoused, from being the victim of the imperial rivalry of East and West to become an actor seeking to assert itself first against the two blocs, and then against American hegemony. While the increased focus on American hegemony has caused incorrect misconceptions of alignment or alliance building with the Soviet Union during its last years, these errors can be clarified by Rafsanjani's comments following his visit to the Soviet Union as the Acting Commander in Chief and Speaker of Majles on 24 June 1989:

> They have comprehended the reality of the revolution and the nature and essence of our revolution and have adjusted themselves accordingly. They [the Soviet Union] have definitely realized that the revolution is sincere when it says "neither East nor West" and is not prepared to depend on anyone or anything during its course. *For the first time in the history of Iran, they had fully prepared themselves to encounter an Iran which is 100 percent independent* and will

> not accept anything except what is in the interests of its ideology and people of the country.[496] (emphasis my own)

Here, Rafsanjani justifies Iran's increased leniency towards the Soviet Union on the basis of his perception of a change of attitude on the part of the Soviet leadership. This in turn allowed for a more friendly approach to Russia from then onwards. Furthermore, Neither East nor West did not have an inherent sense of enmity towards specific political entities, but instead opposed particular (neo)imperial attitudes often held by the former and current empires, such as violent unilateralism and domination. The Iranian establishment perceived these to have diminished by the Soviet Union in its last years as they no longer had any fifth columns in the country, as noted by Ayatollah Khamenei when stating that:

> we have repeatedly clarified that our foreign policy is based on both parties' interest and the non-existence of bullying and hegemony, as well as the never-changing and fundamental principle of neither East nor West. We are prepared for healthy relations … [497]

Indeed, clarification of the country's resistance politics would become an important task of the early Khamenei era as the state transitioned towards a relatively normal state of affairs for a West Asian state. Having fully consolidated the state, slogans would have to be transformed into policy, and pragmatic concerns outside of the ideological scope of the victorious revolutionaries would have to be integrated and accommodated in the discourse and policies of the Islamic Republic. Still, the post-war era was not limited to clarifications and implementation, but also witnessed the emergence of a new discourse which did not exist during the Khomeini era, namely world arrogance (*estekbār-e jahāni*). Perhaps as a consequence of reading history backwards, books in Iran have been written about Ayatollah Khomeini's discourse on world arrogance despite it barely constituting a part of his political vocabulary,[498] as he only used the word in its literal sense a few times. In Western

[496] FBIS-NES Daily Report. Near East & South Asia/Tehran Domestic Service. 1989. "Rafsanjani Interviewed", 24 June 1989.
[497] FBIS-NES Daily Report. Near East & South Asia/Tehran Domestic Service. 1989. "Khamene'i on Revolutionary-Islamic Foreign Policy", 22 August 1989.
[498] See for example: Haji Zadeh, Ali Reza & Dareini, Mahmod. 1386/2004. *Estekbār-e jahāni va shaytān-e bozorg az didgāh-e emām Khomeini*. Tehran: Mo'assesseh-ye Tanzim va nashr-e āsār-e emām Khomeini.

scholarship, the concept is often confused as an early revolutionary discourse indistinguishable from Neither East nor West,[499] or as Ayatollah Khomeini's 'concept of imperialism'.[500] While Ayatollah Khomeini undoubtedly shared the sentiment of world arrogance, it was his successor who transformed the Quranic term into a component of Iran's resistance discourse, and who in November 1989 defined it as:

> a situation in which a number of governments and powers use force while nations, groups, and governments surrender to such force. Both are parties to the regime of dominance [*nezām-e solteh*]. We rejected the regime of dominance; we reject it and campaign against it. We believe that both parties [those using force and those accepting it] are at fault, not only the one using force is at fault, but also the one accepting it.[501]

World arrogance is thus a more concrete articulation of Article 152 of the constitution discussed in the previous Chapter which besides non-alignment, also "the rejection of all forms of domination, both the exertion of it and submission to it".[502] By condemning not only (neo)imperial behaviour, but also submission to it, Ayatollah Khamenei does not simply dichotomise the world between the oppressed and the oppressor, but expresses more nuanced opposition towards submissive behaviour as it functions as a mutually constitutive component of the injustice of unilateralism and domination. Therefore, the discourse of State Resistance is not simply a reaction to domination, but an active struggle against it; and by not resisting injustice, according to world arrogance, the oppressed becomes the oppressor. Responding to the charge that this active resistance encouraged against world arrogance constitutes 'adventurism', Ayatollah Khamenei responded that:

> Adventurism is committed by the chief who enters the space of your house—not you, who drive him out of the house or complain against him or shout at him or explain your position as victims in this or that place.[503]

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[499] Naficy, Hamed. 1992. "Islamizing Film Culture in Iran", in Farsoun, Samih K, and Mashayekhi, Mehrdad. (eds.) *Iran: Political Culture in the Islamic Republic*. London: Routledge. pp. 123-148. p. 125.
[500] Halliday. *The Middle East in International Relations*. p. 214
[501] FBIS-NES Daily Report. Near East & South Asia/Tehran Domestic Service. 1989. "Khamene'i Speech Marking Capture of U.S Embassy", 1 November 1989.
[502] Papan-Matin, Firoozeh. 2014. "The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1989 Edition)". *Iranian Studies* 47/1: pp. 159–200. p. 195.
[503] FBIS-NES Daily Report. "Khamene'i Speech Marking Capture of U.S Embassy".

Therefore, the discourse of world arrogance seems to primarily reflect the concerns about territorial integrity and sovereignty of Neither East nor West, which emphasise state independence as understood by contemporary international law. Consequently, it is my understanding than rather than being 'another word for imperialism', it is actually more concerned with neo-imperialism that followed the era of decolonialisation, which by the 1980s had been *formally* completed in the Muslim Majority World, with the notable exceptions being West Sahara, and the settler colony of Israel,[504] whose opposition the establishment continues to support up until today.[505] With regards to its genealogy, world arrogance reflects the continuation of the Revolutionary Movement and the Thought Collective of the Imam's encouragement of proactive resistance with the dual aim of surviving and challenging the world order. However, it differed from its the pre-revolutionary ancestry, as it was no longer a doctrine for survival, as it was for Modarres and Mosaddeq who explicitly spoke from a position of weakness. Instead, by 1990, the discourse of State Resistance used world arrogance to clarify a path for progress, as the establishment perceived Iran to be increasingly powerful. What is more, while not holding imperial aspirations, the establishment followed the Devotees in perceiving a significant power potential in the Muslim majority world, when for example President Rafsanjani stated that world arrogance powers such as the United States and their allies 'would be helpless against a united Islamic ummah', however, due to the 'divisive policy of the world arrogance' this unity had not been achieved yet.[506]

[504] Pappe, Ilan. 2008. "Zionism as Colonialism: A Comparative View of Diluted Colonialism in Asia and Africa". *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107 (4). pp. 611-633.
[505] Irdiplomacy.ir. 1397/2017. *Irān be a'zāye jebhe-ye Polisārio gozarnāmeh-ye diplomātik dadeh*. Online: < http://irdiplomacy.ir/fa/news/1976539/ایران-به-اعضای-جبهه-پولیساریو-گذرنامه-دیپلماتیک-داده-> Accessed on 21 July 2022.
[506] FBIS-NES Daily Report. Near East & South Asia/Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network. 1993. "Hashemi-Rafsanjani Delivers Friday Prayer Sermons", 20 August 1993.

The struggle encouraged against world arrogance was therefore a struggle against neoimperialism, perceived to be a key quality of the emerging world order with the United State at its helm. According to Ayatollah Khamenei, this was the main reason for rejecting ties with the United States as long as it 'arrogantly oppresses nations, interferes in governments and countries, support such illegitimate regimes as the detested Zionist regime, combats liberation movements and the awakening of nations' while plundering their resources.[507] In response to United State President George Bush Sr's famous declaration of a 'new world order'[508] Ayatollah Khamenei responded that:

> … see what a filthy new world order is dominating the world. Is that the new world order they were speaking about? A bullying thug enters the house of a group of orphan children, occupies their home, takes away their facilities, foodstuffs, their comfortable rooms, their bedrooms, occupies the whole space of their house, and imprisons the occupants of the house in a cellar, for example, and sets restrictions on them. As soon as an opportunity arises and those for those children to cry out and ask why, he gets angry, saying: you always speak of struggle, why do you not think of peace? why are you so ill-humored? [509]

It is within the context of a total moral rejection of the United States that a powerful Islamic Republic of Iran becomes of particular importance, and Ayatollah Khomeini's emphasis on Iran's role as a leader of the oppressed world continued to dominate in the 1990s as Ayatollah Khamenei stressed that 'Iran is where Islam can speak forcefully' as it has the capability call out the great powers, a capability that 'others do not have'.[510] Iran, having succeeded in its primary resistance struggle, was thus perceived by its establishment to be in charge of a revisionist project against the neo-imperial world order spearheaded by the United States.

While the National Resistance Movement had also envisaged an Iranian leadership role in the third world, this position was still espoused from a position of weakness confined

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[507] FBIS-NES Daily Report. Near East & South Asia/Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network. 1991. "Khamene'i Message on Anniversary of Imam's Death", 3 June 1991.
[508] See: C-SPAN. N/A. *George Bush Defines the New World Order*. Retrieved online: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4528359/george-bush-defines-world-order> Accessed on 21 April 2019.
[509] FBIS-NES Daily Report. Near East & South Asia/Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network. 1994. "Khamene'i Delivers Friday Prayer Sermon", 18 February 1994.
[510] Ibid.

to the context of neutralism and non-alignment in the strict foreign policy sense. By virtue of being 'Neither East nor West', the Islamic Republic of Iran under Ayatollah Khamenei perceived itself to be in a position of strength in which it would not only stay non-aligned, but also strive towards altering the world order. However, while attempting to spearhead a revisionist agenda internationally, the task of remaining Neither East nor West at home was still not complete. Having eradicated the political and military infiltration and presence of foreign powers—a dream of all the thought collectives studied in Chapter 2—the establishment still had to maintain independence as prescribed by the Revolutionary Movement and Ayatollah Khomeini. True independence was not just a slogan used to condemn the cultural practices of the Pahlavi regime, but a strict requirement which forced State Resistance to challenge not only material, but also ideational threats to Iranian independence.

The Cultural Invasion

The most notable example of the non-territorial dimensions of Neither East nor West which emerged during the period of reconstruction is the discourse of 'cultural invasion' (*tahājom-e farhangi*). Initially, it appears to have emerged as a concept which became popularised in domestic publications during the 1980s, and was occasionally used by Ayatollah Khamenei during his presidency in the late 1980s to describe what he perceived to be a 'great cultural onslaught against Islam' spearheaded by the West.[511] However, it was not until the end of the Cold War in 1991 that the concept firmly established itself in the resistance politics of the establishment in part as a response to the unchallenged nature of United States' hegemony which the establishment believed was undermining the

[511] Khamenei.ir. 1368/1989. *bayānāt dar didar 'azā-ye majma'-e namāyandegān-e tollab va fozallā-ye howzeh-ye 'elmiyeh-e qom*. Online: <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=2228> Accessed on 18 July 2021.

authenticity, and consequently the spirit of resistance in the country. Domestically, the discourse materialised into policies that sought to counter what was seen as undesirable influences in the public sphere, and the cultural invasion appears to have been the context and pretext upon which the Majles banned satellite dishes in 1995 after it was identified by establishment figures such as Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Mostafa Mirsalim as the symbol of the cultural invasion.[512] However, it is worth noting that it was not until 1997 that the discourse was codified into a law that stipulates various guidelines for state institutions by President Khatami as the Head of the Supreme Council for the Cultural Revolution.[513]

Nevertheless, the main focus of the cultural invasion appears to be American hegemony following the end of the Cold War. For example, in September 1991, Head of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi published an article claiming that the cultural invasion, having started with the 'educated and westoxified' parts of society during the Constitutional Revolution, was making a comeback with the emergence of the 'New World Order'. [514] Stressing the importance of preserving the Islamic and revolutionary authenticity of the nation, Ayatollah Yazdi questioned to what extent Iran had a strategy and the necessary resources to cope with this invasion.[515] Devising strategies aimed at identifying the cultural invasion was thus another trend that would be initiated during the era of reconstruction, which say the revolutionaries who had rapidly turned into the establishment having to provide specific strategies than abstract slogans. In another attempt to specify Neither East nor West, specifically its cultural component, Ayatollah Khamenei sought to

[512] FBIS-NES Daily Report. Near East & South Asia/Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Programme Network. 1996. "Ban of Satellite Dishes Effective in Apr", 14 March 1995; FBIS-NES Daily Report. Near East & South Asia/Tehran IRNA. 1996. "Outline of Satellite Dish Ban Approved", 22 September 1994.
[513] Majlis.ir. 1379/1999. *Siyāsat-hā-ye moqābeleh bā tahājom-e farhangi*. Online: <https://rc.majlis.ir/fa/law/show/100703> Accessed on 21 July 2022.
[514] *Nur-e 'Elm*. No.4 1370 Shahrivar/August-September 1991. p. 4
[515] Ibid. p. 6

emphasise that he was not propagating cultural isolationism or puritanism in a meeting with members of the country's press:

> … cultural invasion (*tahājom-e farhangi*) differs from cultural exchange (*tabādol-e farhangi*) … [while] cultural exchange is our choice; cultural invasion is the choice of the enemy. We perform cultural exchange to become complete, to make our culture whole. But cultural invasion is done to tear out the roots of one's national culture.[516]

More specifically, as the 1990s progressed Ayatollah Khamenei and the establishment's conceptualisation of the cultural invasion transformed from being perceiving it as an ideological onslaught against Islam to become an attempt to undermine the country's 'cultural independence' (*esteqlāl-e farhangi*), thereby making people 'abandon the path of Islam and make them lose faith in the struggle' that the Islamic Republic was engaged in against the existing world order.[517] As such, the discourse of cultural invasion can be understood as a discourse against the 'representational force' the West exerts against Iran,[518] which the establishment believes is seeking to undermine and alter the resistance subjectivity of the Islamic Republic that the state seeks to reproduce among its populace. Therefore, unlike Al-e Ahmad who perceived cultural influences from the West to be a contagious toxification transmitted through interaction and admiration for modern life, Ayatollah Khamenei and the establishment perceived it to be a more active effort aimed at the fundamentals of the Islamic Republic. While the discourse of Westoxificiation has remained hegemonic since Al-e Ahmad made in mainstream in the 1960s, with the term being used consistently as a pejorative aimed at restricting and side-lining opponents and election rivals for the past four decades,[519] the cultural invasion

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[516] *Adabestān-e farhang va honar*, Mordād 1371/July-August 1992. p. 9.

[517] Khamenei.ir. 1372/1993. *Bayānāt dar didār-e jam'i az kārgarān va mo'alemān*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=2666> Accessed on 18 July 2021.

[518] See: Mattern, Janice Bially. 2005. "Why `Soft Power' Isn't So Soft: Representational Force and the Sociolinguistic Construction of Attraction in World Politics". *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33 (3): pp. 583–612.

[519] For example, Westoxified, or Western-oriented (*gharbgara*) is frequently used, predominantly by the right faction, to discredit and challenge individuals and groups aligned with the Reformist and moderate camp such as the Khatami and Rouhani administrations. See for example: Farsnews.ir. 1401/2022. *Obur-e 10 māhe-ye dowlat-e Ra'isi az meydān-e min-e dowlat-e gharbgarā*. Online: < https://www.farsnews.ir/news/14010330000261/> Accessed on 21 July 2022.

appears to be dealing with the popular dimensions of globalisation and hegemony. Rather than the conceptual problem of cultural imperialism which obviously excluded the masses as most of them were illiterate at the time of Al-e Ahmad,[520] Ayatollah Khamenei and the establishment appear to be dealing with a much deeper phenomenon on both mass and elite levels of society.

This can largely be explained by the global political context in which it emerged as a resistance discourse, specifically the fall of the Soviet Union and their defeat on the ideological battlefield against the United States. As prominent sociologist and Freedom Movement member, Gholamabbas Tavvasoli, stated in a discussion on the cultural invasion 'we must not think that we are exempted from this [the Soviet Union's] trajectory', and called for resisting the cultural invasion by opening the political space for public opinion to mature and become better equipped at dealing with the discursive threats posed by United States' hegemony.[521]

Besides experiences of the Cold War and unipolarity, establishment journalist, media producer and intellectual Sayyed Morteza Aviny argued that the discourse had surfaced at this particular time due to Iran's own changing political circumstances:

> The West's cultural invasion against other cultures, and especially the culture of religiosity (*farhang-e dindāri*), is not a new affair and has more than a century-long historical precedent in our own country. What has caused this perception (*ta'bir*) to gain currency these days, is that our era of military struggle against the West ended with the acceptance of [UN] resolution 598, which brought to light the cultural aspects of this struggle.[522]

What Aviny is arguing here is essentially that Iran had transcended primary resistance with the end of continuous foreign aggression to its territory and entered the realm of secondary resistance as it sought to maintain its authenticity against discursive threats. For Aviny, the cultural invasion is a multifaceted phenomenon which encompasses the totality

[520] Prashad, Vijay. 2007. *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*. New York: New Press. p. 81.
[521] *Adabestān-e farhang va honar*, Bahman 1370/January-February 1992. p. 49.
[522] *Fārābi*, Zemestān 1371/Winter 1992. p. 127.

of Western hegemony as he argues that Western technology and economics are also a part of this onslaught, that the state needs to prepare its citizens against using the mediums at its disposal.[523]

Possibly being a more widely espoused discourse than world arrogance, the cultural invasion situated itself intellectually between two parts of the establishment; the left-leaning particularist who saw the cultural invasion as describing the phenomenon that resulted in what Jalal Al-e Ahmad had labelled 'westoxificiation', and more religious approaches which perceived it within a more 'clash of civilisations' frame of thought. Notable examples of the conservative approach is evident in influential institutions and individuals, such The Revolutionary Guard's Centre for Islamic Research (*markaz-e tahqiqāt-e Eslāmi-ye Sepāh),* who during the spring of 1999 published a pamphlet titled *The Cultural Invasion* where it states that:

> World arrogance has reached the conclusion that if the religious spirit of Muslims remains untouched (*dastnakhordeh*) then not only will result in their domination, but that Islam will become a potent danger to their setting up the stall for their arrogance throughout the world.[524]

Citing the Christian conquest of Andalusia as the beginning of the cultural invasion, the publication of the Revolutionary Guard corps seems to perceive the phenomenon as directed towards the Iranian self, which after the revolution had become a global force for change. Seeking to curb this revisionism, the Revolutionary Guard's corps proposed economic growth, improved education to raise awareness of the phenomenon, and strengthening the country's religion in order to cope with these challenges. [525] In stating this, the Revolutionary Guards situate themselves firmly within the trajectory of the Revolutionary Movement discussed in Chapter 2 who perceived the source of independence,

[523] Ibid. pp. 127-130.
[524] Markaz-e Tahqiqāti-ye Eslāmi-ye Sepāh. 1378/1999-2000. *Vizheh-nāmeh-ye nashriyeh-ye maktab-e jebheh*. "Tahājom-e Farhangi". Qom: Mo'āvenat-e Enteshārāt-e Markaz-e Farhangi-ye Sepāh. p. 35
[525] Ibid. pp. 142-151.

and security to emerge from genuine Islam, and its practice would result in *true independence.*

The most seminal work on the topic of cultural invasion would be published only a few months later, by Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi, who at the time was serving as a member of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution. In his book, also titled *The Cultural Invasion,* Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi follows the aforementioned understandings on the cultural invasion but goes a step further to devise a more detailed approach to how to cope with this new and emerging threat. Similar to how the revolutionary movement onwards believed their particular approach to Islam meant independence and was a force of emancipation, Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi argues that the West are fully aware that 'only Islamic culture is able to fully resist the enemy', which is why the Muslim majority world has been victim of a century long cultural invasion.[526] Rather than Western pop culture, Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi focuses on secularism as the main component of the cultural invasion, and argued that Ayatollah Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution rescued Iran from what would have debilitated the country's ability to gain independence.[527]

In other words, Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi perceived the current cultural invasion to be a force of secularism that sought to undermine the foundations of Iranian independence; Islam in the form espoused by the Ayatollah Khomeini. Specifically, he argues that while the objective of the cultural invasion is to serve the material interests of the West, its key objective today is undermining the legitimacy of the doctrine of *velāyat-e faqih,* which Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi perceives to be the reason for the success of the Islamic Revolution and the stability of the Islamic Republic:

> Why is Iran, with all its racial diversity (*tafāvothā-ye nejādi*) ranging from Persians, Turks, Arabs, Baluchis, Kurds and other races, able to maintain its unity and bring about such a great

[526] Yazdi, Mohammad Taqi Mesbah. 1378/2000. *Tahājom-e Farhangi*. Qom: Enteshārāt-e Mo'asseseh-ye Āmozeshi va Pazhuheshi-ye Emām Khomeini. p. 92.
[527] Ibid. p. 93

> revolution? Because it had a leader who was the vali-ye faqih and people saw it as their religious duty to follow him.[528]

Understanding the cultural invasion as a danger 'greater than the eight-year war' against Ba'athist Iraq, Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi argues that the responsibility of this resistance does not lie with the army, or the state itself, but 'the universities and seminaries' as well as a collective mobilisation (*basij-e hamegāni*) which needs to counter the undesired influences on grassroots level as well.[529] With regards to the weapons of this discursive resistance, Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi stresses that the ultimate tool to counter the force of secularism is 'religious education' (*āmozesh-e dini*),[530] a further reflection on the importance of a particularistic form of authenticity perceived to be a prerequisite for both successful resistance and true independence. However, similar to Khatami, he does not call for the total rejection of Western civilisation, and stresses emphasises the importance of learning their science and industry. The aspects that ought to be resisted are those who contravene Islam, and consequently independence.[531] While the discursive threats to Iran's true independence had been identified through the cultural invasion, it would take almost 20 years after its emergence before the war of ideas would be initiated by the establishment. In the meantime, alternative factions would endeavour in their attempts of defending Iran's true independence.

Dialogue Among Civilisations

With no doubt one of the most widely discussed Iranian presidency in Western scholarship, the administration which succeeded Rafsanjani's marked the end of the era of reconstruction, and the beginning of what has been known as the Reformist

[528] Ibid. pp. 126
[529] Ibid. pp. 122-123.
[530] Ibid. p. 124.
[531] Ibid. pp. 134-135.

era. Campaigning under banner of democratic reform, civil society and the rule of law, President Khatami's initial ascendancy to the presidency of the Islamic Republic of Iran was met with great hope and expectations, both domestically and internationally by scholars and politicians alike. The seemingly new discourse espoused by the former Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance under the Khamenei and Rafsanjani presidencies (1982-1992) has caused a level of sensationalism which situated his electoral victory in terms of significance alongside the revolution,[532] or the passing of Ayatollah Khomeini when scholars and pundits claimed that the victory marked the beginning of the 'Third Republic'.[533] Perhaps a more sober assessment would suggest that it certainly marked a turning point in Iranian history,[534] as it undoubtedly marked an era in which Iranian politics in general, but also its resistance politics in particular turned towards a more reconciliatory approach.

Specifically, the return of the Left faction, now known as the Reformists (*eslāhtalabān*), following a decade with limited presence in the political arena, partially due to disqualifications by the Guardian Council of the Constitution, but also due to their ideas becoming less appealing to the growing middle class. However, the previous radicals would turn into Reformists with the rise of Khatami and the reform movement, thereby initiating a decade of factional politics which would shape the political discourse and policy-making in the Islamic Republic in an unprecedented manner. As a consequence of this new development in modern Iranian history significant parts of existing scholarship on the

[532] Abrahamian. *History of Modern Iran*. p. 188.
[533] Wright, Robin. 2000." Iran's New Revolution". *Foreign Affairs* 79 (1), pp. 133–45. p. 137; Ghamari-Tabrizi, Behrooz. 2003. "Iran: A Solution Rather Than a Problem: The Politics of Reform" in Esfandiari, Haleh, et al., *Social Change and Dissent in Iran*, conference report, Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria VA. Retrieved online: <https://apps.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA593515> Accessed on 26 July 2021; Buchta, Wilfried. 2005. *Taking Stock of a Quarter Century of the Islamic Republic of Iran*. Cambridge, MA: Islamic Legal Studies Program. p. 3.
[534] Ninan, Koshy. 2000. "Mandate for Reform in Iran". *Economic and Political Weekly* 35 (12). pp. 985–86. p. 985.

reform era have been focused on the failure to achieve significant change,[535] or on the idea that the reform movement supposedly had the objective of transforming Iran into a liberal democracy.[536] Prevalent understandings, I believe, largely arise from the fact that the political discourse of the Khatami era was and continues to be widely misunderstood down to its very core. Even its very label, reformism (*eslāhtalabi*), was in fact not mentioned in the manifesto for the first election as it was a term 'invented' in its currently known form by radical Reformist papers such as *Jame'eh* six months after the election in May 1997.[537] The same applies to Khatami's main legacy with regards to the resistance, or what is often mistakenly construed to be his *opposition* to it; namely his discourse of dialogue among civilisations (*goftogu-ye tamaddon-hā*). [538] For example, Ali Ansari appears to artificially and arbitrarily distinguish Iranian and Islamic, and argues that Khatami's most prominent foreign policy discourse, the dialogue among civilisations 'suggested a tendency toward Iranian Islamic civilization, in which "Islam," if referred to at all, was very much a junior partner',[539] and that it was an attempt to bring State Resistance to an end.[540] However, I believe that most existing accounts fail to appreciate the extent to which dialogue among civilisations sought to enshrine Iran's position as a revisionist force in the international system. Specifically, while it is accurate to note that Khatami sought to use 'cooperation to reform the inequities of the international system', it is equally important to recognize that

[535] Amuzegar, Jahangir. 2006. "Khatami's Legacy: Dashed Hopes." *Middle East Journal* 60 (1): pp. 57–74. p. 57; Arjomand, Saïd Amir. 2005. "The Rise and Fall of President Khātami and the Reform Movement in Iran." *Constellations* 12 (4): pp. 502–20. p. 518.
[536] Amuzegar. "Khatami's Legacy: Dashed Hopes." p. 67.
[537] Mohammadi, Ariabarzan. 2014. "The Path Dependent Nature of Factionalism in Post-Khomeini Iran." *Discussion Paper. Durham University, HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah Programme, Durham* No.13. p. 186.
[538] Also translated as dialogue of civilisations and dialogue between civilisations. However, dialogue among civilisations is the official translation used by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations and will therefore be used here.
[539] Ansari, Ali. "Civilizational Identity and Foreign Policy". p. 258.
[540] Ardib-Moghaddam. *The international politics of the Persian Gulf. p. 85*; Axworthy, Michael. 2013. *Revolutionary Iran: A History of the Islamic Republic*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 338; Ansari, Ali *Iran*. 2000. *Islam and Democracy: The Politics of Managing Change*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs. p. 132-3; Takeyh. *Guardians of the Revolution*. p. 5; Panah. *The Islamic Republic and the World*. p. 138; [540] Ehteshami, Anoushiravan. 2009. "Iran's regional policies since the cold war", in Gheissari, Ali (ed.) *Contemporary Iran*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 324-348. p. 334.

he sought to do so not by replacing 'past confrontation and anti-imperialist struggle,'[541] but by continuing Iran's revisionist struggle in a more moderate fashion than his domestic rivals through the revision of the international system into a more just world order which accepted Iran's particularistic nature.

The argument presented here thus goes against existing scholarship which tends to situate Khatami and the Reformists outside of the political establishment,[542] an understanding of Khatami only possible by ignoring his ministerial tenure during the 1980s and 1990s as well as the fact that his candidacy was 'approved by the highest echelons of the ruling establishment.'[543] While acknowledging both the institutional opposition and constitutional limitations which prevented the Reformist from implementing their—rather ambiguous—policy platform, it is also important to consider the fact that for the Khatami administration, which rose to power based on a pluralist platform and a diverse establishment support base, factional considerations played a significant role in limiting their success, especially their decision to exclude former president Hojjatoleslam Hashemi Rafsanjani from their camp due to the fear that he would undermine the Reformist base in the 6th Majles elections in 2000.[544]

Therefore, by situating Khatami from 1997 to 2005 as a 'political lightweight' in the political establishment of the Islamic Republic,[545] I argue here that his innovative discourse of dialogue of civilisation nevertheless represents a continuation of the post-Khomeini establishment resistance as it synthesises the previous three discourses already discussed in this Chapter: it calls for a just new world order in line with the values of the United Nations

[541] Hunter. *Iran's Foreign Policy*. p. 77.
[542] See for example: Ansari, Ali. 1999. "Reform Dominates." *The World Today* 55 (10): pp. 22–23; Gheissari and Nasr. *Democracy in Iran*. p. 176.
[543] Tazmini. *Revolution and Reform in Russia and Iran*. p. 247).
[544] Mashreghnews.ir, 1391/2013. *Rafsanjāni mikhast basāt-e eslāhāt rā jam' konad*. Online: <mshrgh.ir/200479> Accessed on 25 February 2016.
[545] Tazmini. *Revolution and Reform in Russia and Iran*. p. 249.

Charter; it seeks to end the practices of world arrogance; and it also seeks to bring the cultural invasion to an end by persuading the world to accept the Islamic Republic in its contemporary form, recognizing its independence and engaging with it in inter-civilisational exchange.

As is commonly known, with the Cold War ending in the early 1990s, intellectual debates appeared to transcend the clash of ideologies which had characterised it, and debates began to focus on alternative forces of mobilisation, with civilisations and identity politics gaining increased currency. The most significant contribution to this global debate was Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations* thesis from 1993, which famously predicted the emerging prominence of identity as the cause of international conflict.[546] His provocative approach to non-western peoples has caused a variety of appraisals across the world, with Iran being no exception as intellectual debates at the turn of the 20th century were characterised by establishment intellectuals across political factions discussing the role and nature of Iran's Islamic civilisation, and how it ought to approach the West.[547] It was within this intellectual context that Khatami**,** borrowing the concept from the Austrian intellectual, Hans Köchler, presented the discourse of dialogue among civilisations at the Organisation of Islamic Conference summit in Tehran on 9 December 1997. Whereas this speech is often perceived to be a breaking point which marked the birth of a new discourse, a close comparison reveals striking similarities in terms of emphasis on civilisations, identity and authenticity between this speech and his speech discussed earlier in this Chapter about a just

[546] Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1993-06-01/clash-civilizations> Accessed on 1 December 2019.

[547] For conservative approaches, see: Larijani, Mohammad Javad. 1374/1995-1996. *Kāvosh-hā-ye Nazari dar siyāsat-e khārejeh*. Tehran: Sherkat-e Enteshārāt-e 'Elmi va Farhangi; Larijani, Mohammad Javad.1377/1998-1999. *Dars-hā-ye siyāsat-e khāreji*. Tehran: Meshkavat. For Reformist: Sorush, Abdolkarim. 1378/1999-2000. *Siyāsatnāmeh*. Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Serāt. pp. 378-381. Sorush, Abdolkarim. 1382/2003-2004. *Eslām va* gharb. Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Etelā'āt.

world order.[548] Far from subordinating Iran's 'Islamic identity', the discourse of dialogue among civilisations was presented to the world with a pronounced emphasis on authenticity with reference to Islam:

> Taking abode in the "common Islamic home" does not mean regression, rejection of scientific achievements, withdrawal from the modern world or seeking conflict with others. On the contrary, it is only after such a return to the common identity that we can live in peace and tranquillity with other people and nations. Living in peace and security can be realized only when one fully understands not only the culture and thinking but also the concerns as well as the ways and manners of others. Sophisticated understanding of the cultural and moral dimensions of other societies and nations entails establishment of dialogue with them. A genuine meaningful discourse can take place only when the parties concerned find themselves in their own genuine and true position, otherwise the dialogue between alienated imitator and others is meaningless and certainly void of any good or benefit.[549]

In line with the trajectory of religious particularism studied in the previous Chapter, Khatami emphasises authenticity and pan-Islamic solidarity as crucial requisites for Muslim countries facing and changing the world. Having achieved authenticity or taken 'abode in the common Islamic home', Khatami believed that civil society ought to spearhead the revisionist project, as civil society 'centered around the axis of Islamic thinking and culture' does not 'seek to dominate others nor submits to domination'.[550] In other words, worldmaking based on Islam will bring world arrogance practices to an end. Consequently, Islamic civil society will be able to contribute to forging 'a new and just world order' based on 'mutual respect' between nations,[551] objectives which dominated the discourse of the National Front and its successors discussed in Chapter 2. According to Khatami, this new world order would bring peace and security to the world, as it would be characterised by a dialogue among civilisations rather than the continuous clashes that had characterised international relations throughout the 20th century:

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[548] Writings on discourses of civilisation appeared to be an emerging trend within the establishment at the time, which is evident in Larijani, Mohammad Javad. 1374. *Kāvosh-hā-ye Nazari dar siyāsat-e khārejeh*. Tehran: Sherkat-e Enteshārāt-e 'Elmi va Farhangi and Larijani, Mohammad Javad.1377. *Dars-hā-ye siyāsat-e khareji*. Tehran: Meshkavat. Which contain extensive discussion of the emergence of the Islamic Republic as the birth of a new civilisation, alongside critiques of Thoynbee and Samuel Huntington's own theories of civilisation.
[549] Mo'āvenat-e āmuzesh va parvaresh-e vezārat-e omur-e khārejeh, *Gozāresh-e mosavvar-e hashtomin ejlās-e sarān-e sāzmān-e konferāns-e Eslāmī*. p. 131.
[550] Ibid. p. 132.
[551] Ibid. pp. 132-133.

> The relations between the Islamic world and others is also fraught with mistrust, misunderstanding and misconceived perceptions, part of which is rooted in history and another part of which emanates from hegemonic relationships or are a consequence of the fanning of chronic misunderstandings by the hegemons. In this connection, through providing the necessary grounds for dialogue among civilizations and cultures- with the people of intellect taking a pivotal role- we should open the way towards a fundamental understanding which lies at the very foundations of genuine peace which in turn based on the realization of the rights of all nations, and thus render ineffective the grounds for the influence of negative propaganda in the public opinion.[552]

Khatami's revisionism is thus formulated as a 'bottom-up' strategy which seeks to establish dialogue, not between government officials, but instead between civil society organisations that are spearheaded by intellectuals. Similar to how Foreign Minister Velayati throughout the Rafsanjani presidency sought to emphasise justice, rather than force, as the foundations for sustainable peace and stability, Khatami added the importance of inter-cultural understanding as the means to achieve these objectives.

A fundamental assumption of Khatami's dialogue among civilisations is therefore the idea that Iran has been fundamentally misunderstood, and its negative image in the West is a product of a lack of knowledge rather than an inevitable clash of civilisations. However, this is not to suggest that Khatami believed conflict in international relations were simply a misunderstanding. In fact, in his first speech at the United Nations General Assembly on 21 September 1998, Khatami clearly stated that the lack of peace and justice in the world were primarily the responsibility of 'those powers whose intelligence services take pride in their dark record of overthrowing popular governments and supporting unpopular ones',[553] a clear reference to imperial interference in Iranian affairs during the Cold War discussed in Chapter 2. It was in the same speech that Khatami famously presented the doctrine of dialogue among civilizations to the entire world when declaring that:

> Now allow me to speak here as a man from the East, the origin of brilliant civilizations and the birthplace of divine prophets — Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed, peace be upon them all. I come from the noble land of Iran, representing a great and renowned nation famed for its ancient civilization, as well as for its distinguished contribution to the founding and expansion

[552] Ibid. p. 133.
[553] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Fifty-second Session,* 8th Plenary Meeting 21 September 1998 A/53/PV.8. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/53/PV.8> accessed on 25 August 2019. p. 4.

> of the Islamic civilization, a nation that has survived the strong winds of despotism, reaction and submission, relying on its cultural and human wealth. It is a nation which pioneered in the East the establishment of civil society and constitutional government in the course of its contemporary history, even though, as a result of foreign interference and domestic deficiencies, at times it may have faltered in its course; a nation which has been at the forefront of the struggle for independence and against colonialism, although its national movement was subverted by a foreign-orchestrated coup. And it is a nation which carries the torch of its popular revolution, not won by force of arms or a coup, but by dethroning a regime of coup d'état through the power of the enlightened word. In the course of its new experience, our nation has endured eight years of an imposed war, pressure, sanctions and various unfair accusations. It has also fallen victim to terrorism, the ominous phenomenon of the twentieth century.[554]

Khatami's perception of the 20th century does therefore represent a strong continuity with that of the establishment and the broader trajectory of State Resistance. While the strong references to the unjust interference of the hegemonic powers reflect his alignment with the establishment, his proposed solution to the unjust status quo constitutes a break:

> Today, the Iranian nation draws on its past to contemplate a better future, while defying reactionary tendencies and, backed by principles and ideals rooted in its religious, national, historical and revolutionary heritage and benefiting from positive achievements of contemporary civilization, marches, be it through trial and error, towards a promising tomorrow. The Islamic Revolution of the Iranian people was a revolt of reason against coercion and suppression. Certainly, a revolution which resorted to logic in the phase of destruction is much better disposed to resort to dialogue and reason in the phase of construction. Hence, it calls for a dialogue among civilizations and cultures instead of a clash between [them].[555]

It is evident that Khatami's main contribution—as opposed to deviation or capitulation—to resistance is the emphasis on dialogue for *achieving the objectives* of resistance. Whereas the secondary literature appears to focus on the parts of Khatami's discourses concerned with dialogue, they have often failed to include Khatami's emphasis on Iran's perceived role, his perception of its history and the international status quo, and the way he wishes to revise it. Khatami therefore called for 'a sober revision of the mentality of the cold war' and called for a culture of peace which recognised the value of each nation as well as the 'avoidance of domination, unilateralism, confrontation and exclusion.'[556]

Using the dialogue among civilisations as a discourse for revising the world order would continue during the Non-Aligned Summit in Malaysia in 2003, Khatami emphasised

[554]Ibid. p. 4.
[555] Ibid. p. 4; Ibid. p. 7.
[556] Ibid. p. 7

again the objective of the revolution as 'creating a new space and a new movement in the unjust world (*donyā-ye setamzadeh*)'.[557] Hoping that the 21st century would be 'a century of peace based on the dialogue among civilisations', Khatami called on the Non-Aligned Movement to establish this new order based on dialogue due to their struggle for democratising the international system and establishing equality among nations,[558] objectives also espoused by Velayati in his United Nations speeches. Khatami, however, goes on to call for the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement to cooperate, as he believes that there needs to be an internal dialogue among the global South aimed at widening the intellectual horizon of the global South on fields of 'politics, economy, science and society' in order to make it better equipped for the most crucial dialogue; the north-south dialogue of civilisations which would seek to establish pluralism, mutual respect, equality.[559] The collective that Khatami believes ought to resist the status quo and its supporters are thus to a greater extent the third world, as well as the Muslim majority world, thereby reflecting a synthesis between the Path of Mosaddeq and the trajectory of religious particularism with regards to alliance building.

Khatami's tour across the world, however, transcended international organisations which used to be the previous arenas which the establishment sought to espouse their vision. The drive for dialogue was also complimented with academic endeavours, such as the publication of books with contributions from academics across the world where the topic of discussion was dialogue.[560] In many respects dialogue among civilisations appears to have been a strategy, as well as a discourse, and its implementation was evident in Khatami's

[557] Khatami, Sayyed Mohammad. 1380/2001 *Goftogu-ye tamaddon-hā*. Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Tarh-e Now. p. 23.
[558] Ibid. p. 24.
[559] Ibid. p. 25.
[560] See for example: Safavi, Seyed Ghahreman. 2003. *Dialogue among Civilisations*. London: Salaman-Azadeh Publication; Aboulmagd, Kamal A (ed.). 2001. *Crossing the Divide: Dialogue among Civilizations*. South Orange: Seton Hall University School of Diplomacy and International Relations.

attempt to communicate directly to the educated classes in various countries in the world. An understanding of the discourse which was also propagated by the Director of International Affairs at the Centre for Dialogue Among Civilisations, Sayyed Masoud Mousavi Shafaee.[561] The manifestation of this strategy was evident in speeches held in universities in Florence, Weimar, and Beijing, where Khatami would propagate his discourse and clearly demonstrate the anti-imperialist dimensions of Khatami's resistance discourse, and the extent to which it was more than simply an olive branch to the West.

At Beijing University, Khatami presented dialogue among civilisations as a new method for 'a rational encounter against the dominance of the unipolar world', which he equated to imperialism.[562] Specifically, Khatami stressed Asian unity (*hamgerāyi-ye āsiyāyi)* as the important force which would bring an end to the 'the unipolar world order' and shift the 'process of globalisation' towards independence.[563] Thus, whereas the force which was to create a just world order during the Organisation of Islamic Conference summit was the Muslim majority world, Khatami's speech at the United Nation's General Assembly suggested it would be Iran. Three years after the introduction of the concept, Khatami would also present it as a continental phenomenon in which Asian states would unite in the pursuit of a just world order.

The exact content of dialogue among civilisation, and which particular actor or collective it ought to include thus appears to depend on the context of Khatami's speeches, thereby suggesting a leniency and level of flexibility perhaps not shared as much by the previous individuals and discourses studied in this Chapter. What remained consistent, however, was the worldmaking aspects of Khatami's discourse in the sense that dialogue

[561] Shafaee, Seyed Masoud Mousavi. 2003. "Dialgoue Among Civilisations: A Practical Outlook (Iran as a Case Study), in Safavi, Seyed Ghahreman (ed.) *Dialogue Among Civilisations*. London: Salman-Azadeh Publications. pp. 77-91.
[562] Khatami- *Goftogu-ye tamaddon-hā*. p. 63.
[563] Ibid. p. 63.

among civilisations was an attempt to forge a new more equitable world order, whether for Iran, the Muslim majority world or Asia. At the heart of this project was the requirement of authenticity of the actors involved, as explained by Mohammad Javad Faridzadeh, Diplomat and head of the Centre for Dialogue Among Civilisations between 1999 and 2010, who claimed that without authenticity dialogue is futile and dangerous.[564] The protection of countries' particularism, and the dialogue between authentic parties was according to Faridzadeh a value in itself which needs to be maintained.[565]

The Khatami presidency's ambitious attempt at worldmaking through international organisations and coalitions did therefore not constitute an ideological break with the trajectory of the establishment's international objectives as much as it was a radical change in approach used to achieve them. However, the 11 September 2001 attacks against the World Trade Centre in the United States, and the subsequent initiation of the so-called War on Terror saw Khatami's moderate approach fail, with Iran being further marginalised by Western states and listed in the George W. Bush Administration's 'Axis of Evil' which appear to instigate a reconsideration and change of path for his successor. The demonization of the Islamic Republic abroad, however, also coincided with the emergence of State Resistance and revisionism as a powerful force, both politically and militarily in the region and beyond.

[564] Mansurinejad, Mohammad and Khalili, Esma'il. 1381/2001. *Goftogu-ye tamaddon-hā az nazar andishmandān-e Irāni*. Tehran: Jahād-e dāneshgāh. p. 176.
[565] Ibid. p. 177.

Part 2: Resistance and Revisionism (2000-2013)

At the same time as Khatami's unsuccessful attempt at moderating the language of State Resistance and earn Iran a position of equality on the world stage, the September 11 attacks, which became a pretext for the NATO invasion of Afghanistan, and the invasion of Iraq led by the United States and the United Kingdom marked the beginning of a well-documented neoconservative revisionist project spearheaded by Iran's enemies of true independence, which further increased their military footprint in the region. As a consequence, the Khatami governments pursuit of dialogue were rebuked, and other attempts aimed at improving relations such as his decision to suspend Iran's nuclear program between 2003-2005 did not yield the hoped-for results, and was criticised by both the Leader and Khatami's conservative opposition in the establishment.[566] The reason behind this critique was that the result of Khatami's reconciliatory approach saw Iran famously designated as a part of the 'axis of evil' alongside Saddam Hussain's Iraq and North Korea by the Bush Administration in January 2002, and becoming the next target of the Administration's regime change campaign which sought to reshape the political landscape of West Asia and North Africa.[567]

However, the neoconservative pursuit of regime change, and the continuous propagation of the idea that Iran being a threat in Western political discourse was not made in an ideological vacuum in Western capitals but appears to have been influenced by developments on the ground in West Asia that were understood to threaten their status quo. While the establishment espoused signs of goodwill in its political discourse during the era of reform, its radical revisionist project in the region, the details of which we will return to

[566] Mousavian, Hossein, and Shahir ShahidSaless. 2014. *Iran and the United States: An Insider's View on the Failed Past and the Road to Peace*. New York: Bloomsbury. pp. 175-177.
[567] Bush, George W. 2002. "President Delivers State of the Union Address". Retrieved from <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>. Accessed on 9 December 2019.

in the last part of this Chapter, materialised significantly in military terms against the allies of the West. Specifically, the asymmetric rocket campaigns launched against Israel by its Lebanese ally, Hezbollah, in 2000 against the Zionist occupation of Southern Lebanon marked a significant military victory for State Resistance outside its territory, as it marked the first time 'Israel ceded land under the force of arms.'[568] Three years later, following the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq, and overthrow of Iran's adjacent enemy, Saddam Hussain, Iran witnessed a power-transition which significantly altered the geopolitical landscape in favour of the Islamic Republic as Iraq went from being Iran's neighbouring arch enemy to an ally in the region. In 2006, Israel's second invasion of Lebanon failed to achieve its declared objective of destroying Hezbollah.[569] The lack of success of the Israeli Defence Forces which had defeated the irregular army of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), and the conventional armies of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan within a few days and weeks previously,[570] suggests that the balance of power in the region was shifting in favour of Iran and its allies. Alongside military success, Iran's nuclear program continued to be a focal point of Iran asserting its independence, with its continued expansion despite opposition from the West, Israel and the United Nation Security Council making Iran the target of one of the strictest sanctions regimes ever implemented. It was within this international context of failed rapprochement, military success, international isolation, economic warfare and rising geopolitical tensions that the establishment would challenge and shape State Resistance as it entered the 21st century.

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[568] Baer. *The Devil We Know*. p. 51.

[569] Mfa.gov.il, 2006. *Address to Knesset by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert*. Online: <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2006/Pages/Address%20to%20the%20Knesset%20by%20PM%20Olmert%2017-Jul-2006.aspx>. Accessed on 9 December 2019.

[570] Matthews, Matt. 2008. *We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War*. Fort Leavenworth, Kan: Combat Studies Institute Press, US Army Combined Arms Center. p. 6; Hinnebusch. *The International Politics of the Middle East*. pp. 155-159.

At the same time, Reformist achievements between 1997 and 2005 would gradually fade away as the Conservatives, now more commonly known as the Principlists (*osulgarāyan*), and particularly its right wing would rise to power with limited opposition from the Reformists who were weakened by their disappointing tenure. The perception of Reformists failure coupled with leading Reformist candidates being rejected by the Guardian Council of the Constitution paved the way for Principlists to retake control over the Majles as they won 196 out of 290 seats in the seventh Majles election of 2004,[571] with 150 seats being captured by individuals understood to belong to its radical wing. [572] However, similar to the Reformist success in the early 2000s, radical Principlists success in the 2004, 2005 and 2009 elections proved to be pyrrhic victories for the radicals. On the one hand, the populist economic policies of the Ahmadinejad administration combined with United Nations Security Council sanction regime instigated an era of unprecedented economic recession and isolation which significantly undermined the Principlists' electoral appeal. On the other, factional alignments were also impacted by the Principlists' radicalism, especially after President Ahmadinejad fell out with the Leader in 2011, thereby paving the way for the Moderates (*miyāneh-row-ha/e'tedālgarān*), who had been mobilised by Rafsanjani in the late 1990s to combat what he understood to be dangerous radicalism within the system, to rise to power under the Rouhani administration (2013-2021) which will be covered in the final part of this Chapter.[573]

In retrospect, the era of Resistance and Revisionism covered in this Chapter proved to be a critical period in which the establishment tested the limits of radical discourse and its consequences under the Ahmadinejad administration, whilst also being forced to further expand the scope of resistance in pursuit of genuine independence. Discursively, State

[571] Mehrnews.com. 1399/2020. *Chinesh-e ahzāb-e mokhtalef-e keshvar dar majles-e showrāh-ye Eslāmi dar yāzdah dowreh-ye akhir*. Online: <https://www.mehrnews.com/news/4937354/> Accessed on 21 July 2022.
[572] Ehteshami, Anoushiravan 2017. *Iran: Stuck in Transition*. London: Routledge. pp. 38-9.
[573] Mousavian and ShahidSaless. *Iran and the United States*. p. 147.

Resistance engaged more actively with non-material threats in the form of the soft war (*jang-e narm),* and with economic issues, for the first time since the Islamic Revolution, in the form of the resistance economy (*eqtesād-e moqāvemati*) as the Islamic Republic entered the 21st century.

The Justice-Seeking Principlists

Known for moderation, rapprochement but nevertheless the inability to achieve his desired objectives, the Khatami Presidency laid fertile ground for a radical shift and re-evaluation of the direction State Resistance was developing towards. His successor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, would undoubtedly become the most controversial President in modern Iranian history. A former IRGC Commander, Governor of Maku, Khoi and Tehran and a university lecturer, Ahmadinejad was sworn in on 3 August 2005 having won the second round of the presidential elections against former President Rafsanjani who ran on a technocratic agenda concerned with improving the economic situation. However, situating Ahmadinejad's position within the establishment is particularly challenging. This is in part due to the apparent paradox of occupying the heart of the executive of the Islamic Republic, while simultaneously espousing a radical discourse which resonated, and continues to resonate, only with the margins of the establishment.

Besides the challenge of identifying the Ahmadinejad administration's position on the ideological spectrum of the establishment, another tendency that has challenged our understanding of the phenomenon has been the tendency to perhaps over-emphasise the President, at the expense of his rather unique and eclectic cabinet that shaped the politics of the Islamic Republic's most controversial years after Khomeini. De-personalising the Ahmadinejad Administration's political discourse is also important despite him being side-lined from decision-making in the Islamic Republic, as his former entourage still possesses

key positions in the state, and state-related institutions. Besides personalisation, despite campaigning on a platform focused on economic reform, social justice and welfare, the international attention on this presidency has been particularly focused on his transgressive discourse on Israel's existence and his holocaust denial. While the overwhelming focus on Ahmadinejad's provocative politics is understandable and highly predictable with regards to the media, it has nonetheless also prevented scholarship from attaining a sophisticated understanding of an important ideological current in the establishment, with dominant understandings labelling the movement as 'Iranian neoconservatives',[574] which draws parallel on the Bush Administrations revisionist and neo-imperialist ideology, with whom they share few similarities. Others have framed his politics along the lines of 'militant Islamic socialism and Third Worldist foreign policy',[575] which is understandable considering the general importance of religion, social justice at home and third world solidarity abroad that characterised his discourse, but nonetheless somewhat inaccurate considering their opposition to socialism and rather idiosyncratic third world politics which will be discussed below.

I have chosen to name the governments of the Ahmadinejad Presidency as that of the 'Justice-Seeking' Principlists due to the function of justice as a nodal point in their political discourse,[576] the discussion will focus on three aspects of justice that was pursued by the current; firstly their attempt to forge a new world order amidst what they perceive to be the decline of the existing one, secondly to challenge the fundamental truths that inform the existing order, and finally, to revise the United Nations into an organisation able to implement justice and prevent domination. Importantly, this political current should not be confused with the justice-seekers movement (*jonbesh-e edālatkhāh*) which is propagating

[574] Ehteshami and Zweiri. *Iran and the Rise of Its Neoconservatives*.
[575] Gheissari and Nasr. *Democracy in Iran*. p. 156.
[576] Dehqani, Sayyed Jalal. 1386/2007. "Goftemān-e usulgarāyi-ye 'edālat mehvar dar siyāsat-e khāreji-ye dowlat-e Ahmadinejād". *Dānesh-e Siyāsi* (5) pp. 67-98. p. 70.

social justice-oriented and anti-corruption policies and reforms on the domestic scene today. Moreover, I also concede the inability of this label to encapsulate the anomalous, contradictory, and eclectic nature of a political current in the establishment, which was spearheaded by Iran's sixth president discourse who sought to reformulate Iranian politics in general, but State Resistance in particular.

When studying the discourse of this current, it is perhaps more important than previously to reiterate that statesmen do not operate in the same environment as thinkers and academics, as they deal with the exigencies of the day, and that inconsistencies in politicians' discourses, as was evident with for example Khatami's adaption of dialogue among civilisations according to his audience, is a natural part of their politics. However, partially due to the vast number of speeches and declarations issues by Ahmadinejad during his presidency, a consequence of his frequent domestic and international tours[577] and of his numerous public letters to nations and statesmen, and partly due to the erratic nature of his discourse, the researcher confronts the realisation that there for any argument derived from his discourse, there will also be a counterargument available from elsewhere in his prolific output. There is little doubt that Ahmadinejad was *the* most active president in Iranian history, and as such, the discussion below will focus on the most consistent themes of the Justice-Seekers' resistance discourse during their two terms in office, and in particular how this discourse reflected Iran's emerging perception of itself as a powerful actor able to change the world.

Assuming the presidency four years into the NATO-led invasion of Afghanistan, and two years into the Anglo-American occupation of Iraq, the new administration would radically shift away from dialogue among civilisations, to actively seek to alter the world

[577] Ghiabi, Maziyar. 2019. *Drugs Politics: Managing Disorder in the Islamic Republic of Iran*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 166.

order that every single individual and group thus far discussed in this thesis had understood to be unjust. This was evident when the 9th presidential administration of the Islamic Republic presented their political program where they stated in their section on foreign policy that:

> The Islamic Revolution was another start for the Iranian-Islamic civilisation (*tamaddon-e Irāni-ye Eslāmi*) and became the end point of a dark era (*notqeh-ye pāyāni bar shab-e zolamāni gardid*). Now Islamic Iran is slowly emerging (*dar in suy rokh minamāyad*) to undermine the system of world domination and shed the light of justice and spirituality. The system of domination, despite the roars of its pharaoh, is breathing its last breath. Some western strategists are admitting this view of the future. Perhaps that is why the hegemonic system is trying to prevent its decline by occupying Afghanistan and Iraq to prepare for the implementation of the Greater Middle East Initiative.[578]

Seeking to challenge what is perceived as Western efforts to prevent decline, most likely as a result of the apparent quagmires of Iraq and Afghanistan, the new administration declared their intention to safeguard the country's sovereignty through 'international engagement on the basis of justice, peace and dignity for all and combating injustice, discrimination, insecurity, and humiliation of nations and warfare',[579] besides the explicit emphasis on justice as an objective and a value, the rest is largely consistent with other establishment figures discussed thus far in this Chapter. However, the certainty regarding the decline—*the* underlying assumption which would inform their resistance discourse—appears to have emboldened their revisionist project which stands out in a more particularistic fashion as the programme explicitly states Iran's intention to 'cooperate with Islamic countries in order to establish an Islamic pole (*qotb-e Eslāmi*) in the multipolar world order of the future.'[580] Similar to the turn of the 1990s when the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union was a global discussion which the Iranian establishment sought to influence, the global debates of the first decade of the 21st century was one characterised by the demise of the unipolar order, with the rise of China, Putin's challenge to American

[578] Dabirkhāneh-ye showrā-ye etelā' resāni-ye dowlat. 1384/2005. *Barnāmeh-ye dowlat-e nohom*. Tehran: showrā-ye 'āli etelā' resāni p. 8.
[579] Ibid. p. 12.
[580] Ibid. p. 40.

hegemony and the backlash of the American War on Terror undoubtedly shaping the Iranian establishment discourse at the time.

However, the certain assumption of decline, which highlights the total decline of Western domination over the world, appears to have also been driven by two key perceptions; firstly, one messianic determinism, bearing similarities to liberation theology in Latin America, which claims that the monotheistic religions are clear with regards to the *future* of those who cause injustice. In his public letter to the American people in 2006, Ahmadinejad wrote in that 'all prophets have taught us, injustice and transgression will eventually bring about decline and demise',[581] a sentiment which was to be repeated consistently throughout his presidency. For example, at his speech at the African Union summit in Gambia in 2006, Ahmadinejad stressed that the decline of the liberal order was imminent, since:

> Western liberalism is in a state of disintegration (*dar hāl-e forupāshi*) because it lacks morals and spirituality. Against the wishes of coercive powers (*zurmadārān*), people love God, justice, and human dignity … the path of rescuing humanity is nothing but a return to God, justice, and the traditions of the Prophet.[582]

Similar to how the religious trajectory of the pre-revolutionary opposition believed that resistance would not be able to succeed unless it is authentic, Ahmadinejad appears to presuppose the need for spirituality for the sustainability of any order. Whereas religion meant independence in the discourse of the revolutionary movement, with independence achieved the Ahmadinejad administration appears to use religion, and the return to it as a synonym for (attaining) justice. Moreover, the demise of the unipolar world order was not limited to its political entities, but also the ideological foundations of the status quo as Ahmadinejad made clear in his United Nation's General Assembly speech in 2009:

> By the grace of God, Marxism is no more; it is history now. And the unhindered growth of capitalism will certainly meet the same fate because, based on the divine tradition of a principle

[581] CNN.com. 2006. *Ahmadinejad's Letter to Americans*. Online: <https://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/11/29/ahmadinejad.letter/> Accessed on 28 July 2020.
[582] Haji Kazem Tehrani, Mohammad Mahdi. 1397/2018. *Tārikh-e tahlili-ye dowlat-e nohom* Vol. 2. Tehran: Mo'asseseh-ye Farhangi va Honari va Enteshārāt-e Markazi-ye Asnād-e Enqelāb-e Eslāmi. pp. 602-603.

> in the Holy Koran, the deceitful one, like a bubble on the surface of water, will disappear. Only that which eternally serves the interests of human societies survives.[583]

Ahmadinejad thus identifies the West, Western hegemony and American unipolarity as being on the brink of collapse. However, despite his constant reference to Shia eschatology and the establishment of the ultimate justice with the return of Imam Mahdi (ajtf) at the end of his speeches, probably more so than any other public figure in the establishment, his vision of decline was not limited to spiritual reasons, but also material changes that Iran was witnessing in West Asia.

Specifically, recent military success for Iran and its allies, as well as the lack of it for Iran's enemies appears to have further reinforced the Justice-Seeking Principlists' perception of decline beyond spiritual and messianic rationale. By the summer of 2006, it had become clear to the President that the West's military endeavours had failed in Iraq and Afghanistan, which gave him the impression that the United States no longer was in a position to even contemplate an attack against Iran,[584] to the point that he argued that 'only an idiot (*ahmaq*) thinks that such an event will take place' as 'Iran is a very capable world power.'[585] Understanding the international trajectory to be one in which Iran is rising, and the United States declining, Ahmadinejad declared in 2011 that the domineering powers (*soltegarān*) 'had planned to swallow the Middle East region' but that today 'even they admit that everything they have done for the past 10 years has turned out to the benefit of Iran and that 'no power is capable of imposing their will on Iran.'[586] With regards to the United States, as declared by the foreign policy ideologue of the Justice-Seekers, Said Jalili, the former superpower was sunk in a 'swamp' and its 'desperate attempts [to get out] will

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[583] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Sixty-fourth Session*, 4th Plenary Meeting 23 September 2009 A/64/PV.4. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/64/PV.4> Accessed on 2 May 2020. p. 34.
[584] Haji Kazem Tehrani, Mohammad Mahdi. *Tārikh-e tahlili-ye dowlat-e nohom*. p. 732.
[585] Ibid. p. 501.
[586] Dolat.ir. 1390/2011. *Mellat-e Irān be barekat-e khun-e shahidān moqtadertarin mellat-e donyast*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/200667> Accessed on 27 June 2020.

only make it sink further',[587] thereby providing fertile ground for the Justice-Seeker's agenda to establish a just regional order.

Moreover, the 33 Day War, in which Israel failed to achieve its stated objective of destroying Hezbollah, meant for Ahmadinejad that the 'myth (*afsāneh*)' of Israeli invincibility was broken, and that this justified further resistance as 'they have reached the end.'[588] It appears that from the perspective of the Justice-Seekers, this is directly linked to the current's perception of unipolar demise, as the United States was understood by Ahmadinejad to be 'the master of this regime [Israel]'.[589] Specifically, he seems to understand Israel to be a 'bogus regime (*rezhim-e maj'ul*)' created by the United States and the United Kingdom 'as a tool so that they could pressure the people of the region and impose [their will] on its nations'.[590] In pursuit of the nearly century old resistance objectives of ensuring justice and non-domination, Ahmadinejad believed in the necessity of the dissolution and even the destruction of the State of Israel as we know it today.

Therefore, on the basis of Western hegemony, as well as Israeli invincibility coming to an apparent end, the Justice-Seeking Principlists would begin to formulate a radical revisionist discourse within the State Resistance project which sought to reformulate both the historical basis as well as the current presence of Western military forces in the region. This constitutes classic secondary resistance as defined by Said in Chapter 1. While not the main point of this section, I am aware of the controversy and sensitivity of classifying holocaust denial and 9/11 conspiracy theories as resistance politics. However, by paying attention to the particular pattern in which it is formulated on the international stage, as well as the explicit explanations of its purposes on the domestic scene, notwithstanding the anti-

[587] Dolat.ir. 1389/2011. *Mowj-e bidāri-ye jahān aleyh-e Āmirkā ru be gostaresh ast*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/199047> Accessed on 27 June 2020.
[588] Haji Kazem Tehrani, Mohammad Mahdi. *Tārikh-e tahlili-ye dowlat-e nohom*. p. 553.
[589] Dolat.ir. 1389/2010. *Kelid-e hall-e masā'el-e khāvarmiyāneh Irān ast*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/188966> Accessed on 27 June 2020.
[590] Haji Kazem Tehrani, Mohammad Mahdi. *Tārikh-e tahlili-ye dowlat-e nohom*. p. 504.

Semitic nature of holocaust denial, I nevertheless believe concluding the analysis of his discourse with the verdict of anti-Semitism prevents an accurate understanding of its significance and purposes for the Justice-Seeking Principlists.

Whereas Khatami used the Organisation of Islamic Conference summit to introduce a discourse of dialogue that sought to demonstrate Iranian moderation to the world, Ahmadinejad chose to use it to challenge the fundamental 'truths' of the Western order. Having initially called the holocaust a 'myth' (*afsāneh)* a few months earlier at a rally in Zahedan,[591] Ahmadinejad took his discourse to the world stage at the Summit in the Holy City of Mecca:

> Some European countries insist on saying that during World War Two, Hitler burnt millions of oppressed Jews in crematoriums (*kureh-ye ādam suzi*), and they are so insistent on this issue that whoever proves otherwise is condemned and thrown in prison. Though we do not believe this claim, but let us assume that it is correct, our question to the Europeans is if the murder of oppressed Jews by Hitler is a [sufficient] reason for them to support the occupation of Qods. If the Europeans are right, they should give some of their own provinces in for example Germany, Austria or other countries to the Zionists and the Zionists can create their own state in Europe. Dedicate a piece of Europe [to the Zionists], and we will support it, and not chant any slogan against them.[592]

Appearing to anticipate the immediate charge of anti-Semitism, Ahmadinejad stressed that 'Jews of the world support Palestine' and that the state of Israel is a recent creation, whose ultimate legitimacy can only be determined by a referendum which includes 'all the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine, including Muslims, Christians, Jews and other religions.'[593] It is my interpretation, within the context of the Justice-Seekers' western decline thesis that rather than seeking to inflict emotional pain on the Jewish people by questioning the holocaust, Ahmadinejad and his administration were instead pursuing three broad objectives of resistance; firstly, broadly challenging the fundamentals of the liberal international order which were largely based on the experience of World War Two and the

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[591] Hamshahrionline.ir. 1386/2007. *Holokāst; pas az 70 sāl*. Online: <https://www.hamshahrionline.ir/news/17967/%D9%87%D9%88%D9%84%D9%88%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA-%D9%BE%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D8%B2-70%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84> Accessed on 22 May 2020.
[592] Haji Kazem Tehrani, Mohammad Mahdi. *Tārikh-e tahlili-ye dowlat-e nohom*. p. 227.
[593] Ibid. p. 227.

Holocaust in particular. Secondly, and more specifically, they sought to challenge the historical basis upon which the West understand Israel—understood by most of the establishment as the force of Western domination in the region—was created and continues to justify its existence, and thirdly, challenging the West's moral high ground on the issue of freedom of speech and human rights, as the issue of holocaust denial is not protected by laws of academic freedom in several European countries. The latter was corroborated by Jalili, who explained that its main purpose of the President's holocaust denial was 'questioning the lack of freedom of speech and criminalisation of speech in western countries.'[594] This interpretation of the Justice-Seekers' revisionist agenda can be substantiated when taking into account a less translated interview with Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) Channel 2 shortly after the famous holocaust denial speech, in which an even more defiant Ahmadinejad stated that:

> We should not be confined to what they dictate for us. They tell us that we have to only act within [their] framework, we say no, why are you coming from over there to interfere against us, [then] why should we not interfere? *We saw that this is incidentally the weak spot* (*noqteh-ye āsibpaziri*) of the Western front (*jebhe-ye gharb*), and this was true. For 60 years they shaped a discourse (*adabiyāt*), created a political order of the world based on oppression, injustice and trampling rights (*haq koshi)*. Well, *this question [about the holocaust] has brought all of it under question* … this is just a question … but because the foundation of this story is a construction (*sākhtegi*) and for the purpose of tailoring a political order of domination in the region, for this reason, it has become sacred, and they do not allow us to enter [the debate]. They know that if they are brought under question, this regime will by itself crumble because in the minds of people *their existential philosophy (falsafeh-ye vujudiyeshān) will be destroyed, when its existential philosophy is destroyed, it will be finished. [if] not this year, then three years later. Eventually it shall collapse (furu khāhad rikht).* There is no need for war and fights, it will fall by itself.[595] (emphasis my own)

In questioning and shedding doubt over the Holocaust, Ahmadinejad is both challenging Western hegemonic understandings of history, and attempting to hasten the collapse of the main force of Western domination in West Asia in the pursuit of a just world order. For the next seven years, Ahmadinejad would tour the world, and reiterate this position on the holocaust across international organisations such as the United Nations,

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[594] Dolat.ir. 1388/2009. *Dar defā' az manāfe'-e melli zarreh-i 'aqab neshini nemi konim*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/183314> Accessed on 27 June 2020.
[595] Haji Kazem Tehrani, Mohammad Mahdi. *Tārikh-e tahlili-ye dowlat-e nohom*. p. 736.

Organisation of Islamic Conferences, but also Columbia University, Council of Foreign Relations and the Durban Review Conference in Geneva, and numerous Western media outlets to name a few. What is more, these statements would also be repeated in official letters such as those sent to Angela Merkel and George W. Bush. The fight against Israel, was thus a fight against imperialism in general, and this understanding is particularly important as the exact same tactic was applied with regards to the broader Western military presence in the region.

Speaking at the United Nation's general assembly in 2010, Ahmadinejad started with his characteristic review of the collapsing world order, this time targeting the West's economic system. Despite a century of domination, 'the capitalist system and the existing world order have proved to be unable to provide appropriate solutions to the problems of societies',[596] having done so, Ahmadinejad goes on to address 9/11 as another myth used to justify Western military presence in the region:

> We recall that at the time suddenly the news of an attack on the Twin Towers was broadcast using numerous footages of the incident. Almost all Governments and important figures strongly condemned this incident. But then a propaganda machine came into full force; it was implied that the whole world was now exposed to a huge danger — terrorism — and that the only way to save the world was to deploy forces into Afghanistan. Eventually Afghanistan and shortly thereafter Iraq were occupied. I ask the Assembly please to take note: It was said that some 3,000 people were killed on 11 September, for which we are all very saddened. Yet so far in Afghanistan and Iraq hundreds of thousands of people have been killed, while millions have been wounded and displaced, and the conflict is still going on and expanding. In identifying those responsible for the 11 September attack, there were three viewpoints. The first was that a very powerful and complex terrorist group, able to successfully cross all layers of American intelligence and security, carried out the attack. That is the prevalent viewpoint advocated by American statesmen.[597]

As opposed to the 'prevalent viewpoint' advocated by United States' officials, Ahmadinejad presents alternative understandings:

> The second viewpoint was that some segments within the United States Government orchestrated the attack to reverse the declining American economy and its grip on the Middle East in order also to save the Zionist regime. The majority of the American people as well as other nations and politicians around the world agree with this view. The third viewpoint was that

[596] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Sixty-fifth Session,* 12th Plenary Meeting 23 September 2010 A/65/PV.12. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/65/PV.12> Accessed on 2 May 2020. p. 7.
[597] Ibid.

> the attack was carried out by a terrorist group, but that the American Government supported and took advantage of the situation. Apparently, this viewpoint has fewer proponents. … Regardless of each of those three viewpoints, there remain a few questions to be answered.[598]

Having cast doubt over the September 11 attacks, Ahmadinejad calls for the United Nations to establish an 'independent fact-finding group in' in order 'ensure that the different views about it are not banned from future discussions.'[599] Unsurprisingly, this also provoked negative reactions from Western states, and in response to Obama's condemnation of Ahmadinejad's comments as 'hateful' and 'inexcusable'.[600] Ahmadinejad defended himself by stating that 'I simply presented three hypotheses regarding 11 September' and that he has 'no opinion regarding this event' other than that an independent commission should investigate it since 'thus far nearly one million people in the middle east region have been killed' in the American response to the attack.[601] Intellectual mentor of the Justice-Seekers and Vice President for one week, Rahim Mashaei's critique of Obama's response was perhaps more revealing when he argued that the United States is afraid that an independent committee would reveal the conspiracies of the US and find them guilty, since 'the basis for the major developments over the past decades and the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq was the attack against the twin towers in New York'.[602]

Therefore, it appears that at the heart of these 'questioning campaigns', the Ahmadinejad Administration sought to challenge all aspects of American hegemony in the pursuit of the ultimate objective that 'these corrupt superpowers shall pack up their baggage

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[598] Ibid.
[599] Ibid.
[600] Foxnews.com. 2010/2015. *Obama: Ahmadinejad's Sept. 11 Statements "Hateful"'*. Online: <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/obama-ahmadinejads-sept-11-statements-hateful> Accessed on 28 July 2020.
[601] Dolat.ir. 1389/2010. *Mellat-e Irān ba eshghālgari, mohāsereh, ādamkoshi va terror mokhālef ast*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/193444> Accessed on 27 June 2020.
[602] Dolat.ir. 1389/2010. *'Ellat-e 'asabāniyat-e Obāmā az pishnahād-e Ahmadinejād zir so'āl raftan-e eqdāmāt-e Āmrikā dar daheh-ye gozashteh ast*. Online: http://dolat.ir/detail/193507 Accessed on 27 June 2020.

(*basāt*) of this imposed bogus regime (*rezhim-e ja'li-ye dast neshāndeh*) and pack up and leave the region.'[603] Thus, while the methods of seeking a more just world order was rather unconventional, their objective of expelling foreign military forces from the region is firmly situated within the establishment discourse, as it had been an ideal of the Islamic Republic since its inception in 1979.

As mentioning above, the Justice-Seekers sought to also pursue the long held ideal of an international Islamic alliance that could replace the existing world order. While visiting the United States' allies in the Persian Gulf, such as the United Arab Emirates, Ahmadinejad would stress that 'all of us dream of [the day] that foreign powers will leave the region' and that countries of the region would 'establish security in the region themselves.'[604] With regards to Iraq, the fall of the Ba'athist regime, Ahmadinejad sought to reformulate the relationship between the two states 'was not a war of two nations. But Saddam's war and that of his masters against two nations', thereby emphasising the role of foreign powers interfering in the region.[605]

However, the alliance building of the Justice-Seekers transcended Islamic particularism significantly, more so than that of any individual or movement discussed thus far. The Justice-Seekers turn to Latin-America constitutes a notable change for State Resistance, and appears to be an important legacy as it has established itself as an important part of its resistance discourse up until today. Importantly, however, the Latin-American connection was not 'invented' by the 9th government, as Khatami himself had travelled several times to Venezuela following the Bolivarian Revolution in 1999.[606] However, whereas Khatami sought to emphasise that Iran and Venezuela do 'not have any hidden agenda for creating a strategic alliance against a country or seek to damage (*zarbe zadan*)

[603] Haji Kazem Tehrani, Mohammad Mahdi. *Tārikh-e tahlili-ye dowlat-e nohom*. p. 505.
[604] Ibid. p. 1015.
[605] Ibid. p. 949.
[606] Ibid. p. 788.

the national interest of another country',[607] the Justice-Seekers were quite clear on their intentions to damage the interests of the United States and its allies:

> Hugo [Chavez] is a champion in the struggle against imperialism and is an inspiration for all the fighters (*mobarezān*) against oppression (*zolm*) and injustice (*settam*) in Latin America. Hugo is a *God-worshipping revolutionary* who is tireless … I congratulate the dear people of Venezuela who have decided to be free and independent and not allow today's bullies (*zurguyān*) and oppressors of the world today, especially the United States, to interfere in their destiny. I salute the brave, God-worshipping, justice-seeking (*'edalat-talab*) and justice seeking (*haq ju*) people of Venezuela.[608] (emphasis my own).

From the Third Force until the 9th government, Iranian opposition and later the establishment sought to rationalise alliances with non-Muslim states and organisations on the basis of power dynamics, specifically the Cold War. This was evident throughout his many tours, especially in Latin American states such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua where he consistently stressed that 'Latin America has shares many similarities to our nation and our region' and it is therefore 'natural' that 'the Islamic republic of Iran shall stand next to them in their demands for justice (*motālebat-e haq*) and prioritise the development of economic and cultural ties in that region.'[609] However, the close relationship between Iran and Venezuela, and Ahmadinejad and Chavez in particular was also rationalised on ideological similarities and religiosity, with spirituality in the Iranian case transcending Islam, and appearing to have been replaced by a new focus on monotheism. I understand this to be a break from the past is the new emphasis on monotheism as a driving force of the broader revisionist program that sought to achieve justice. At the African Union Summit in Gambia, Ahmadinejad declared:

> long live the people of Africa, long live the people of Latin America, long live the people of Asia, and long live all the justice seekers and monotheists (*movvahed*) of the world.[610]

[607] Ibid. p. 788.
[608] Ibid. p. 796.
[609] Ibid. p. 781.
[610] Ibid. p. 603.

At subsequent United Nations General Assembly speeches throughout his tenure, Ahmadinejad would also call for the return to monotheism.[611] This appears to have two reasons, firstly a normative one as to 'bring about unity amongst all of God's religions',[612] and secondly a 'practical' reason due to the imminent collapse of the Western order in its totality:

> Marxism was defeated and joined the history [books], liberalism is at the brink of collapse, and there is therefore no other path left for humanity other than monotheism (*yegāneh parasti*), justice, friendship, and the path of God's prophet (*rāh-e anbiyāh-e elāhi*) and this is the path that the Islamic revolution resurrected.[613]

In line with the particularistic trajectory which emphasised authenticity, Ahmadinejad appears to expand the scope of authenticity to accommodate all monotheistic faiths as the force which will perform successful and legitimate resistance and contribute to forging a new just world order:

> … you tell us that you only have two paths to move forward: either submit to us or we will put you under pressure. We tell you that you have made a mistake, the world has changed. You do not have more than two paths. You either have to join the popular current (*jariyān-e umumi*) of justice-seeking and God-worshipping and join the [community of] nations and abandon the position of world arrogance and bullying (*qoldori*), and if not, know that the power of God will emanate from the sleeves of monotheistic nations and just like the pharaoh and Nimrud, put you noses into the ground. The nation of Iran does not wish such a fate for you. The nation of Iran has raised the flag of unity, justice, God-worshipping, and humanity, and is inviting [you to follow] … of course, we hope that you accept. It is for your own benefit that you accept. It is for the benefits of other as well, but if you do not accept, the traditions of God (*sonnat-hā-ye elāhi*) in society and in history is current and we are certain that with the help of God, the state of the world (*sharāyet-e jahān*) will completely change to the benefit of the devotees, and to the benefit of the revolution.[614]

While the decades preceding the Islamic Revolution was characterised by different conceptualisations of third forces that would bring about change in the world, Ahmadinejad understood the revisionist force that would forge a new world order to be a broad monotheistic coalition. The new world that the Justice-Seeking Principlists are attempting

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[611] See for example: United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Sixtieth Session,* 4th Plenary Meeting 14 September 2005 A/60/PV.4. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/60/PV.4> accessed on 2 May 2020.

[612] Dolat.ir. 1389/2009. *Āmrikā dar hāl-e oful ast/jahān niyāzmand-e nezām-e jadidi ast*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/185038> Accessed on 27 June 2020.

[613] Dolat.ir. 1389/2010. *Keshvar-hā-ye orupāyi dar siyāsat-hā-ye khod mostaqel bashand*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/189942> Accessed on 27 June 2020.

[614] Haji Kazem Tehrani, Mohammad Mahdi. *Tārikh-e tahlili-ye dowlat-e nohom*. pp. 731-732.

to forge is thus on the one hand one without the Western military presence, either directly as in Iraq, Afghanistan and in the oil monarchies, or indirectly through the State of Israel. On the other hand, they sought to ensure non-domination by reforming international organisations. While the end of Chapter 2 and the beginning of Chapter 3 demonstrated how democratising the United Nations in accordance with the broader discourse of the Non-Aligned Movement was often espoused at the United Nations by Iranian representatives, this issue often had a supplementary role to the broader discourse of the resistance.

However, for Ahmadinejad, reforming the United Nations seems to be paramount to his vision of a just world order, and is the area in which the monotheistic nations can contribute, perhaps more so than in Iran's immediate neighbourhood. Consistently, and throughout his tenure, Ahmadinejad and his administration sought to highlight the shortcomings of the United Nations, sometimes followed by abstract proposals for how to reform it, and by extension, the international system. It is important to note with respect to his erratic discourse that the Justice-Seekers appear to accept the full legitimacy of the United Nations, as its resistance politics, such the governments' support for Hezbollah during the 33 Day War was justified on the basis of the Geneva Convention and the United Nations charter.[615] The critique was thus Reformist, and not revolutionary, and at its core, Ahmadinejad championed the idea that the United Nations had become a mere tool of the great powers, and as a result, it has become dysfunctional and unable to achieve its intended purpose.

Speaking at a gathering for veterans and families of martyrs in the Khorasan province during the 33 Day War, Ahmadinejad slammed the inactivity of the security council as the servant of its permanent members, and said that 'they thought they could fool nations with

[615] Ibid. p 492; p. 1123.

their tools that is the United Nations, the tool that is the Security Council.'[616] The same rhetoric would be applied across all regional conflicts, as was evident a few months later at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2006 where a significant portion of his speech was devoted to the bias and futility of the United Nations:

> Can the Security Council play a role in restoring peace and security in Iraq when the occupiers are themselves permanent members of the Council? Is the Security Council capable of making a fair decision in this regard? … What council or international organization is standing up to protect this brutally besieged Government? Why cannot the Security Council take any steps [to protect Palestine]? … in all of these cases, the answer is self-evident. When the Power behind the hostilities is itself a permanent member of the Security Council, how can the Council fulfil its responsibilities?[617]

A few months later at the Asian Parliamentary Assembly summit in Tehran in November, Ahmadinejad highlighted the issue of Palestine as an Asian continental issue, and argued that the creation of Israel by the superpowers was intended to 'threaten/endanger important parts of Asian nations', and that throughout this time 'the United Nations has not even been able to take a positive step and action to realise the rights of the nation of Palestine.'[618]

The dysfunctional nature of the United Nations was not surprising, however, as Ahmadinejad would emphasise as he returned to New York in 2007, as he understood it to have been created on the 'basis not of justice but of safeguarding the interests of the victors over the vanquished nations' after World War Two, therefore, 'for 60 years now, mechanisms arising from this approach and related policies have been incapable of finding just solutions for global problems.'[619] He would then intensify his rhetoric and condemn the United Nations Security council as the most inefficient institutions on earth since:

> … some Powers with an exclusive and special right to the veto in the Security Council act as prosecutor, judge and executioner. It is natural that countries that have been subjected to those

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[616] Ibid. p. 504.
[617] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Sixty-first Session,* 11th Plenary Meeting 19 September 2006 A/61/PV.11. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/61/PV.11> Accessed on 2 May 2020. pp. 37-38.
[618] Haji Kazem Tehrani, Mohammad Mahdi. *Tārikh-e tahlili-ye dowlat-e nohom*. p. 612.
[619] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Sixty-second Session,* 5th Plenary Meeting 25 September 2007 A/62/PV.5. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/62/PV.5> Accessed on 2 May 2020. p. 19.

> Powers' infringements of their rights have no hope of getting what they deserve from the Council.[620]

Importantly, this discourse was not limited to Ahmadinejad, who nonetheless propagated it the most, but was also shared by the current, as is reflected in Jalili's critique of the United Nations as they had failed to resolve the conflict in Palestine over the past six decades, which was 'an example which proves that the current system of global governance (*nezām-e hākem bar modiriyat-e jahāni*) does not work.'[621] Nonetheless, by 2007, Ahmadinejad would begin to propose increasingly concrete reforms that would improve global governance. Fundamentally, he desired for it to be 'restructured in order to transform this world body into an efficient and fully democratic organization, capable of playing an impartial, equitable and effective role in the international relations.', [622] a sentiment shared across the establishment since 1979. Seeking to emulate the diplomatic success of Khatami who had successfully been able to internalise his discourse in the United Nations, Ahmadinejad called for the second decade of the 21st century to be designated as the 'decade for joint global governance', the collective effort of politicians and intellectuals alike will forge a new more just international system.[623]

The concrete reforms presented by Ahmadinejad himself would initially be characterised by religious particularism or Non-Aligned solidarity. In 2006, Ahmadinejad espoused two concrete reforms, one within the particularistic trajectory which was espoused at the Organisation of Islamic Conferences summit in 2006 he reiterated Ayatollah Khamenei's position from 1997 and called for the security council to include a representative of 'Islamic countries' that will seek to 'guarantee of peace, tranquillity and

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[620] Ibid.
[621] Dolat.ir. 1390/2011. *Oful-e yekjānebeh garāyi-ye Āmrikā vāqe'iyati-ye enkārnāpazir ast*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/206401> Accessed on 27 June 2020.
[622] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Sixty-fourth Session,* 4th Plenary Meeting. p. 35.
[623] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Sixty-fifth Session,* 5th Plenary Meeting 25 September 2010 A/65/PV.5. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/65/PV.5> Accessed on 2 May 2020. p. 5.

justice in the world,'[624] an argument he had also made at the United Nation's General assembly in 2005 when asking why Islamic countries representing 50 member states and over 1.2 billion people but not have a permanent seat in the UNSC.[625] The second position, reflecting the secular trajectory with its international commitment to non-alignment was espoused at the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Havana, Cuba in 2006 where had made a 'fair request' which was to grant the movement a seat with the right to veto in the Security Council since it represents two thirds of the world's nations.[626]

However, as the years progressed, Ahmadinejad would formulate a more cosmopolitan reform to the United Nations, specifically he would call for 'abolishing the discriminatory privilege of the veto right',[627] and that the General Assembly should be United Nation's top decision making body so it can be able to promote 'justice and eliminating discrimination in the world order.'[628] The Justice-Seeking Principlists' tenure would end the same year, and its limited success would provoke another reconsideration of the direction of the establishments' resistance politics towards prudence and moderation. Nevertheless, at the same time as the Justice-Seekers' were trying to forge a new world order on the political stage, the establishment sought to also engage in a more aggressive revisionism on the ideological battleground and challenge the cultural invasion in what would become known as the soft war (*jang-e narm*).

The Soft War

While the Iranian establishment's shift away from dialogue was manifested internationally by the emergence of the Justice-Seeking Principlists, domestically, this was

[624] Haji Kazem Tehrani, Mohammad Mahdi. *Tārikh-e tahlili-ye dowlat-e nohom*. p. 607.
[625] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Sixtieth Session,* 4th Plenary Meeting. p. 4.
[626] Haji Kazem Tehrani, Mohammad Mahdi. *Tārikh-e tahlili-ye dowlat-e nohom*. p. 595.
[627] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Sixty-fourth Session,* 4th Plenary Meeting. p. 35.
[628] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the Sixty-fifth Session,* 12th Plenary. p. 10.

reflected in the emergence of a new revisionist discourse that put a greater emphasis on challenging Western dominance over people's beliefs and perceptions. Also concerned with the non-territorial threats to Iran's true independence, the discourse of the soft war (*jang-e narm*) emerged at the same time as the Justice-Seekers but managed to enshrine itself firmly within the establishment's resistance discourse even after the Justice-Seekers lost power and influence. It is arguably still growing in importance today and has been a source of controversy in recent years. For example, addressing a group of students in 2017, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution caused a major controversy in Western based Persian media outlets in particular when arguing that:

> Each of your work independently, and as they say in the battlefield: fire at will (*atāsh be ekhtiyār*). Of course, in war there are headquarters that give orders, but if the connection with the headquarters is cut or if the command structure fails, this is when the commander gives the order of fire at will. Well, you are the officers of the soft war … whenever you feel that the Central Command is disrupted and is unable to manage properly, then you are allowed to fire at will.[629]

Ayatollah Khamenei's speech was portrayed as the Islamic Republic's Leader calling for violence or even the summary execution of his opponents.[630] Besides ideological incentives, another cause of the misinterpretation can most likely be attributed to the lack of understanding of the concept of soft war. Despite using military vocabulary, the Leader was explicitly addressing a group of students in the context of the soft war and calls to fire at will was a call for students to challenge more actively what he understands to be political and cultural deviations that are taking place in society. The same applies in academia, where perhaps due to its academic origin of the soft war, the concept has received more scholarly attention than true independence and the cultural invasion. Being an increasingly important

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[629] Khamenei.ir. 1396/2017. *Bayānāt dar didār-e jam'i az dāneshjuiyān*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=36775> Accessed on 1 July 2020. https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=36775

[630] See for example: BBC.com. 2017. *Esteqbāl-e fa'ālān-e "hezbollāh" az farmān-e ātash be ekthiyār*. Online: <https://www.bbc.com/persian/iran-features-40316600> Accessed on 28 July 2020; Radiofarda.com. 1396/2017. *Shirin Ebādi: farmān-e "ātash be ekhtiyār-e" Khāmenei shellik be qānun ast*. Online: <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/f4_shirin_ebadi_khameni_order_trigger_law/28572644.html> Accessed on 28 July 2020; DW.com. 2017. *Cherā farmān-e "ātash be ekhtiyār" ta'dil shod?* Online: <https://p.dw.com/p/2fPQf> Accessed on 28 July 2020.

phenomenon in the establishment's resistance subjectivity, the discourse is yet to be studied in Western academia, and as such, existing accounts of the concept are underdeveloped partially due to the concept being primarily, though not exclusively the focus of scholars studying the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and the Basij. For example, Afshon Ostovar defines it rather journalistically as a 'catch-all for any dissent that had a social and political basis',[631] while Narges Bajoghli has more accurately defined it as a term 'that is used loosely by Iranian officials to refer to the ways in which the United States, European powers, and Israel influence Iranian politics with the soft power of culture.'[632] While the former is a simplification only made possible by ignoring the vast amount of textual sources dealing with the topic, the latter accurately identifies the key aspect of the discourse as it deals with undesired influences coming from the West but appears to limit it to culture, thereby failing to identify that it is an evolved version of the cultural invasion. Saeid Golkar has more specifically defined it as the establishment's understanding of 'western countries' plot to foment the breakdown of the IRI [Islamic Republic of Iran] by corrupting society and removing its purity',[633] while Amir Saikal has accurately noted that the increased focus on the soft war 'reflects the shift in Iran's threat perception away from fears of US military involvement toward a growing consensus of the importance of its soft power in shaping Iran's domestic politics'.[634]

The most sophisticated analysis of the concept in Western academia comes from Farzan Sabet and Roozbeh Safshekan who successfully trace its genealogy back to Westoxification and the cultural invasion, and as such, accurately point out that 'soft war is a conflict rooted in Iran's encounter with western imperialism from the 19th century

[631] Ostovar. *Vanguard of the Imam*. p. 188.
[632] Bajoghli, Narges. 2019. *Iran Reframed: Anxieties of Power in the Islamic Republic*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. p. 39.
[633] Golkar. *Captive Society*. p. 115.
[634] Saikal, Amin. 2019. *Iran Rising: The Survival and Future of the Islamic Republic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 164.

onwards.'[635] Conceptualising it using Joseph Nye's concept of soft power, they understand the term to be 'sometimes used loosely and propagandistically by Iranian officials' and that 'Soft war is the exercise of soft power by the United States on Iran such that it creates security challenges for the Islamic Republic and forces it to respond.'[636]

Building on the aforementioned contributions, and contesting the idea that soft war is a rather ambiguous and often selectively used establishment tool aimed at suppressing dissent, I argue instead that soft war is an establishment discourse seeking to identify and challenge hegemonic discourses emanating from the West, as well as providing a framework in which the establishment can more aggressively propagate its own revised worldview that substantiates its resistance endeavours in Iran and beyond. While Chapter 2 demonstrated how the idea of 'true independence' encouraged the Pahlavi regime's opposition to pursue a path of resistance which is based ideologically on Neither East nor West, Part 1 of this Chapter demonstrated how the fall of the Soviet Union and the failures of overthrowing the Islamic Republic militarily made the establishment aware of the reduction of physical threats and caused attention to shift towards unwanted cultural and political influences understood as the cultural invasion. Soft war in this case differs from the above-mentioned non-territorial discourses as it reflects a growing perception in the establishment that the era of physical threats is completely over, and that the threats to true independence are primarily discursive. Consequently, soft war is another example of the establishment engaging discursively from a position of power, as the discourse seeks to identify a war of ideas where Iran is actively fighting, rather than being a victim of an invasion or subject to an intellectual illness. It also reflects a point of intersection between domestic academia on the one hand, and the political and military establishment on the other, in which their discourses overlap

[635] Sabet, Farzan & Safshekan, Roozbeh. 2013. "Soft War: A new episode in the old conflict between Iran and the United States", *Iran Media Program, Center for Global Studies, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania*. p. 16; p. 24.
[636] Ibid. p. 4.

and reformulate into a synthesised discourse of resistance that seeks to raise awareness mobilising society from the grassroots level up to the government in order to protect the Islamic Republic's true independence.

While the emergence of the cultural invasion reflected the establishment's understanding that physical and territorial threats to the Islamic Republic were diminishing, the 1990s were characterised by a reconsideration of the threat landscape that the Islamic Republic was dealing with. By 2000, President Khatami's advisor and head of the Center for Strategic studies, Mohammad Reza Tajik, coined the term software war (*jang-e narmafzāri)* to describe contentious nature of the discursive space within which the Islamic Republic was interacting.[637] In order to cope with these threats, Iran ought to develop 'soft tools' (*abzār-e narm*), rather than traditional use of force, and 'find appropriate courses of action to deal with the new face of threats (*chehreh-ye jadid tahdidāt*)'.[638]

However, it was not the concept of 'software war', but instead soft war, which would establish itself in the establishment discourse. The concept appears to have been coined by a Masters student at Shahid Beheshti University, Mohammad Hossein Moqaddam, writing in the IRGC owned journal, *motāle'āt-e 'amaliyāt-e ravāni* (Study of Psychological Operations) in 2003.[639] Using Joseph Nye's concept of soft power, famously defined as 'the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments', which 'arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies,'[640] Moqaddam appears to initiate a trend in Iranian academia in which the utilisation of this power is understood as soft war. This trend quickly reached those higher echelons of the establishment that also enjoyed academic positions and, by 2006, was familiar to

[637] Tajik, Mohammad Reza. 1379/2000. "Pārādoks-e amniyat-e melli va taksir garāyi/goftogu". *Olum-e siyāsi-daneshgah-e bāqer ol-ulum*. (9). pp. 261-282.
[638] Ibid. p. 280.
[639] Hossein Moqaddam, Hossein. 1382/2003. "Naqsh-e qodrat-e narm dar pishbord-e estrāteji-hā-ye nezāmi-ye Āmrikā (barresi-ye moredi-ye jang-e solteh)", *motāle'āt-e 'amaliyāt-e ravāni*. (2). pp. 144-152.
[640] Nye, Joseph. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs. p.x.

Mohammad Soltanifar, who at the time was Research Director of the Expediency Discernment Council's Strategic Research Institute and would later become head of the Media Research and Planning Office (*daftar-e motale'āt va barnāmeh-rizi-ye resāneh-i*) of the Ministry of Islamic Guidance and Culture under Ahmadinejad. Soltanifar continued to use Nye's theory of soft power and argued that an important aspect of it is that it is the only kind of war that continues to be waged 'even during peace time', a characteristic of what he termed post-modern wars (*jang-hā-ye post-modern*) that ultimately lays the groundwork for military invasion.[641]

Importantly, while academic debate about soft war continued to be centred on Joseph Nye's soft power theory right up until today, the concept appears to have taken on a slightly different meaning and function within the political establishment. Specifically, the phenomenon that the establishment was engaged with shares more similarities with the concept of representational force that was discussed in the section on the cultural invasion, as it should be understood conceptually as the continuation of military power.[642] By early 2008, soft war had entered Ayatollah Khamenei's resistance discourse, as he argued that the soft war and psychological warfare were the reason why national self-confidence 'is not at the necessary level' to pursue the objectives of the Islamic Republic.[643] However, while the concept appears to have reached the highest echelons of the establishment by 2008, at the time it appears unclear how the soft war is different from the cultural invasion.

The watershed moment which would both define and firmly enshrine the concept of soft war in the establishment's resistance discourse was the post-election uprising in 2009, known as the Green Movement in the West and by its supporters in Iran, and as the Sedition

[641] Soltanifar, Mohammad. 1384/2005. "Resāneh-hā; bohrān-hā-ye novin va jang-hā-ye postmodern" *pazhuhesh-hā-ye ertebāti* No 42 and 43 pp. 27-58. pp. 37-38.
[642] Mattern. "Why `Soft Power' Isn't So Soft". p. 583.
[643] Khamenei.ir. 1386/2007. *Bayānāt dar didār-e dāneshjuiyān-e dāneshgāhā-ye ostān-e yazd*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=3416> Accessed on 1 July 2020.

(*fetneh*) by large parts of the establishment.[644] The uprisings in response to the election results, which were understood by Reformist candidates Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi and their followers, as well as by significant parts of Western scholarship, to have been rigged,[645] lose to the incumbent president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, were largely understood by large parts of the establishment to be Iran's enemies' attempt to overthrow the political system through mass media and social media in what they often call a velvet revolution (*enqelāb-e makhmali*) or a colour revolution (*enqelāb-e rangi*). [646] For example Hojjatoleslam Abdollah Hajji Sadeqi, deputy of Hawza relations for the Leader and the head of the Islamic Research Institute of the IRGC, who at the time also was the editor in chief of the *Morabbiyān* journal, wrote an editorial arguing that opponents of the Islamic Republic were no longer capable of pursuing military invasion or a coup d'état as they had done in the past, and that their main objective today was the 'soft overthrow' (*barandāzi-ye narm*) of the Islamic Republic through the soft war. [647] This understanding of the changing power relations which appeared to also shape the justice-seekers' discourse, was reiterated consistently in discussions on the soft war, as was seen in Ahmadinejad's Vice President and IRGC commander, Hassan Dehqan, who argued a line that would be consistently repeated in establishment discussions about the soft war, namely that 'world arrogance (*estekbār-e jahāni*) is no longer able to challenge Iran using its traditional means, and is currently pursuing a soft war path', meaning that this marks a new stage of colonialism, called 'ultramodern colonialism' (*este'mār-e farā now*).[648]

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[644] Alimagham, Pouya. 2020. *Contesting the Iranian Revolution: The Green Uprising*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-2.
[645] Ehteshami. *Iran: Stuck in Transition*. p. 71; Amuzegar, Jahangir. 2013. "Ahmadinejad's Legacy." *Middle East Policy*, 20/4: pp. 123-132. p. 123.
[646] *Pānzdah-e Khordād* No. 22 1388/2010. p. 127.
[647] Haji Sadeqi, Abdollah. 1388/2009. "Sokhan-e sardabir", *Morabiyān,* (33). pp. 3-4. p. 3.
[648] Dehqani, Hossein & Tahani, Mohammad. 1390/2011. "barresi-ye tahājomāt 'aleyh-e jāme'eh-ye zamineh sāz va rāhbord-hā-ye resāneh dar movājeheh bā ān" *Motāle'āt-e beyn-e reshteh-ye dānesh-e rāhbordi* (3). pp. 195-234. p. 214.

The concept of ultramodern colonialism would enshrine itself in the academic discourse on soft war, and was also picked up by the Leader's office in describing the new security situation that the establishment perceived the Islamic Republic to be in.[649] With regards to soft war, the break from the past was made evident in the new form of conquest that was being pursued by the enemy, as is evident in the conceptualisation of the 2009 events by Hojjatoleslam Ali Sa'idi Shahroudi, representative of the Leader in the IRGC. He used the lens of the soft war and resembled the line of argument that Haji Sadeqi would put forward a conceptualisation that would be repeated in almost every establishment discussion on the subject:

> the real difference (between war and soft war) is that in hard war (*jang-e sakht*) the objective is normally directly acquiring (*tassarrof*) territory or [control over] the political system, but in soft war, the direct objective is to acquire [control of] the hearts and minds and its indirect objective is to take over the government (*tassarrof-e hokumat*).[650]

Since 'hard war' is no longer an effective strategy in West Asia for the United States and its allies, these powers have instead invested significant resources in the soft war in their pursuit of 'velvet coup or colour revolution'.[651] According to Sa'idi Shahroudi, this represents an 'evolved and advanced stage of the cultural invasion' in which 'most of society is involved' and it falls upon the establishment to 'vaccinate people's minds, hearts and thinking'.[652] Ayatollah Khamenei followed a similar line with regards to the soft war, which he saw as a 'psychological war' (*jang-e ravāni*) that pursued objectives largely similar to that of the cultural invasion:

> the enemy is coming after the spiritual strongholds to destroy them. Coming after the beliefs, knowledge, determination, foundations and basic pillars of the system and country; the enemy is trying to destroy them and turn [our] strengths through their propaganda into weaknesses; turn the opportunities of the system into threats … they have numerous tools at their disposal. We

[649] The concept of ultramodern colonialism precedes the establishment's use of soft war and was coined by the Leader in 2005 as 'the enduring indirect occupation, and without popular protest [the occupation] will pass the political rulers' See: Khamenei.ir. 1384/2005. *Este'mār-e farā now*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/others-article?id=9214> accessed on 1 July 2020.
[650] Sa'idi Shahrudi, Ali. 1389/2010. "Jang-e narm va pāsdāri az enqelāb-e Eslāmi". Interview by Rafi'i, Ali & Ali Mohtadi, Mohammad Hadi. *Hosun* no 23. pp. 6-11. p. 7.
[651] Ibid. p. 8.
[652] Ibid. p. 9.

> need to know the dimensions (*ab'ād*) of the enemy and the scope of enmity in order to overcome him.[653]

Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi, member of the Assembly of Experts and former member of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, and another protagonist of the cultural invasion discussed in Part 1 argues more specifically that by 'conquering people's thoughts and opinions' (*tassarof-e fekr va andisheh*), Iran's enemies are seeking to change people's convictions and worldview to the point at which they are no longer able to pursue their own interests.[654] Specifically, seeking to cause deviations (*enherāf*) in order to 'change religious beliefs, social beliefs, political beliefs' as well as people's understandings of groups and individuals, the soft war eventually seeks to create 'incentives [for people] to act on these erroneous thoughts'.[655] Whereas previously he had argued for religious teachings as a cure against the cultural invasion, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi argues for a more comprehensive campaign organised around regaining popular trust, since:

> … it is our duty to put in the effort, by expressing the truth to the point where the devil is unable to divert people's opinions, and to do so, we need to prove that we are the people …[656]

In terms of discourse, the soft war thus seems different from the cultural invasion as it uses military metaphors, possibly to emphasise the serious nature of the representational force Iran is dealing with. Moreover, being a war rather than an invasion, the soft war differs from its antecedent as it often includes a more focused discussion on the appropriate response, thereby also distinguishing it from securitisation where ideas are brought into the realm of security and treated as traditional security threats. Whereas Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi sought to regain trust, large parts of the soft war strategies revolved around mobilisation and spreading awareness. The mechanism through which the people were to be mobilised in the soft war reflects an interesting development for State Resistance and

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653 Khamenei.ir. 1388/2009. *Bayānāt dar didār-e 'azāye majles-e khobregān-e rahbari*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=8094> Accessed on 1 July 2020.
654 *Pāsdār-e Eslām* No.355 Tir 1390/June-July 2011. p. 12.
655 Ibid. p. 13.
656 Ibid. p. 14.

represents the clearest example of a synthesis between militaristic and academic discourses. From 2010 onwards, IRGC officials engaged in non-military activities began to justify their increased involvement along the following lines:

> … Sepah is not only a military institution, it is the guardian (*pāsdār*) of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Revolution is an intellectual and doctrinal (*fekri va e'teqādi*) revolution and wherever a danger arises for the Islamic Revolution, Sepah needs to enter that arena.[657]

The same line was reiterated by IRGC Commander Sayyed Mohammad Hejazi, who argued that the IRGC's participation constituted a 'return to the Sepah's existential philosophy (*falsafeh-ye vojudi*)' as according to the constitution of the Islamic Republic the role of the IRGC is to 'establish and guard the revolution and its achievements.'[658] Therefore, by perceiving the soft war as an attack against the Islamic Republic and the Islamic Revolution, Hejazi argues that the IRGC is 'obliged to oppose this attack', and in doing so, essentially returning to its essential duties as he argues that the idea that the IRGC is a solely military organisation is a product of the post-war era.[659] Dealing with the phenomenon of soft war in more detail, Hejazi points to the role of the Basij in particular, and argues that its non-military activities are more important than its more famous paramilitary popular mobilisation forces.[660] Specifically, he argues that the Basij is training loyalists to 'defend and spread their beliefs', but concedes that a lot of progress is needed in this area. [661] However, he argues that with respect to 'the defensive dimension (*bo'd-e padāfandi*), which is to identify and deal with the enemy's measures (*eqdāmāt*)' the Basij has made significant progress. He goes on to argue that cyberspace and media campaigns aimed at influencing the Iranian public, are not organic, but mostly foreign funded.[662] Commander of the Basij Organisation Mohammad Reza Naqdi also affirmed the

[657] Sa'idi Shahrudi, Ali. "Jang-e narm va pāsdāri az enqelāb-e Eslāmi". p. 9.
[658] *Pāsdār-e Eslām* No.346 Mehr 1389/September-October 2010. p. 20.
[659] Ibid.
[660] Ibid. p. 21.
[661] Ibid. p. 22.
[662] Ibid. pp. 22-23.

organisation's role in the soft war, but highlighted another aspect of its resistance strategy: recruitment aimed at protecting youth from either switching allegiance or becoming apathetic to political issues:

> Through the Basij, they are invited, organised, and employed to do charitable and valuable work … this is the biggest role that the Basij is currently fulfilling, and it is a very comprehensive and broad role … it is the biggest form of cultural jihad.[663]

Importantly, however, the role of military organisations constituted only one part of the soft war front. As IRGC Commander and soft war scholar Ali Mohammad Na'ini argued (using military terminology—another characteristic of the more recent soft war discourses), dealing with the soft war requires prediction and prevention, but not necessarily defensive and reactive measures (*eqdāmāt-e padāfandi va enfe'āli*), but also:

> the system (*nezām*) should be able to predict the soft war through its elites (*nokhbegān*) and responsible institutions before it occurs. For example imagine that one year before the sedition of 88 [2009], we ought to have predicted the approach of a challenge to the system with regards to the important event that was the election, so we could be aware of how the system would be challenged and, in the words of the Leader, how the election, which is the foundation of national security, could be transformed into a threat to national security? The intelligence apparatus [must also] assess and predict these types of issues.[664]

However, according to Na'ini, raising awareness is the key step before identifying and confronting it, since 'if we do not believe that the enemy is currently engaged in a soft war against us … no action and effort [against it] will take place',[665] and he argues that high ranking officials not believing in the soft war is itself a security risk.[666] Na'ini thus argues for the elites to strive towards identifying and targeting soft war actors, with particular reference to university circles. This would also become Ayatollah Khamenei's main audience as he would utilise his position to spread awareness and propagate the discourse of soft war up until today. The reason for this, according to Ayatollah Khamenei, is that:

> in this soft war, you, the student youth are the young officers of this front. I did not say soldiers … because a soldier does not make any decisions on his own and must do whatever the commander says. Nor did we say commanders of large bases and units because they make the grand strategies. Young officer is on the stage, acts upon orders and sees the stage correctly …

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[663] *Keyhān-e Farhangi* No.308-309 Mordād va Shahrivar 1391/August-September 2012. p. 11.
[664] *Pāsdār-e Eslām*, No. 358 Mehr 1390/September-October 2011. p. 27.
[665] Ibid. p. 25.
[666] Ibid. p. 26.

> of course, young officers also have ideas, actions, and presence on the scene, [they] also understand the situation [correctly] and act within the framework.[667]

The Leader of The Islamic Revolution thus appears to perceive the discursive space in which Iranian politics is propagated, contested, reproduced, and formulated as a genuine battleground of ideas, in which various parts of the elites and establishment have their particular roles in performing resistance and maintaining Iran's true independence. Whereas government officials continue to coordinate the broad strategic aspects, professors are in charge of guiding and educating the students who will be fighting in the battlefield of ideas.[668]

Beyond awareness raising and mobilisation, a third aspect of the soft war is particularly telling of the evolving nature of the establishment's self-perception. Whereas Westoxication and cultural invasion was often framed through the prism of being sick/infected or victims of aggression, the soft war reflected to a much larger extent the establishment's self-confidence on the ideological battlefield. Having enjoyed military success, and witnessed its enemies lack of military success, the soft war marks the juncture in which the establishment appears to have decided to take on the superpower on the ideological battlefield.

When discussing the Arab uprisings that started in 2010, often referred to as the Arab Spring in Western discourse, university professor, cleric, and member of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, Hassan Rahimpur Azghadi argues that that the soft war is not simply an onslaught but a complex battle:

> Soft war does not only mean that the enemy in the form of soft war attacks us, but it is [also] us, through the use of our own soft power, exercising our influence in the region.[669]

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667 Khamenei.ir. 1388/2009. *Bayānat dar didār bā asātid-e dāneshgāh-hā*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=7959> Accessed on 28 July 2020.
668 Khameneir.ir 1394/2015. *Bayānat dar didār bā asātid-e dāneshgāh-hā*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=30199> Accessed on 28 July 2020.
669 *Keyhān-e Farhangi*, No.301 Dey 1390/December-January 2011-2012. p. 63.

Importantly, when mentioning soft power, there are few indications that Azghadi is talking about Joseph Nye's concept, but instead is talking about the Islamic Republic of Iran's non-military means of exerting influence, similar to Rafsanjani's understanding of exporting the revolution discussed in the end of Chapter 2. For Nai'ni, the next step, having raised awareness of the soft war within the country, he argued for mobilising against it by 'creating networks and organising' so that the 'Islamic Revolution Front' can educate the people, provide counter-narratives to those espoused by Iran's enemies.[670] While conceding that Iran is in its initial stages of developing a coherent soft war strategy, as Iran needs 'to figure out what the elements and components of soft resistance (*moqāvemat-e narm*) are' and strive to repeat the success of matching the enemy's hard power when it comes to the capabilities and resources required in the soft war,[671] he nonetheless states confidently following the Arab uprisings that:

> We do not have military and economic bases (*pāygāh-e eqtesādi va nezāmi*) in the region, nor do we have financial power, but we have the thought of the Imam [Khomeini], [and] the model of the Islamic Republic and the culture of resistance and steadfastness (*moqāvemat va pāydāri*) has been inspirational for the region … the resistance and steadfastness of the people of Palestine, Lebanon and Iran have strengthened the spirit of resistance and steadfastness and created this movement.[672]

A similar approach is also espoused by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, whose magazine, *Mohandesi-ye Farhangi* (Cultural Engineering), in an editorial argued that the Islamic Revolution in itself constituted a threat to Western hegemony and that the Council has the duty to support the 'cultural front of the Islamic revolution' in the soft war.[673] The emergence of the discourse of soft war thus marks the point in which the establishment sought to actively resist western hegemony and the unjust world order, not only physically, which was the main focus until the early 2000s, but also discursively. Resisting the enemy's physical presence as well as their hegemonic narratives,

[670] *Pāsdār-e Eslām*, No. 358. p. 26.
[671] Ibid. p. 27.
[672] Ibid. p. 29.
[673] *Mohandesi-ye farhangi* No.65 Khordād-Tir 1391/ May-June 2012. pp. 12-14

the soft war in many respects marks the synthesis of the ideological trajectory of State Resistance. From Khalil Maleki's attempt to raise awareness and increase consciousness with regards to the ideological machinery of empires to the revolutionary movement's emphasis on authenticity as a requisite for resisting. By 2012 a discourse of soft war had manifested itself as a revisionist force that sought to defend itself against, but also to challenge, Western hegemony in Iran and beyond.

The Resistance Economy

Another discourse reflective of the Islamic Republic's pursuit for true independence which also seeks to support the revolutionary state in its worldmaking endeavours in the 21st century is the resistance economy (*eqtesād-e moqāvemati).* Whereas the cultural invasion and the soft war dealt with the ideational challenges to true independence, and world arrogance dealing with threats to territorial independence, the escalation of the United States, European Union and the United Nations Security Council's sanctions regime against the Islamic Republic's nuclear program appears to have been the instigator of a resistance discourse specifically focused on the Iranian economy. While Chapter 2 demonstrated the importance of achieving economic independence from the National Front to the Thought Collective of the Imam, the discourses concerned with the economy remained limited to control over national resources, and in later stages, statements and expressed objectives of self-sufficiency without an establishment consensus on the path to this ideal.[674] A noteworthy aspect of the Islamic Revolution and the establishment's resistance discourse prior to the emergence of the resistance economy and the broader developments that will be discussed here is therefore the subordinate position of the economy in the revolutionary discourse to the extent that it is possible to argue that the Islamic Revolution stands out from the major revolutions of the 20th century in not espousing a clear economic vision beyond independence, thereby opening up the space for contending discourses on the economic path of the revolutionary state.[675] Importantly, as this section will demonstrate, the resistance economy is not a specific economic policy that necessarily resembles Import-Substitution Industrialisation,[676] but instead a broad discourse that propagates an ideal of an independent,

[674] Pesaran. *Iran's Struggle for Economic Independence*. p. 27; p. 70; p. 98.
[675] Ibid. pp. 1-6.
[676] Rózsa, Erzsébet N. and Szigetvári, Tamás. 2019. "The Resistance Economy: Iranian Patriotism and Economic Liberalisation", in Gerőcs, Tamás, and M Szanyi. 2019. *Market Liberalism and Economic Patriotism in the Capitalist World-System*. Cham: Springer. pp. 169-182. p. 178.

resilient economy that is able to sustain and support the Islamic Republic's broader resistance and worldmaking project. Therefore, rather than containing detailed policy prescriptions, the resistance economy, whose most influential individual is the Ayatollah Khamenei, stipulates a set of values and ideals that are supposed to enable and constrain, not only the policies of the various institutions and actors involved in the Iranian economy, but also patterns of consumption in Iranian society.

Importantly, the discourse appears to still be in its formative stages at the time of writing but is emerging as a crucial aspect of future policy making for the establishment. For example Ali Larijani when serving as the speaker of the Majles in 1395/6 argued that while Ayatollah Khomeini had argued for 'independent politics, economics, security and culture oriented' policy making, the Islamic Republic is yet to achieve economic independence, and that this can have a significant adverse effect on the future of the Islamic Republic.[677] However, as will be apparent below, the resistance economy goes beyond economic independence, and includes cultural, and security dimensions of Iran's pursuit of true independence and a more equitable world order. In other words, having secured territorial and political independence, and currently stepping up the soft war for cultural independence, the resistance economy appears to constitute one of the last battles in the Islamic Republic's pursuit for true independence.

However, while it will become evident that the objectives and language of the resistance economy is a clear continuation of the intellectual trajectory of State Resistance, its timing should not be understood as such. The tectonic shift in the global economy which saw the end of global dependency on Iranian oil following the shale revolution and increased number of suppliers on the global market, thereby rendering Iranian oil sanctionable on a

[677] *Bāzār va sarmāyeh* No. 95 Esfand 1396/February-March 2018. p. 25.

global scale by 2010.[678] Domestically, the Ahmadinejad administration's high expenditure populist policies contributed significantly to inflation, especially after oil sales were sanctioned in 2010.[679] The financial crisis that followed would also contribute to foregrounding the issue of corruption due to the perceived mismanagement that dominated media headlines and political debates at the time.[680] It was within this context that the idea of a resilient economy reliant on its public and thereby less susceptible to external factors, notably sanctions would emerge within the establishment.

First mentioned in a meeting with a group of Iranian entrepreneurs on 7 September 2010, three months after the United States' sanctions regime intensified against the Islamic Republic in the form of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act,[681] Ayatollah Khamenei declared that:

> We need to bring about a genuine resistance economy in the country. Today this is what entrepreneur means. Friends were right to say that we circumvent sanctions; I am certain of that. The Iranian people (*mellat-e Irān*) and the country's officials (*mas'ulin*) will get around the sanctions and make those who sanction (*tahrimkonandegān*) into failures. Just like in other issues in the past years there were political issues in which they made a mistake… and were forced to retreat and apologise individually. I am certain you remember a few examples. Nowadays the youth (*javānhā*) do not know [about this], but in the past 10-20 years, they have done this several times. It will be the same this time. Of course, sanctions are nothing new to us, we have been under sanctions for 30 years. All the things that have happened, all the great progress of the great nation of Iran, has been done in the context of sanctions; thus, they cannot do anything. Ok, but this is a reason for all officials and those who care about their country to consider themselves obliged, [and] tasked with creating jobs (*ijād-e kār*), production (*towlid*), entrepreneurship (*kārāfarini*), to the growing prosperity of this great workshop (*kārgāh-e 'azim*) [Iran] … Everybody must hold themselves responsible.[682]

While the concept was introduced in 2010 as an ideal for an Iranian economy that can withstand sanctions from states opposing the Islamic Republic, it was not until two years later that it emerged as a significant establishment discourse that would seek to shape the

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[678] Van de Graaf, Thijs. 2013. "The "Oil Weapon" Reversed? Sanctions Against Iran and U.S.-EU Structural Power". *Middle East Policy* 20/3: pp. 145–63.
[679] Pesaran. *Iran's Struggle for Economic Independence*. pp. 161-188.
[680] Ibid.
[681] Whitehouse.Gov. 2012. *Fact Sheet: Sanctions Related to Iran*. Online: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/07/31/fact-sheet-sanctions-related-iran.> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
[682] Khamenei.ir. 1389/2010. *Bayānāt dar didār jam'I az kārāfarinān-e sarāsar-e keshvar*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=10077> Accessed on 19 July 2021.

policies of the revolutionary state, as is reflected in an interview with Commander of the Basij, Mohammad Reza Naqdi, when he claimed that the most important jobs of the Basij at the time was 'comprehensive participation in the resistance economy, and striving towards domestic production, spreading the culture of work and manufacturing, reforming patterns of consumptions' as he understood the Basij ought to be the first ones that have to start implementing the orders of the Leader.[683] The gradual process of narrowing down the resistance economy to concrete policy objectives appears to have been initiated by the Leader himself two months before, when he argued that the objectives of enemy states' sanctions is to prevent growth and prosperity in Iran so that the people will 'separate [themselves] from the Islamic system',[684] arguments similar to those mentioned in the previous discussions on the soft war and cultural invasion. As a solution to these problems, Ayatollah Khamenei calls for 'democratising the economy' (*mardomi kardan-e eqtesād*), a recurrent theme in the resistance economy discourse which appears to be another word for privatisation, as well as reducing oil dependency in the economy in order to make it less vulnerable to sanctions, as well as global financial instability.[685] Whereas these objectives clearly fall within the realm of economic policy making, Ayatollah Khamenei also stressed the importance of managing consumption (*modiriyat-e masraf*) as essential to the resistance economy, arguing that it is a '*jihadi* move' against the enemy to manage consumption as it will reduce the enemy's ability to exert pressure on the Iranian economy.[686] The importance of moderating consumption had already been submitted in a communiqué to the Expediency Discernment Council under the 'general policy for reforming consumption patterns'

[683] *Keyhān-e farhangi* No. 308-309. p. 15.
[684] Khamenei.ir. 1391/2012. *Bayānāt dar didār-e kārgozārān-e nezām*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=20534> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
[685] Ibid.
[686] Ibid.

(*siyāsat-e kolli-ye eslāh-e olgu-ye masraf*) as a general policy of the system (*siyāsat-e kolli-ye nezām*) on 5 July 2010, with the objective of:

> Reforming the culture of individual, societal and organisational consumption, promoting a culture of frugality (*sarfeh juyi va qenā'at*) and combating wastefulness (*esrāf*), prodigality (*tabzir*), luxury (*tajamol gerāyi*) and consumption of foreign goods by using cultural, educational, and artistic resources, and media, especially the national media.[687]

This general policy would be integrated into the broader discourse of the resistance economy, and I believe that its emphasis on individual and societal consumption reflects a point in which the resistance economy is an intersection between cultural, religious and economic policy making, as the Leader seeks to find a path for Iran to exploit 'the opportunity and permission to grow and prosper even when under pressure' that includes both public officials as well as the consumption culture of the general.[688]

The significance of the resistance economy is heavily reflected in the names given to the Iranian calendar year in his annual new year speeches. The tradition of giving particular years a specific name, which according to Senior Advisor to the Leader and member of the Supreme Council for the Cultural Revolution, Gholamreza Haddad 'Adel is done with the objective of 'attracting the people's attention towards a particular value and at the same time highlight an issue' started in the calendar year of 1378 (1999-2000).[689] While the names given to the various years has ranged from symbolic names marking particular anniversaries such as the first year marking the centenary of Ayatollah Khomeini's birth, others have focused on other issues such as national unity, accountability and moderating consumption. Therefore, whereas the years up until the Iranian calendar year of 1389 (2010-2011) covered a wide range of issues, with only the slogan of

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[687] Maslahat.ir. 1389/2010. *Eblāgh-e siyāsat-e kolli-ye eslāh-e olguye masraf az suye rahbar-e mo'azzam-e enqelab*. Online: <http://maslahat.ir/index.jsp?siteid=3&fkeyid=&siteid=3&pageid=576> Accessed on 19 July 2021.

[688] Khamenei.ir. 1391/2012. *Bayānāt dar didār-e dāneshjuyān*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=20686> Accessed on 19 July 2021.

[689] Khamenei.ir. 1390/2012. *barresi-ye ellat-e nāmgozāri-ye sāl-hā dar goftogu ba moshāver-e 'āli-ye rahbar-e enqelāb*. Online <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/others-dialog?id=19286> Accessed on 19 July 2021.

'Movement towards reformed pattern of consumption' (*harekat be samt-e eslāh-e olgu-ye masraf*) in 1388 (2009-2010) being related to what would become the resistance economy. However, from 21 March 2010 until today the names of the new years have been almost exclusively focused on economic issues covered by the resistance economy:

> **1390/2011-2012**: The year of economic jihad (*sāl-e jahād-e eqtesādi*).[690]
> **1391/2012-2013**: The year of domestic production and support for Iranian work and capital (*sāl-e towlid-e melli va hemāyat az kar va sarmāye Irāni*).[691]
> **1392/2013-2014**: The year of political and economic heroism (*Sāl-e hemāseh-ye siyāsi va hemaseh-ye eqtesadi*).[692]
> **1393/2014-2015**: The year of economy and culture with national determination and jihadi leadership (*Sāl-e eqtesād va farhang ba 'azm-e melli va modiriyat-e jahadi*).[693]
> **1394/2015-2016**: The year of government and nation, empathy, and compassion (*Sāl-e dowlat va mellat, hamdeli va hamzabāni*).[694]
> **1395/2016-2017**: The year of the resistance economy; action and practice (*Sāl-e eqtesād-e moqavemati; eqdām va 'amal*).[695]
> **1396/2017-2018**: The year of the resistance economy; production and employment (*Sāl-e eqtesād-e moqāvemati; towlid va eshteghāl*).[696]
> **1397/2018-2019**: The year for supporting Iranian products (*Sāl-e hemāyat az kālāye Irāni*).[697]
> **1398/2019-2020**: The year of growth in production (*Sāl-e rownaq-e towlid*).[698]
> **1399/2020-2021**: The year of leap in production (*Sāl-e jahesh-e towlid*).[699]
> **1400/2021-2022**: The year of production, [its] support, removal of obstacles (*sāl-e towlid, poshtibāni-ha, māne'zodāyi-hā*).[700]

With the exception of 1394 (2015-2016), which was focused on national unity, all the slogans since 2011 have either directly or indirectly been focused on various aspects of the resistance economy, suggesting the centrality of achieving its objectives for the highest

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690 Khamenei.ir 1390/2011. *Payyām-e nowruzi be monāsebat-e āghaz-e sāl-e 1390*. Online <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/message-content?id=11785> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
691 Khamenei.ir 1391/2012. *Payyām-e nowruzi be monāsebat-e āghaz-e sāl-e 1391*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/message-content?id=19289> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
692 Khamenei.ir 1392/2013. *Payyām-e nowruzi be monāsebat-e āghaz-e sāl-e 1392*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/message-content?id=22212> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
693 Khamenei.ir 1393/2014. *Payyām-e nowruzi be monāsebat-e āghaz-e sāl-e 1393*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/message-content?id=25952> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
694 Khamenei.ir 1394/2015. *Payyām-e nowruzi be monāsebat-e āghaz-e sāl-e 1394*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/message-content?id=29204> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
695 Khamenei.ir 1395/2016. *Payyām-e nowruzi be monāsebat-e āghaz-e sāl-e 1395*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/message-content?id=32665> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
696 Khamenei.ir 1396/2017. *Payyām-e nowruzi be monāsebat-e āghaz-e sāl-e 1396*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/message-content?id=36020> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
697 Khamenei.ir 1397/2018. *Payyām-e nowruzi be monāsebat-e āghaz-e sāl-e 1397*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/message-content?id=39247> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
698 Khamenei.ir 1398/2019. *Payyām-e nowruzi be monāsebat-e āghaz-e sāl-e 1398*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/message-content?id=42034> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
699 Khamenei.ir 1399/2020. *Payyām-e nowruzi be monāsebat-e āghaz-e sāl-e 1399*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/news-content?id=45207> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
700 Khamenei.ir 1400/2021. *Payyām-e nowruzi be monāsebat-e āghaz-e sāl-e 1400*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/news-content?id=45207> Accessed on 19 July 2021.

echelons of establishment. When the Rouhani administration assumed the presidency in the summer of 2013—the details of which we will return to in the next section—Ayatollah Khamenei appears to further specify the framework and the ideals for the country's policy making, such as when he stressed to Rouhani that 'resistance economy does not mean economic austerity (*riyāzat-e eqtesādi*), it does not mean hiding in your shell' but that 'we have to be able to create an economy in the country that can resist international crisis and instability'.[701] The attempts to promulgate a policy framework under the banner of the resistance economy reached a crucial stage in 18 February 2014, when the resistance economy was submitted in a communique by the Leader to the Expediency Discernment Council, and was implemented as a general policy of the system).[702]

The communique, which seeks to outline general policy objectives for official institutions to adhere to, covers a wide range of economic issues divided by 24 points, which can be condensed to the following:

> **1-2**: Efficiently utilising available resources and manpower in the country, become the number one exporter of goods and services in the region through supporting innovation and entrepreneurship.
> **3-5**: Increase productivity and factors boosting production (*avāmel-e towlid*), training and educating the workforce, making the economy more competitive by utilising the various capacities available in different provinces, target-oriented subsidies that will increase employment and production, equitable distribution of income across the supply chain.
> **6-8**: Increase production of essential goods, with particular focus on 'strategic goods and services' (*mahsulāt va khadamat-e rāhbordi*), diversify and increase quality of production to reduce import dependency, manage (reduce) consumption in accordance with the general policy for reforming consumption patterns, and achieve food security.
> **9**: Reforming and strengthening the financial sector in all areas required seek to achieve financial stability and strengthening the manufacturing and service sector.
> **10**: Comprehensive and targeted support for exports of goods and services in the form of offering required trade assistance, encourage foreign investment for exports, planning domestic production in accordance with international demand, create new markets, increase trade relations, especially with neighbouring states, using barter system where necessary, and establish consistent procedures and regulations for export.
> **11**: Increase the scope of action for economic free zones to include exchange of advanced technology, expand and facilitate production, export of goods and services and providing essential needs and financial resources from abroad.
> **12**: Increase the resilience of the Iranian economy through strengthen strategic trade relationships, using diplomacy to support economic objectives, using regional and international organisations.

[701] Khamenei.ir 1392/2013. *Bayānāt dar didār ra'is jomhur va a'zāye hei'at-e dowlat*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=23715> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
[702] Maslahat.ir. 1392/2014. *Siyāsat-e kolli-ye eqtesād-e moqāvemati eblāghi-ye maqam-e mo'azzam-e rahbari*. Online: <http://maslahat.ir/index.jsp?siteid=3&fkeyid=&siteid=3&pageid=583> Accessed on 19 July 2021.

13: Reduce the vulnerability of the Iranian economy's oil and gas sales through choosing customers strategically, diversify methods for conducting trade, involving the private sector in sales, increase export of gas, electricity, petrochemical products, and refined oil goods.
14-15: Increase strategic reserves of oil and gas in order to increase Iran's strategic position in the global market and increase production of refined petrochemical products with a greater return on investment.
16: Reducing public expenditure, reducing size of government and dissolving overlapping and unrequired institutions.
17-18: Reform the government source of income towards taxation and increase the National Development Fund with money collected from oil and gas exports to reduce budget dependency on oil and gas income.
19: Increase economic transparency, preventive action against practices and sources of economic corruption in the financial, trade and exchange sector.
20: Strengthening jihadi culture in the creation of wealth, productivity, entrepreneurship, investment, and job creation and award the resistance economy badge to prominent individuals in this realm.
21: Clarify the scope of the resistance economy and engage in discourse building (*goftemān sāzi*) in scientific, educational and media environments and transform it into a national discourse.
22. The government is specifically requested to identify the available resources and opportunities in the country and act accordingly, assess the nature sanctions and 'increase the cost for the enemy', design counter measures against both 'domestic and foreign threats.
23-24: Increase transparency and streamline distribution and pricing systems, improve supervisory functions over the economy. Implement and promote certificates of standard for domestic products.[703]

According to the Leader, this comprehensive communiqué of the resistance economy constitute a 'native and scientific blueprint which emanates from our revolutionary and Islamic culture'.[704] Importantly, and as is evident in the communiqué, the policies proclaimed are not meant to be a short-term strategy for overcoming the adversity of sanctions, but a general guideline for the economic path of the state, that will enable it to adapt according to new circumstances in the future.[705] These circumstances transcend the immediate issue of unilateral and multilateral sanctions, as the resistance economy is presented as a challenge to the 'capitalist economy' and the 'problems that follows from it', specifically what Ayatollah Khamenei understands to be excessive interdependence resulting form it which makes economies, particularly outside the West, more vulnerable to global instability.[706] He therefore stresses that all countries are to a various extent pursuing a resistance economy, but that the Islamic Republic's 'need for a resistance economy is

[703] Ibid.
[704] Khamenei.ir 1392/2014. *Bayānāt dar jalaseh-ye tabin-e siyāsat-hā-ye eqtesād-e moqāvemati*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=25795> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
[705] Ibid.
[706] Ibid.

greater than other countries', not with the 'intentions of separating and isolating from the global economy,' which is he argues is impossible today, but 'because of our independence, because of our honour' and 'our insistence on not being under the influence of the policies of [great] powers, we are also under attack and malice (*su'-e niyat*)'.[707]

As mentioned above, the resistance economy should therefore be understood to be a necessity rising from the Islamic Republic's politics of defiance to the international order, and the task of establishment figures would be to situate their policies within the framework established in the overall politics of the system. Immediate examples of this were seen in the Rouhani administration's quick expression of their acceptance of the resistance economy following its communique, though it appears that his and Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri's understanding of the resistance economy includes an emphasis on increasing oil exports,[708] while Mohammad Nahavandian, the government's Vice President for Economic Affairs understood it to be resilience against sanctions,[709] which either suggests the extent to which the government either tacitly disagreed with the resistance economy, or operate with a different understanding of it.

For Ayatollah Khamenei, however, the resistance economy is the economic component of combatting world arrogance,[710] and that 'economic independence can only be achieved with the resistance economy', and while foreign investment is an important aspect of the resistance economy, the most important aspect is 'activating domestic capacities' in

[707] Ibid.
[708] See for example: Dolat.ir 1392/2014. *Nāmeh-ye ra'is jomhur be maqām-e mo'azzam-e rahbari dar pey-e eblāgh-e siyāsat-hā-ye kolli-ye "eqtesād-e moqāvemati"* Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/236180> Accessed on 19 July 2021; Dolat.ir. 1392/2014. *Āmādegi-ye dowlat barāye jāmeh-ye 'amal poshidan be siyāsat-hā-ye eqtesād-e moqāvemati*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/236328> Accessed on 19 July 2021; Dolat.ir. 1395/2016. *Siyāsat-hā-ye eqtesād-e moqāvemati nabāyad dar had-e harf bemānad*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/276530> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
[709] Dolat.ir. 1394/2015. *Matn-e sokhanān-e doktor Nahāvandiyān dar pish az khotbeh-hā-ye namāz jom'eh-ye Tehrān*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/266607> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
[710] Khamenei.ir. 1395/2016. *Gozideh-i az bayānāt dar didār eydāneh-ye jam'i az mas'ulān-e keshvar*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=32842> Accessed on 26 July 2021.

the Iranian economy.[711] Comparisons to ISI can be understood to emerge from the focus on domestic production, which Khamenei is 'the spine of the resistance economy',[712] and as seen above, this is heavily reflected in the more recent new year speeches that have largely revolved around domestic production. In the words of one of the architects of the resistance economy communique, Expediency Discernment Council Member Mohammad Javad Iravani, the resistance economy is therefore not a short term 'tactic' in reaction to sanctions, but a 'long term approach and strategy based on the conditions and requirements of the Islamic Republic' which seeks to transform the potential of the country into a strategic advantage.[713]

At its essence, the discourse of the resistance economy is therefore an economic policy-oriented discourse that seeks to reduce the costs inflicted on Iran due to its worldmaking endeavours, and in the long term help the Islamic Republic in its pursuit for a just world order. The establishment appear to do so by espousing a discourse advocating a transparent economy not blighted by corruption that is able to provide essential goods and services from within. However, this does not necessarily translate into protectionism, as we have demonstrated above, but instead a strategic export policy which focuses mainly on neighbouring states constitute a broader attempt to create sustainable economic relationships that are not dependent on relations with major powers. 60 years after the National Front were overthrown by an Anglo-American Coup in their attempt to gain control over Iran's national resources, and nearly 30 years after calls for economic independence were made, the establishment of the Islamic Republic began to promulgate an economic discourse that

[711] Khamenei.ir 1395/2016. *Bayānāt dar marāsem-e bist-o-haftomin salgard-e rehlat-e emām khomeini (rahmatollah)*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=33259> Accessed on 26 July 2021.
[712] Khamenei.ir. 1393/2014. *Bayānā dar didār-e kārgarān dar goruh-e san'ati-ye mapnā*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=26284> Accessed on 26 July 2021.
[713] *Rahbord-e towse'eh*. 1393/2014. *Chisti va cherāyi-ye eqtesād-e moqāvemati (bakhsh-e avval)* (interview with Ali Aqamohammadi, Davoud Daneshja'fari, and Sayyed Morteza Nabavi by the editors of Rahbord-e towse'eh) (39). pp. 7-27. p. 8.

ought to turn the Iranian economy into an independent economy where its resources and capabilities would become a strategic weapon in its resistance and worldmaking project.

Part 3: Resistance and Worldmaking (2000-2021)

Nearly a century after Ayatollah Modarres formulated a discourse of resistance aimed at ensuring Iranian survival, the revolutionary establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran is actively espousing discourses of resistance aimed at forging a new world order that would ensure justice through independence and non-domination. However, writing the concluding Part of the final Chapter is challenging as the collection of sources and material is ongoing until the day of submission since its content is being produced as I write. Therefore, while I have sought to provide a conclusion on the various discourses, doctrines and concepts that have emerged since Ayatollah Modarres rejected the imperial presence in Iran, the final two worldmaking discourses; multilateral diplomacy and Islamic Resistance; two discourses that are yet to reach their conclusive stages. In fact, considering the events taking place at the time of writing, notably the United States' unilateral withdrawal in 2018 from the Joint Cooperative Plan for Action (JCPOA), a key achievement of multilateral diplomacy, as well as the assassination of Iran's military commander, Qassem Soleymani in January 2020, arguably one of the most influential individuals in Iran but especially for the Islamic Resistance, it is likely that this thesis will fail to miss out on the most important developments of Iranian worldmaking.

On the surface, multilateral diplomacy, as espoused by the Rouhani administration's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohammad Javad Zarif, and Qassem Soleymani's discourse of resistance and his regional policies might appear to be reflective of internal disputes within the establishment, an understanding shared by mainstream media and pundits in the West, and likely to translate into scholarship in the coming years. Moreover, this false dichotomy is also exacerbated domestically through the division of foreign policy between diplomacy (*diplomasi*) and the battlefield (*meydān*) gaining foothold in mainstream discourse within Iran. However, as noted by one of Iran's most prominent contemporary writers, Mahmoud

Dowlatabadi, in an interview with the Reformist magazine *Mehrnāmeh* in 2015 when asked about the apparent polarisation in Iranian society between the military and diplomatic apparatus in public opinion:

> Incidentally, I like Qassem Soleymani and others like him in their own place, and I also like Zarif and others like him … He [Soleymani] needs to stay in his own place and prevent the murderers (*ādamkoshān*) from entering Iran, and the others [Zarif, diplomats] need to stay in their own place and by other means speak and strive so that these murderers will go away.[714]

Anecdotally, I find Dowlatabadi's position today to be a popular understanding within the country, and intellectually, the relationship between the diplomatic and militaristic endeavours of resistance in the 21st century appears more often than not to be complimentary rather than contradictory. However, the nature of their relationship goes beyond 'keeping the murderers out', as the two discourses constitute clear radical examples of Iranian worldmaking discourses of resistance. While the former seeks to contain the United States and forge a new legal order that prevents non-domination, the latter seeks to mobilise regional forces to expel the United States, eliminate Israel and contain their allies in West Asia.

Multilateral Diplomacy

Three decades after the revolution, the Islamic Republic had gone through eight years of war, one conservative technocratic administration focused on rebuilding the country, a Reformist government seeking to promote moderation and 'dialogue among civilisations', and a radical populistic government that sought to challenge the totality of the Western order. Just as Khatami's dialogue among civilisation failed to achieve the establishment's desired results in 2005, eight years later, few indicators suggested that the Justice-Seeking Principlists shift towards radical revisionism yielded the desired results.

[714] *Mehrnāmeh,* No.31 Mordād 1394/July-August 2015. p. 198.

Finding themselves in what at the time was the most comprehensive sanctions regime in Iranian history, and isolated by the international community, the 11th presidential election on 14 June 2013 saw former member of parliament (1980-2000), member of the Expediency Discernment Council (1989-2013), Assembly of Experts (2007-), member (1989-), first secretary of the Supreme Council of National Security (1989-2005), and chief nuclear negotiator with Europe, Hassan Rouhani win the popular vote with the slogan of 'prudence and hope' (*tadbir va omid*) against notable Principlists candidates such as prominent Justice-Seeker, Said Jalili, and military figures such as IRGC Commanders Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, and Mohsen Rezai.

Whereas Rouhani's electoral victory was not met with the same level of sensationalism as the Khatami presidency, expectations of the eclectic cabinet consisting of Reformists, Principlists, independents and technocrats were high as they sought to meet a considerable domestic and international demand for another shift in Iranian foreign policy making. In the words of President Rouhani, whose factional position within the establishment transitioned from conservative to moderate, Iran had 'suffered greatly from extremism (*efrāt)*', and the will of the people and solution for the country was to move towards moderation.[715]

With regards to State Resistance and its worldmaking project, the shift, or perhaps more accurately, return towards moderation, is reflective of a technocratic turn in foreign policy making with institutional consequences. The increasing significance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic during the Rouhani administration resembles, if not exceeds its importance during Ali Akbar Velayati's tenure between 1981-1997 and is a

[715] Sharghdaily.com 1393/2012. *Rowhāni dar goftogu bā sharq*: *hatman sharāyet-e keshvar rā 'avaz mikonam*. Online: <http://sharghdaily.com/fa/main/detail/12561/%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B7-%DA%A9%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%B1%D8%A7-%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%B6-%D9%85%DB%8C%E2%80%8C%DA%A9%D9%86%D9%85> Accessed on 19 July 2021.

development I understand to be inseparable from Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's appointment to the post of Foreign Minister. A factionally independent career diplomat—albeit often associated with the Reformist faction—Zarif had prior to 2013 spent most of his time at Iran's delegation at the United Nations in New York, first as a member from 1982 until he became the Islamic Republic's Ambassador to the United Nations (2002-2007). From 2013 onwards, Zarif would emerge as one of the most influential establishment contributors to modern day resistance as Iran sought to overcome its short-term challenges of isolation while continuing the establishments worldmaking project. It is worth mentioning that beyond their academic credentials, with Zarif being a scholar of International Relations as well as a diplomat, both Rouhani and Zarif possess significantly more experience than all the previous administrations, having held senior roles for over three decades before assuming government.

Despite operating under the banner of moderation, I intend to demonstrate here that the moderation espoused by the Rouhani administration was similar to Khatami's dialogue among civilisations, mostly related to Iran's methods of affecting change, rather than the broad objectives of the Islamic Republic's resistance project. Therefore, the Rouhani administration's shift to moderation needs to be analysed beyond 'normalisation'[716] or 'rapproachment'[717] as it goes considerably beyond finding a solution to its immediate issues and should instead understood as a radical worldmaking discourse built on a sophisticated understanding of the international order, as well as the means by which the order can be altered in favour of justice as understood by the Islamic Republic. Importantly, the distinction between revisionism within the realm of secondary resistance which I have used

[716] Rezaei, Farhad. 2019. *Iran's Foreign Policy After the Nuclear Agreement: Politics of Normalizers and Traditionalists*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 16-17.
[717] Ahouie, Mahdi. 2020. "Exploring President Rouhani's Foreign Policy Doctrine 2013-2017", in Zaccara, Luciano (ed.) *Foreign Policy of Iran under President Hassan Rouhani's First Term (2013–2017)*. Singapore: Springer. pp. 15-42. p. 22.

to characterise the resistance discourses studied thus far, and worldmaking lies in the administrations focus on constructing 'juridical, political, and economic institutions in the international realm that would secure non-domination' which is the key feature of worldmaking and the resistance discourse of the Rouhani administration. Starting with the senior officials and International Relations experts at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' conceptualisation of the contemporary world order, this section will demonstrate how the Rouhani administration understands the world to be in a period of transition (*dowreh-ye gozār*) which started with the collapse of the Soviet Union and continues up until the time of writing. Having done so, I will look at what Rouhani perceives to be the most effective tool of effecting change during the period of transition, namely multilateral diplomacy (*diplomāsi-ye chand jānebeh*). Finally, it will assess his discourse of resistance in practice through the initiatives espoused by the Rouhani administration through the United Nations, especially World Against Violence and Extremism (WAVE), Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and Hormuz Peace Endeavour (HOPE). In juxtaposition with the scholarship of the Foreign Ministry, this section will argue that these initiatives are a part of the establishment's worldmaking discourse which seeks to bring United States' military presence in West Asia to an end, strengthen Muslim unity and prevent military domination through regional and sub-regional cooperation based on mutual interest and international norms, and also pursue legal and political mechanism that bring an end to world arrogance practices in disputes with the great powers.

Before doing so, however, it is worth noting out that despite the broad similarities between the discourse of Multilateral Diplomacy and other establishment discourses discussed so far which were primarily propagated by Conservatives, multilateral diplomacy was met with significant opposition within the establishment. Whilst being able to attain the support of most of the Reformist faction, Rouhani was only able to attain the support of the

'moderate' wing of the Principlists, causing significant factional opposition from the very beginning.[718] While factional opposition was constant throughout the Rouhani administration's two terms, political disagreements would emerge on a policy level as electoral slogans began to materialise into concrete policies, and key decision were being made within the system.[719]

Critical to the government of prudence and hope were the intellectual foundations which would inform their worldmaking project. I have demonstrated thus far that the century of defiance in modern Iran has been characterised by growing ambitions, accompanied by a growing perception of Iran being a powerful actor after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. However, the exact understanding of this transformation has more often than not been limited to statements of power where its meaning is assumed, rather than conceptualisations of it. Moreover, as we have seen thus far, perceptions of the international order have gone from an imperialist order before 1945, a bipolar order during the Cold War until 1989, followed by a unipolar world order dominated by the United States, which parts of the establishment perceived to be in terminal decline in the 21st century.

The worldview which would inform the Rouhani administration's resistance politics shared many similarities with its predecessors, but different significantly on the exact nature of the contemporary world order, and consequently, how to shape it towards a more just and equitable system. These two points of divergence are reflected in two books written by Zarif, and his colleagues in the Foreign Ministry, Sayyed Mohammad Kazem Sajjadpour, who served as the Islamic Republic's Ambassador to the European Headquarters of the United

[718] Khabaronline.ir. 1392/2013. *Tahlil-e motefãvet-e 'Ali Mottahari az entekhābāt*. Online: <https://www.khabaronline.ir/news/301628/تحلیل-متفاوت-علی-مطهری-از-انتخابات-درایت-مردم-و-مسئولان-اجازه> Accessed on 21 July 2022.

[719] See for example: IRNA.ir. 1394/2015. *Mokhālefān-e tarh-e barjām: dowlat movazzaf ast lāyeheh beh majles bedahad.* Online: <https://www.irna.ir/news/81784454/> Accessed on 22 July 2022; ISNA.ir. 1395/2016. *'elm-e mokhālefat ba barjām dar dastān-e Sa'id Jalili.* Online: <https://www.isna.ir/news/95082517787/> Accessed on 22 July 2022.

Nations, and the current Head of the Institute for Political and International Studies (2018-), and Abadollah Molaei, a career diplomat who briefly served as Rouhani's advisor in 2013 before becoming Iran's ambassador to Austria (2015-2020). Despite being published in 2012 and 2016, I understand these books to be the mature articulation of discourses that were espoused from the start of the Rouhani administration in 2013.

The conceptualisation of the world order was published in 2012 in an International Relations book titled *dowrān-e gozār-e ravābet-e beinolmellal dar jahān-e pasā gharbi* (Transition in International Relations of Post-Western World), where Zarif, Sajjadpour, Molaei argue that the end of the Cold War did not mark 'the end of history' as declared by Francis Fukuyama,[720] but instead that it marked the period of transition which is 'the beginning of another history whose conclusion is still not clear.'[721] What is clear, however, is that the international order is currently being challenged both structurally and normatively, as Western states are increasingly less successful at disseminating their norms and values through international institutions.[722] Importantly, they do not suggest that the great powers are irrelevant today, but that the complexities of power, and the increased number of actors engaged in international politics has brought the 'monopoly' of the great powers over international politics to an end.[723] Therefore, the current international climate during the period of transition is characterised by not only military competition, but ideational (*ma'nāyi)*, discursive (*goftemāni*), and normative (*hanjāri*) competition as well.[724] Moreover, the increasing number of actors in the international system further contributes to the image of a post-western world, as most of these actors are not western, while emerging

[720] Fukuyama, Francis. 1989. "The End of History?", *The National Interest*. No.16. pp. 3-18.
[721] Zarif, Mohammad Javad, Sajjadpour, Sayyed Mohammad Kazem and Molaei, Abadollah. 1396/2017. *Dowrān-e gozār-e ravābet-e beynolmellali dar jahān-e pasā gharbi*. Tehran: Markaz-e Motāle'āt-e Siyāsi va Beynolmellali. p. 317
[722] Ibid.
[723] Ibid.
[724] Ibid. p. 319.

powers that are starting to influence the ideational and military dynamics of international politics are exclusively non-western.[725] While this might appear like conventional International Relations discussions on the transition towards a multipolar world order, they stress that the transition is not limited to material power, but also the processes that will shape interstate behaviour, and unlike the past, this will no longer be determined by great powers only, but by a multitude of international state and non-state actors.[726] Accordingly, they argue that the world is transitioning towards a pluralistic, multicentered, multi civilisational, multiregional order, and policy and strategy ought to be planned accordingly.[727]

Four years later, Zarif and Sajjadpour would further conceptualise the idea of the period of transition, as well as the appropriate mechanisms for affecting change, or in other words, changing the world order in *Diplomāsi-ye chand jānebeh* (Multilateral Diplomacy). Arguing more specifically that the ongoing competition in the post-Cold War world revolves around methods of managing the globalised world, and the struggle for global leadership (*zemāmdāri-ye jahāni*), which is primarily taking place in the form of multilateral diplomacy rather than military conflict.[728] The result of these dynamics, according to Zarif and Sajjadpour, is the creation of 'new international regimes, new or reformed multilateral institutions, and new norms and global regulations (*moqarrarāt-e novin-e jahāni*)', that establish themselves long after they have first been espoused, and as such, states are able to 'institutionalise temporary power relations.'[729] Critical to these norms and regimes is that

[725] Ibid. p. 320.
[726] Ibid. p. 322.
[727] Ibid.
[728] Zarif, Mohammad Javad & Sajjadpour, Sayyed Mohammad Kazem. 1395/2016. *Diplomāsi-ye chand jānebeh: puyāyi-ye mafhumi va karkardi-ye sāzmān-hā-ye manteqi-i va beynolmellali*. Tehran: Markaz-e Motāle'āt-e Siyāsi va Beynolmellali. p. 741.
[729] Ibid.

they force even the most powerful states to constrain their behaviour, as they rely on international legitimacy in a world no longer determined by military force on its own.[730]

While conceding that even normative and institutional developments have historically been spearheaded by greater powers, Zarif and Sajjadpour argue that 'power relations have not translated into international norms and institutions in the post-Cold War era' and as such, regional powers and marginalised actors are able to influence the development of norms and institutions to a greater extent than during the Cold War since states that have succeeded in 'internalising their desired norms and establish their [desired] institutions' did so with the backing of these marginalised states.[731] The growing number of marginalised nations, according to Zarif and Sajjadpour, is the 'most important factor that can guarantee the influence of these states', and if they act collectively, their influence can increase even further despite power asymmetries due to the foundational principle of sovereign equality in the United Nations and most international organisations.[732]

Crucially, their argument regarding the efficiency multilateral diplomacy is not a normative or prescriptive 'third worldist' theorisation of international relations, which was characteristic of proponents of non-aligned resistance before the revolution and in the support for restructuring the United Nations after the revolution. Instead, it is a descriptive one based on their understanding and experience of global developments over the past decades, namely the reduced success of military campaigns and globalisation. Firstly, the period of transition is understood as a period in which diplomacy and consensus building are particularly important in order to achieve international objectives, and in which states that resort to violence in order to achieve their objectives are 'forced to bear higher costs in order to make up for their ineffectiveness in the multilateral environment.'[733] Moreover,

[730] Ibid.
[731] Ibid. pp. 742-743.
[732] Ibid. p. 743.
[733] Ibid.

Zarif and Sajjadpour argue that greater powers' resort to military force has become increasingly less successful in recent years, and as such, external, brute force (*qodrat-e biruni*) is no longer 'the only determining factor in the outcomes of interactions in multilateral organisations', while on the other hand, 'sovereign equals in these organisations have the decisive role.'[734] As such, in the world today there are no longer any fundamental obstacles to prevent less influential actors from achieving their objectives, and these actors have the necessary resources, particularly greater numbers, required to affect change. This success, however, depends on the efficient use of multilateral diplomacy, namely with examples mentioned being 'scientific and organisational mastery of issues, presenting innovative initiatives, patient coalition building, utilising appealing and persuasive arguments and explanations of points of view in a way that accords with other actors' and participants' interests'[735]

Secondly, globalisation, the dynamics of which had often been conceptualised as a threat to the establishment, especially its cultural dimensions, is understood by Zarif and Sajjadpour to be a key factor making multilateral diplomacy the most important tool for effecting change. Besides the 'valuable commodity of legitimacy', they argue that states are no longer able to pursue their objectives at the expense of others.[736] Using climate change as a metaphor, they ask if:

> … can any power [save] the environment of its country or region by endangering the environment of other countries or regions in the world to save itself from pollution, greenhouse gases, and global warming? Although the answer to this question might appear obvious today, consensus on this topic did not exist from the beginning. The same is true of welfare and security. This reality has to a notable extent been accepted in the area of health, transportation, communication, and even trade and global economy … however, in the realm of security even the acceptance of the idea of changing perspective for states, especially powerful states will be challenging. And its implementation and execution even more challenging. In such change of approach, the pursuit of security by making others less secure, which is currently the most prevalent method of powerful states, and their understanding of deterrence and zero-sum rationalisations, will no longer be applicable to international politics.[737]

[734] Ibid.
[735] Ibid. p. 744.
[736] Ibid.
[737] Ibid. p. 745.

Zarif and Sajjadpour concede that this view is rejected as utopian and unrealistic by great powers and intellectuals that are reproducing the status quo, but that they will all be forced eventually to accept this reality, since 'what was yesterday known as realism, is nothing but dangerous wishful thinking today'.[738] Therefore, 'global leadership in the globalised world needs a new outlook based on global realities',[739] and that diplomacy and multilateral institutions 'give the capacity and appropriate opportunity to raise awareness, and create norms and institutions based on new perspectives' in order manage new globalised challenges while also mitigating the use of military force and domination by relying on collective legitimacy.[740]

The perception of the world order today expressed by these high-level thinkers and officials, and the period of transition they identify marks a shift towards a more complex and academically grounded approach, which was visible from the start of the Rouhani administration. On 6 August 2013, three days after the inauguration of the 11th presidential administration of the Islamic Republic, Zarif presented the administration's foreign policy program. After the initial declaration of allegiance to the values of the Islamic Revolution, the guidelines of Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei, the foreign policy program of the 11th government would differ in its understanding of the international system:

> The current era of international relations is one of transition (*enteqāli va* gozār) in the sense that the bipolar world order which underwent structural change at the end of the 20th century is yet to reach its particular focal point and is yet to achieve certain stability and consolidation … The period of transition due to [its] fluidity, complexity, and intrinsic ambiguity can be understood as one of the most sensitive, perilous, and most decisive points of history of the international order. Eras of transition in the past has mostly been accompanied with the violent wars and military contestations of the great powers. At the current period of transition, competition is more intense due to their long-term consequences, but due to changes in the environment of global interaction, and transformations in the nature of power and the diversity of actors, competition in the current period of transition is mostly taking non-military forms.[741]

[738] Ibid.
[739] Ibid. p. 746.
[740] Ibid.
[741] Dolat.ir. 1392/2013. *Barnāmeh-hā-ye vazir-e omur-e khārejeh Mohammad Javād-e Zarif*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/229667> Accessed on 19 July 2021.

Therefore, unlike unipolarity and the teleological narrative of the inevitable collapse of the American world order which was perceived by the Justice-Seekers, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the 11th government understands the post-cold war international order to still be in the process of formation, and as such, more malleable to worldmaking endeavours as its outcome is yet to be concluded. The window of opportunity perceived by Zarif is further widened by his understanding of power after the Cold War:

> The concept of power has undergone a transformation of its contents. Transitioning from focus on traditional military power to other emerging dimensions of power, affirmation of cultural characteristics, ideational, normative and discursive and asymmetric [forms of power], and the promulgation of the non-military meanings of [forms of] power such as economic, technological, soft power, performative power (*qodrat-e bāzigari*), and the power of consensus building have been examples of this transformation. For this reason, space has opened up to an unprecedented level for regional powers, including the Islamic Republic of Iran. The increased role of public diplomacy and the increased influence of cyberspace has [also] transformed many components of foreign policy.[742]

With the new world order being in its formative stages, and forms of power proliferated in favour of regional powers such as the Islamic Republic, the question of the methods of effecting change arises. As mentioned in the books discussed above, the Rouhani administration follows mainstream International Relations theory and perceives the world to be mutually interdependent (*peyvastegi-ye moteqābel*), and consequentially, the challenges states are facing today ought to be solved collectively rather than individually, which has produced 'attitudes and practices' in favour of collective action and multilateralism, since it is no longer possible to solve global issues unilaterally.[743] The transition of the world today, according to Zarif, has thus transformed into one of 'cooperation and competition' from the previous 'confrontation or unconditional cooperation' which had characterised the international relations of the colonial and Cold War era.[744] The end of the era of zero-sum calculations in international politics means that

[742] Ibid.
[743] Ibid.
[744] Ibid.

states relying on traditional methods of unilateralism, often within the framework of world arrogance discussed previously in this Chapter, 'impose the situation of lose-lose on themselves and other actors.'[745]

Thus, according to Zarif, the opportunity for states in the period of transition, complex power relations and multilateralism lies in their ability to accurately comprehend and take these developments into account in their foreign policy making. By doing so, states will be able to 'enhance their global position and institutionalise and consolidate their power and influence', and states that do not do this, will eventually 'lose their influence and position and become marginalised'.[746] For Iran, which Zarif perceives to be 'one of the essential points of origin and cases in the formation of the international order as it is taking shape', has the possibility to further 'institutionalise its power and [make it] effective' in the fields of values, norms and ideas that will shape the international system.[747]

This conceptual framework of the international order and forces which can shape it would be reflected in the administration's attempts to first initiate dialogue with, then seek to change the world through dialogue. A few months after his inauguration, President Rouhani published an article in the Washington Post before travelling to the United Nation's 68th General Assembly**,** titled *Iran's New Approach to the World* on 20 September 2013. Echoing Zarif, Sajjadpour and Molaei's conceptualisation of the period of transition, Rouhani writes that:

> We must pay attention to the complexities of the issues at hand to solve them. Enter my definition of constructive engagement. In a world where global politics is no longer a zero-sum game, it is — or should be — counterintuitive to pursue one's interests without considering the interests of others. A constructive approach to diplomacy does not mean relinquishing one's rights. It means engaging with one's counterparts, on the basis of equal footing and mutual respect, to address shared concerns and achieve shared objectives. In other words, win-win

[745] Ibid.
[746] Ibid.
[747] Ibid.

> outcomes are not just favourable, but also achievable. A zero-sum, Cold War mentality leads to everyone's loss.[748]

As an alternative to the traditional use of force, a method the administration believes became less useful by the end of the Cold War, Rouhani proposes dialogue and limited cooperation as an alternative. More than a decade after dialogue among civilisations failed to establish itself in the Islamic Republic's politics of resistance, the Rouhani administration would revive what they understood to be its most important feature, dialogue. The renewed emphasis on dialogue should not be surprising, as Rouhani had served as Khatami's advisor and led the nuclear negotiations at the time, and Zarif contributed to formulating and developing Khatami's dialogue among civilisations in the United Nations.[749] However, while discussion on dialogue among civilisations above demonstrated the prominent role of civilisation in Khatami's version of the discourse, Zarif argues explicitly that dialogue was the most important aspect of the doctrine, and that civilisations was a 'secondary issue' made necessary by the political climate at the time in which the diplomatic establishment believed that the United States was in the process of constructing an 'Islamic enemy' following the collapse of their communist enemy.[750]

This time, however, dialogue would be foregrounded, but also supplemented by the new conceptualisation of the period of transition and multilateral diplomacy. Yet, for Zarif, a reality of the period of transition was that its existence had to be taught to the world, as Zarif believed the 'outdated' Cold War worldview was still prevailing in the West, as explained in an interview with IRIB1 on 27 August 2013:

> I think that the opposite side does not have a good understanding of global or international conditions. Still, the US does not believe … that the world today is not a zero-sum game. You cannot have security at the expense of others' insecurity. If that was possible, 11 September would not take place, if it was possible, incidents that took place in London, Madrid, Rome and

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[748] The Washington Post. Sept 19, 2013 "President of Iran Hassan Rouhani: Time to engagehttps://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/president-of-iran-hassan-rouhani-time-to-engage/2013/09/19/4d2da564-213e-11e3-966c-9c4293c47ebe_story.html".

[749] Raji, Mohammad Mahdi.1398/2019-2020. *Goftogu bā Mohammad Javād Zarif: Āqāye Safir*. Tehran: Nashr-e Ney. pp. 145-150.

[750] Raji, *Goftogu bā Mohammad Javād Zarif*. pp. 144-146.

> other western countries, catastrophes that took place there, would not have happened. Security is an interconnected reality, it has to be everywhere. Progress, development, economic development, and prosperity are a collective good (*kālāh-ye hamegāni*) not private goods in the interconnected world. I think that Westerners, especially the dominant view in the United States, have not reached a realistic understanding of international relations. This understanding has to be created. The Islamic Republic is the propagator of dialogue among civilisations, the propagator of understanding, the propagator of civilisation, [and] has had, and still has the foundations to help the world to achieve this understanding, since we have really distanced ourselves from the past world. The international situation is no longer the same, there is a need for a new understanding.[751]

The first attempts to convey the new understanding of the world and present the objectives of the Islamic Republic's discourse of State Resistance within that context and was presented to the world at President Rouhani's first United Nations General Assembly speech on 24 September 2013. In his speech Rouhani championed virtually all the post-revolutionary establishment discourses discussed thus far under the framework of the period of transition and multilateral diplomacy:

> The current *critical period of transition* in international relations is replete with dangers, albeit also with unique opportunities. Any miscalculation of one's own position, and of course those of others, will cause damage on a historic scale; a mistake by one actor will have a negative impact on all others. *Vulnerability is now a global and indivisible phenomenon* … At this sensitive juncture in the history of global relations, the age of zero-sum games is over, even though a few actors still tend to rely on archaic and deeply ineffective ways and means of preserving their old superiority and domination. Militarism and the recourse to violent and military means for the purposes of subjugating others have shown themselves to be failed examples of the perpetuation of old ways in new circumstances … Coercive economic and military policies and practices geared to the maintenance and preservation of old superiorities and domination have been pursued in a conceptual mindset that negates peace, security, human dignity and exalted human ideals. *Ignoring differences between societies and globally imposing Western values as universal values represent further manifestations of that conceptual mindset* … So, on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I propose, as a first step, the consideration by the United Nations of a project to be known as "A World Against Violence and Extremism". Let us all ride this wave. *I invite all States, international organizations and civil institutions to undertake a new effort to guide the world in this direction.* We should start thinking about a coalition for enduring peace across the entire globe instead of ineffective coalitions for war in various parts of the world.[752] (emphasis my own)

A World Against Violence and Extremism (WAVE) initiative was the first example of the Rouhani administration's attempt to pursue worldmaking through multilateral diplomacy. Beginning the worldmaking efforts on what the establishment understood to be one of the most pressing challenges for Iran and the world, namely combating the emergence

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[751] Basij-e daneshjuyi-ye daneshgah-e sahand-e Tabriz. *Barnāmeh-ye negāh-e yek (Mohammad Javād Zarif) qesmat-e chāhārom*. <https://www.aparat.com/v/cYS9N> Accessed on 8 September 2021.
[752] United Nations General Assembly: *Official records of the sixth plenary meeting,* 24 September 2013 A/68/PV.76. Retrieved from: <http://undocs.org/en/A/68/PV.6> Accessed on 26 July 2021. pp. 13-16.

of violent non-state actors such as Al-Qaida and Daesh which Iran understood to be sponsored, supported by not only its traditional enemies in the West, but also the oil monarchies of the Persian Gulf.[753] Rather than espousing resistance politics through the politics of confrontation, which was characteristic in the Ahmadinejad administrations pursuit of resistance, the Rouhani administration emphasised mutual interests, and urged dialogue and multilateral diplomacy as a means to resolve violent conflicts, and succeeded in unanimously passing WAVE at the United Nations General Assembly in the form of UNGA resolution 70/109 in 2015.[754] While the language of the resolution is vague affirmations of United Nation's values in relation to the rise of violent groups like Daesh, I believe it is intended as a symbolic starting point for cooperation and an attempt to attain legitimacy through international consensus, as outlined in *Multilateral Diplomacy*, for Iran to spearhead a worldmaking endeavour. On one hand, it was used as a springboard in Iran's regional cold war, namely as the basis upon which Iran would critique its main regional rival and what it perceived as a source of injustice in the region, Saudi Arabia, for their belief in and export of Wahhabism, the main sect of Iran's regional enemies.[755] On the other hand, due to the belief that it is impossible to shape the region by force,[756] Zarif argues that the intention of WAVE was to proposes a realistic beginning in the form of a 'regional dialogue forum' based on collective United Nation's values under which all regional countries could unite, namely:

> respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the political independence of all states, the inviolability of international boundaries, noninterference in internal affairs of others, the

[753] Nytimes.com. 2016. *Mohammad Javad Zarif: Let Us Rid the World of Wahhabism* – Online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/14/opinion/mohammad-javad-zarif-let-us-rid-the-world-of-wahhabism.html> . Accessed on 19 July 2021.
[754] United Nations General Assembly: *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 2015*. A/RES/70/109. Retrieved from <https://issafrica.org/ctafrica/uploads/UNGA%20Res%2070:109.%20A%20World%20against%20Violence%20and%20violent%20Extremism.pdf> Accessed on 26 July 2021.
[755] Nytimes.com *Mohammad Javad Zarif: Let Us Rid the World of Wahhabism*.
[756] Dolat.ir. 1393/2013. *Khoshunat va efrāt dar mantaqeh natijeh-ye siyāsat-hā-ye nādorost ast*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/256544> Accessed on 19 July 2021.

> peaceful settlement of disputes, the impermissibility of threats or use of force, and the promotion of peace, stability, progress and prosperity in the region.[757]

The ultimate objective of this dialogue forum, which ought to be 'kept to relevant regional stakeholders' while utilising 'existing institutional frameworks for dialogue' such as the United Nations is for it to develop into 'more formal nonaggression and security cooperation arrangements.'[758] In other words, similar to how Khatami sought to utilise dialogue among civilisations as a strategy for normalisation and rapprochement, the Rouhani administration appears to espouse multilateral diplomacy as a strategy for establishing dialogue with regional states with the objective of replacing the United States' as their 'security guarantor', which reflects a continuation of State Resistance with regards to improving relations and cooperation with Muslim states, but also engage in worldmaking by establishing institutions that serve to bring an end to the United States and its allies' military presence in the region.

Whereas WAVE was the first comprehensive attempt at pursuing worldmaking through multilateral diplomacy in West Asia, the second effort of multilateral diplomacy with the world powers would culminate in what is today known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran nuclear deal. According to Zarif, the international sanctions regime against Iran was the product of extensive campaigns of Iranophobia (*Irān harāsi*) under the 'American-Zionist plan of securitising Iran in the international order.'[759] However, the consequences of the Justice-Seekers unconventional discourse was also considered to be important, and Zarif believed that the Iranian people had voted for a 'new different discourse' than what was espoused by Ahmadinejad, and this

[757] Zarif, Mohammad Javad. 2016. "How to Handle the Enabling Conditions for Extremism and Terrorism", *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 7(1). pp. 5-20. p. 18.
[758] Ibid. pp. 18-19.
[759] Dolat.ir. *Barnāmeh-hā-ye vazir-e omur-e khārejeh Mohammad Javād-e Zarif*.

shift would result in Iran speaking 'to the world in a language that the world will understand and be able to understand the reasoning of the Islamic Republic.'[760]

With 'removing the nuclear issue' from the Security Council being declared one of the government's main foreign policy objectives in 2013,[761] extensive negotiations would take place between the Rouhani administration and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, as well as Germany in what would become known as the P5+1 between 2013 and 2015. However, the shift towards dialogue was not without its share of opponents, and the foreign policy debates over the past seven years of the Rouhani administration has often revolved around validity and utility of negotiations. For example, on 2 December 2014, roughly a year before the JCPOA was signed, Zarif sought to explain the importance of negotiations and the nuclear deal to members of the Political Science Association at Allameh Tabatabaei University in Tehran, where he stated that the nuclear issue is 'one of the most important issues in international relations after the Cold War', and that:

> You negotiate with another party because you want the other side to understand the views, opinions, logic, righteousness (*haqqāniyat*), [and] the oppression of this great nation and the resistance of this great nation, and this was done well in [the nuclear] negotiations, and this is the template (*olgu*) that the Leader presented [when saying that] we accept any fair and wise deal, but will never succumb to the language of force and excessive demands… during our tenure, we have generated respect of the country, the people of the world today respect Iran, they respect our methods, and the calculations of the enemy have been proven wrong.[762]

Zarif appears to believe that taking part in multilateral diplomacy itself has inherent benefits, and has contributed to improving Iran's reputation internationally, and attained the necessary respect. Zarif also argued that the process of negotiations resulted in increased 'security, authority and influence' while also 'reducing the vulnerability of the Islamic

[760] Dolat.ir. 1392/2013. *Tashrih-e barnāmeh-ye dastgāh-e diplomāsi dar dowlat-e yāzdahom*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/230194> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
[761] Dolat.ir. *Barnāmeh-hā-ye vazir-e omur-e khārejeh Mohammad Javād-e Zarif*.
[762] Dolat.ir. 1393/2014. *Zarif: mozākerāt-e hasteh-i az mohemtarin masa'el-e beynolmellali-ye pas az jang-e sard ast*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/256141> Accessed on 19 July 2021.

Republic of Iran' since the 'securitised environment' had collapsed.[763] The achievement of normalisation and rapprochement, however, was only one aspect of the achievements of multilateral diplomacy. According to Zarif, as he also believed the JCPOA to have increased Iran's regional power, as he argues that the nuclear deal dealt a significant blow against Iranophobia which has made it more difficult for states to act against the interests of the Islamic Republic in the region.[764] Speaking at another event at Allameh Tabatabaei University on 23 August 2015, approximately a month after the JCPOA was signed, Zarif argued that Iran, having made 'intelligent decisions in the transformation of the region, turned into a power' as it utilised other non-material forms of power, an approach to power that Zarif attributes to the founding father of the Islamic Republic.[765] The legacy of Khomeini, and the continuity from the Khatami era is also evident on the emphasis on authenticity as a pre-requisite for negotiations, as Zarif argued that 'identity' is a critical requisite before entering dialogue, and that it is exactly where 'the Islamic Republic's refection of dominance (*solteh nāpaziri*) is a source of power'.[766]

It is important to stress that the JCPOA from the Iranian perspective was always espoused as a step towards a just world order, and not just a short-term normalisation following eight years of radicalism and marginalisation. The objective of reforming the international order through worldmaking was clear by 2014, when the Islamic Republic's long term objective was espoused internationally when Rouhani told the United Nations General Assembly that a 'final accord regarding Iran's peaceful nuclear programme' can be the beginning of 'multilateral collaboration aimed at promoting security, peace and

[763] ibid
[764] Dolat.ir. 1394/2015. *Zarif: bā tasmim-hā-ye hushmandāneh beh qodrat-e mantaqeh-i tabdil shodim*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/266250> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
[765] Ibid.
[766] Ibid.

development in our region and beyond.'[767] The next year, months after the JCPOA had been signed by Iran, all permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and the European Union, Rouhani declared to the General Assembly that:

> Two years ago, the people of Iran, voting in a competitive election, gave me a mandate to consolidate peace and constructive engagement with the world, while pursuing national rights, interests and security. That national will manifested itself through a careful and clear diplomatic effort, which resulted in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, concluded between the Islamic Republic of Iran and six world Powers and the European Union. That Plan of Action became an international instrument when the Security Council adopted resolution 2231 (2015). From the standpoint of international law, the instrument sets a valuable precedent, as the two sides, rather than warring and then negotiating peace, engaged in a process of dialogue and mutual understanding before a conflict could break out … Through the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, *we were not just seeking a nuclear deal. We wanted to suggest a new and constructive way of recreating the international order, an order based on mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of others and sustained cooperation and coexistence among the States Members of the United Nations*.[768] (emphasis my own)

Therefore, whereas the JCPOA was often seen by its proponents in the West as the end of the nuclear standoff between Iran and the world, or a set of regulations that prevents Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons in return for sanctions relief, the establishment of the Islamic Republic perceived it to be a part of a multilateral effort aimed towards bringing the practice of world arrogance to an end and replace it with a less violent practice more favourable to marginalised states and smaller powers.

However, it is important to note that multilateral diplomacy as espoused by the Rouhani administration was not in any way intended as a complete replacement of military force. Instead, their relationship should be understood as complimentary, as was evident when Zarif attributed the success in negotiations is in part due to the success of 'our brothers in the region',[769] an explicit reference to state, and non-state actors allied with Iran who are fighting Iran's enemies in in Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria.

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[767] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the 9th plenary meeting*, 25 September 2014 A/69/PV.9. Retrieved from <http://undocs.org/en/A/69/PV.9> Accessed on 26 July 2021. p. 12 .
[768] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Reords of the 13th plenary meeting*, 28 September 2015 A/70/PV.13. Retrieved from <http://undocs.org/en/a/70/pv.13> Accessed on 26 July 2021. pp. 32-33.
[769] Dolat.ir. 1394/2015. *Zarif dar didār ben 'alavi: movafaqiyat-e ma dar mozākerāt-e hasteh-I, movāfaqiyat-e barādarānemān dar mantaqeh niz hast*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/261420> Accessed on 19 July 2021.

What appears to be the objective of the administration's strong focus on multilateral diplomacy and new methods of affecting change is in the perceived futility of material power as the main, and very often, sole method for affecting change. Following the election of Donald Trump in the United States in 2016, and the radical shift towards aggressive unilateralism from the beginning of his presidency until today, the relationship between military force and multilateral diplomacy would become even more strongly emphasised by Iran. On one hand, Iran sought to stress, similar to how it sought to emphasise that security was unattainable at the expense of others, that American military force simply did not have the impact it has had historically. An example often used by Zarif—which also informed the worldview of the Justice-Seekers—was the inability of both superpowers of the Cold War to achieve their stated objectives in Afghanistan, a country Zarif sought to stress had a 'gross domestic product is 14 times smaller than Apple's annual revenues.'[770]

Rather than replacing military force, Zarif sought to stress that multilateralism does not replace power, but it reduces it', thereby functioning as an 'equation between power and legitimacy'. [771] Speaking at a conference on Iranian multilateralism on 24 February 2019, Zarif argued that not only has Iran 'survived for forty years without American support' but that it has been able to survive for 'forty years despite American pressure', which suggests that the United States should not think it is the 'centre of the universe' as its power has been significantly diminished.[772] Referring to US attempts to utilise the security council to pass sanctions against Iran, Zarif highlights the impact of the JCPOA to demonstrate how anti-Iran resolutions in relation to Yemen were vetoed by Russia and China, two states that voted for Security Council sanctions against Iran prior to the JCPOA.[773] The relationship between

[770] Dolat.ir. 1399/2020. *Mohammad Javād Zarif/vazir-e omur-e khārejeh: jahān moqābel-e qānun shekani-ye beynolmellali-ye Āmrikā beisteh*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/344976> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
[771] Dolat.ir. 1397/2019. *Zarif: lāzemeh-ye esteqlāl-e Irān in nabud ke ba kasi dargir shavim*. Online: <http://dolat.ir/detail/318947> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
[772] Ibid.http://dolat.ir/detail/318947
[773] Ibid.

the two forces for effecting change, and their relationship in the Iranian context was further elaborated in an interview with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' own journal where he stated that while 'negotiations are a major part of international relations':

> … the role of negotiations in bringing disputes to an end and/or consolidating achievements. Negotiations are what brings disasters to an end. And we must not construe negotiations to be something that goes against [our] values and the same as submission. When negotiations and military force (*qodrat-e meydāni*) are used together and in a coordinated manner, it yields the best results. But if one of the two is not present or where there is no coordination [between the two], or they do not support each other in appropriate situations, achievements are very low and God forbid, we will fail. But regardless of failure or success, the principle of negotiations is a necessity, and this has been accepted as an objective reality throughout the 40-year history since the revolution.[774]

Whereas Khatami's emphasis on dialogue largely went at the expense of military force, the recipe of successful worldmaking according to Zarif lies in the ability to coordinate the use of multilateral diplomacy and military force. While the regional military endeavours that took place during the Rouhani administration and their relationship to State Resistance will be discussed in the next section on the Axis of Resistance, the military tension that took place in the Persian Gulf in the summer of 2019 present a striking example of this discourse in practice. Following heightened tension between Iran and the United States following Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA and imposition of unilateral sanctions under the banner of 'maximum pressure', several oil tankers were attacked in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, while a Saudi Arabian oil processing facility in Abqaiq-Khurais was also attacked by drones.[775] These military incidents, which Iran denied its involvement in, but has been attributed to Iran or its allies in the region by opposing states, paved the way for a third multilateral endeavour, in accordance with the foreign policy objective of creating 'regional institutions especially security arrangements and cooperation in the Persian Gulf, prevent threats from taking shape against Iran'[776]; the Hormuz Peace

[774] Zarif, Mohammad Javad. 1397/2018-2019. "Siyāsat-e khāreji-ye Irān az dowrān-e mozākereh mobtani bar qodrat", *Siyāsat-e Khāreji* (4). pp. 5-26. p. 12.
[775] Nytimes.com. 2019. *Two Major Saudi Oil Installations Hit by Drone Strike, and U.S. Blames Iran*. Online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/14/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-refineries-drone-attack.html> Accessed on 19 July 2021.
[776] Dolat.ir. *Barnāmeh-hā-ye vazir-e omur-e khārejeh Mohammad Javād-e Zarif*.

Endeavour (HOPE). Speaking at the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2019, Rouhani declared that:

> The security doctrine of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on maintaining peace and stability in the Persian Gulf and on providing freedom of navigation and safety of movement in the Strait of Hormuz. Recent incidents have seriously endangered such security. *Security and peace in the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz could be provided with the participation of the countries of the region and the free flow of oil and other energy resources could be guaranteed provided that we consider security as an umbrella in all areas for all the countries*. … In line with the historical responsibility of my country in maintaining security, peace, stability and progress in the Persian Gulf region and the Strait of Hormuz, I should like to invite all countries directly affected by the developments in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz to the coalition for hope within the Hormuz Peace Endeavour. The goal of the coalition for hope is to promote peace, stability, progress and welfare for all residents of the Strait of Hormuz region and to enhance mutual understanding and peaceful and friendly relations among them.[777] (emphasis my own)

In the subsequent meeting on Regional and Subregional Cooperation, Zarif would further elaborate on the details of HOPE, in a speech reflective of the resistance discourses and objectives discussed thus far in this Chapter. Arguing that 'all regional States have the responsibility to ensure peace, stability and prosperity in the region', Zarif went on to emphasise that:

> The objectives of HOPE include promoting solidarity, mutual understanding and peaceful and friendly relations and cooperation among States of the region, ensuring the territorial integrity, political independence and international boundaries of all regional States, cooperating in eradicating terrorism, extremism and sectarian tensions, peacefully resolving all regional tensions and conflicts, preventing tensions through enhanced communication and early warning, and ensuring energy security, the freedom of navigation and the free flow of oil and other resources to and from the Hormuz Strait community and beyond. … Those objectives can be promoted only through adherence to such common principles as dialogue and mutual respect; respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of international borders; peaceful settlement of all disputes; rejection of the threat and use of force; non-aggression and non-intervention in the internal or external affairs of other States; and rejection of and non-participation in coalitions and alliances against fellow States. Energy security and the free flow of natural resources are further principles to which we must all subscribe. … The Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to fully engage in dialogue with countries of the region and the United Nations to discuss all aspects of the HOPE initiative.[778]

Whereas Khatami promoted dialogue for the purpose of achieving mutual understanding, and Ahmadinejad sought to question the legitimacy and the realities which informed the policies of Iran's enemies, Zarif appears to formulate a worldmaking objective

[777] United Nations General Assembly: *Official Records of the fifth plenary meeting*, 25 September 2019 A/74/PV.5. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/PV.5> Accessed on 26 July 2021. p. 18.
[778] United Nations Security Council: *Provisional Records of the 8626th meeting*, 25 September 2019 S/PV/8626. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/S/PV.8626> Accessed on 26 July 2021. p. 31.

of the Islamic Republic explicitly, and more so than his predecessors, in the language of the United Nations. Rather than espousing the position of the Islamic Republic based on the trajectories discussed above, Zarif—in a similar fashion to WAVE—presents an institutional/organisational solution for the region which excludes the military presence of the United States. Whereas WAVE can be understood as an alternative to the United States' supposed War on Terror, HOPE is presented as a step towards forging an order in the Persian Gulf whose security, stability and prosperity is in the hands of its inhabitants. Emphasis in international law is particularly important as is evident his Financial Times article two months later when he argued that:

> For too long now there has been mistrust, acrimony and conflict in the community around the Strait of Hormuz. For too long, states have armed themselves and invaded, bombed or embargoed each other. For too long, foreign forces have come to our region to project their power, not to protect our people. And for too long our peoples have suffered. We can, collectively, choose to remain on this path of instability and tension, and await the unknown. Or, we can instead choose peace, security, stability and prosperity for all … The UN was given a mandate in 1987 to furnish the necessary umbrella for such a regional arrangement. Iran is trying to provide a solution to what appears — but in fact is not — an intractable problem. There are competing interests and ideologies, disparities in size, resources and capabilities, and distrust among the states most affected by developments in the area: Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.[779]

Whereas the objectives of forging a new regional order free from foreign domination is a consistent feature of State Resistance, both by the pre-revolutionary opposition and the post-revolutionary establishments, the means by which this ought to be achieved, namely worldmaking, appears to be characteristic of the Rouhani administration. The same applies to Islamic unity, which used to be the key aspect of all calls for cooperation between Iran and its neighbours by the protagonists of resistance discussed since the 1950s, with the Rouhani administration shifting the focus towards immediate material needs and concerns of the Persian Gulf. In answer to Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain's negative

[779] FT.com. 2019. *Strait of Hormuz Region Can Find Its Own Solution*. Online: <https://www.ft.com/content/10c0ab1a-eab1-11e9-aefb-a946d2463e4b> Accessed on 19 July 2021.

response to HOPE, Zarif stressed material gains, rather than religious commonalities, when warning them that:

> From 1985 we put on the table suggestions for peace, and unfortunately none of them have been taken seriously by those countries in the region who hope that they can pay for their security. And the United States is very much willing to sell them all the arms. But is the U.S. capable of providing them protection? I don't think so. I think protection cannot be bought from outside. I think protection should be gained through interaction in the region. And we are prepared to do that.[780]

While the outcomes of the Rouhani administrations multilateral endeavours are beyond the scope of this thesis, the discourse of multilateral diplomacy marks a shift for State Resistance, not with regards to its objectives, but through its discourse. While most of the discourses studied thus far have been involved with envisioning and espousing ideal, as well as challenging Western hegemony and domination through revisionism, the government of hope and moderation sought to engage in worldmaking by reforming the international system which they believed was moving beyond great power politics. Understanding legitimacy to be a key enabling and constraining factor of international politics, the Rouhani administration sought to attain international legitimacy for its own worldmaking efforts, while also seeking to establish standards for legitimacy that would constrain, and in the context of West Asia, what the establishment perceived to be sources of domination and injustice. Nevertheless, at the same time as Iran's elected officials were shifting towards multilateral diplomacy, a parallel trend of resistance was also being espoused in the form of the Islamic Resistance, which reflects the other side of the coin of worldmaking, namely its military dimension.

[780] CFR.org. 2020. *A Conversation with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif of Iran*. Online: <https://www.cfr.org/event/conversation-foreign-minister-mohammad-javad-zarif-iran> Accessed on 19 July 2021.

Islamic Resistance

On 7 August 1979, in the middle of the first Ramadan after the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini announced that the last Friday of the holy month should be known as 'Jerusalem Day' (*ruz-e Qods*) where Muslims across the world would take part in 'a ceremony of international solidarity of Muslims' in support of the Palestinian resistance.[781] For the subsequent 42 Ramadan, supporters loyal to the establishment of the Islamic Republic and the Palestinian cause have taken part in rallies across the world expressing their solidarity with the Palestinian resistance. Whilst predominantly a symbolic move by the first Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the initial designation of Jerusalem Day in 1979 marks the first major discursive move in which the global *and* particularistic dimensions of Iranian oppositional resistance politics discussed in Chapter 2 would gradually begin to translate into a specific establishment discourse of resistance. Whereas particularistic discourses of Muslim solidarity and resistance are predictable consequences of the Islamic Republic's politico-cultural identity that has been present throughout this Chapter, one particular discourse that is separable from the broader vocabulary of the establishment and is traceable back to the trajectory within which Jerusalem Day can be situated is the discourse of Islamic Resistance (*moqāvemat-e Eslāmi*) that the establishment espouses in their attempt to forge a new independent, regional order that ensures justice and non-domination.

While earlier discourses of Muslim solidarity and resistance following the designation of Jerusalem Day in 1979 emerged under the banner of 'exporting the revolution' (*sodur-e enqelāb*) that were discussed in Chapter 2 could appropriately be labelled as discourses of Islamic Resistance, *the* discourse of Islamic Resistance studied here

[781] Khomeini, Ruhollah. 1389/2010-2011. *Sahifeh-ye Emām*. Vol. 9 Tehran: Tanzim va Nashr-e Emām Khomeini. p. 267.

differs as it is specifically directed against the Zionist occupation of Palestine and the United States and its allies' military involvement in the region. Thus, the discourse of Islamic Resistance focuses on the stages that succeeded the initial revolutionary slogans of exporting the values and ideas of the Islamic Republic where the establishment would perform resistance with its allies who agreed with or had accepted or agreed with a significant part of those values and objectives on an international level and are striving towards realising them in the region. Moreover, the particularistic discourses of the establishment discussed thus far in this Chapter have been mostly limited calls for increased cooperation with Muslim majority states primarily on a governmental level. A notable discourse that shares many similarities with Iran's rendition of Islamic Resistance is perhaps the 1990s conceptualisation of political leadership through *omm al qorrā*, as it provides a theoretical framework for a particular politics of defiance where the Iranian establishment spearheads and propagates a particular alliance and set of objectives for West Asia.

Over the past 30 years however, simultaneous to the Islamic Republic's four presidential administrations' calls for pragmatism for reconstruction of the post-war state, 'dialogue among civilisations' to protect Iran's true independence and forge a more equitable world order, radical revisionism that sought to challenge and expose the unjust nature of Western powers and reform the United Nations to achieve international justice, and worldmaking through multilateral diplomacy in order to prevent foreign domination and ensure independence of Iran and the region, the discourse of Islamic Resistance has gained and continues to gain momentum even today. Reflective of the 'other', more violent side of politics of defiance which was discussed in Chapter 1, Islamic Resistance and its more common contemporary iteration, the Axis of Resistance (*mehvar-e moqāvemat*) has therefore also attracted substantial interest from media and policy makers, though

surprisingly, only limited attention in academia.[782] Where discussed, the Islamic Resistance—like most discussions on the Islamic Republic's resistance politics—is discussed within the rather unsophisticated frameworks of terrorism, fundamentalism, critiqued in Chapter 1 of this thesis, or Shia sectarianism, and analysed as a phenomenon limited to the IRGC.[783]

Contending these dominant understandings of Iran's Islamic Resistance, this section will demonstrate that the discourse is not limited to Shia forces in the region, nor is it only a military discourse propagated by the IRGC. Instead, this section will demonstrate that Islamic Resistance ought to be largely understood as a classic (primary) resistance discourse in the sense that it seeks to expel what the Islamic Republic understands to be a foreign occupation of Muslim territory. However, it is also a worldmaking discourse in the sense that the project goes beyond ideas of national independence and seeks to reshape the regional order in order to bring an end to foreign domination and restore justice through what the establishment understands to be an increasingly powerful Islamic Republic. Whilst certainly more dependent on military developments and individuals than other discourses studied thus far, Islamic Resistance still needs to be detached from the politicised and security-oriented lens that dominates the study of post-revolutionary Iran and to include the broader political and cultural establishment of the state, as it is reflective of Iran's attempt to forge a new political, cultural, and military order in West Asia. Unlike dialogue among civilisations and Multilateral Diplomacy , the Islamic Resistance is largely limits itself to regional politics and does not always constrain or frame its practices within normative international order,

[782] Only reserved to brief mentions, see for example: Ostovar. *Vanguard of the Imam. p*. 218; Hunter. *Iran's Foreign Policy*. p. 209*;* Akbarzadeh, Shahram. "The sectarian divide in Iran-Saudi Relations", in Zaccara, Luciano (ed.) *Foreign Policy of Iran under President Hassan Rouhani's First Term (2013–2017)*. Singapore: Springer. pp. 87-106. p. 100.
[783] Abedin, Mahan. 2019. *Iran Resurgent: The Rise and Rise of the Shia State*. London: Hurst. p. 7.

but instead seeks to shape a world in accordance with the more particularistic dimensions of State Resistance discussed thus far.

While the most popular and widely covered aspect of the Islamic Resistance is its military dimension, the focus of this section will be on its intellectual dimensions as it seeks to cover the critical junctures of its intellectual history. In doing so, notable individuals involved in the former who have been the focus of both media and scholarship on the Islamic Resistance might be excluded here due to their role in reproducing rather than contributing to changes in its discursive evolution. It will do so by first accounting for the emergence of the Islamic Resistance in the Iranian establishment's resistance discourse and demonstrating how it emerged in relation to geopolitical developments in the Levant, specifically the Israeli occupation of Palestine and Lebanon. Having done so, it will demonstrate the discursive impact of Palestinian and Lebanese resistance in Iranian establishment promulgations of resistance and argue that the alliance espoused by the Iranian establishment is discernibly Islamic, rather than Shia-sectarian which is often assumed. Further, this section will demonstrate that while the broad objectives of the Islamic Resistance have remained consistent, the target of its resistance has transformed from being limited to the United States and Israel in the Levant, to including not only their allies in the Persian Gulf, notably Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, but also violent non-state actors like Daesh. The same applies with regards to the alliance, which started with Islamic Jihad, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Syrian government in the Levant, but has broadened to include the Iraqi government, and the Defenders of the Shrines (*modāfe'ān-e haram*) in Iraq and Syria, and the Ansarullah Brigade in Yemen.

The concept of Islamic Resistance itself is likely to have been a Levantine influence on Iranian politics during the late 1980s. While the concept was used sporadically when discussing Lebanese and Palestinian resistance to the Zionist occupation, but also Afghan

resistance to the Soviet invasion throughout the 1980s,[784] the concept appears increasingly in publications from early 1988 onwards in relation to discussions about the Lebanese resistance, roughly at the same time that the Islamic Resistance Movement (*harekat al-muqāwamā al-islāmiyyah),* better known as Hamas, began to take shape in Palestine.[785] In the Iranian context, *Pāsdar-e Eslām* became a key outlet through which the discourse of Islamic Resistance would be espoused, notably in a series of articles written by Hossein al-Shami, Hezbollah's Chief Representative in Iran. In these articles, those resisting the Israeli invasion and occupation were labelled the Islamic Resistance.[786] As the concept grew increasingly popular with this particular meaning, reaching the highest echelons of the Iranian establishment, it became increasingly clear that the Islamic Resistance as understood by the establishment was not limited to Israel, but also included the United States.[787] For example, on 12 August 1993**,** Ayatollah Khamenei informed Hezbollah's recently appointed Secretary General, Hojjatoleslam Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, in Tehran that Israeli aggression will only strengthen the Islamic Resistance against the 'collective conspiracies of the United States and Israel.'[788]

The emergence of this discourse discerning a particular alliance in the Levant is reflective of two aspects worth emphasising. Firstly, rather than sectarian, the discourse of Islamic Resistance is Islamic, something that has been consistently reiterated for decades by

[784] See for example: FBIS-NES Daily Report. Near East & South Asia/Tehran Domestic Service. 1984. "Hashemi-Rafsanjani on War Situation, Khark", 4 March 1984.; FBIS-SAS Daily Report. SOUTH ASIA/IRNA. 1985. "Velayati on Israeli Occupation of South Lebanon", 3 March 1985.
[785] Baconi, Tareq. 2018. *Hamas Contained: the rise and pacification of Palestinian resistance*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. p. 1.
[786] *Pāsdār-e Eslām* No.64 Farvardin 1366/March-April 1987. pp. 40-43; No.65 Ordibehesht/April-May 1987. pp. 36-38; No.66 Khordād 1366/May-June 1987. pp. 37-39. p. 58.
[787] The twofold focus on the United States and Israel had been present in Hezbollah's political discourse from the very beginning, as is evident in their first manifesto from 1985, titled '*Hezbollah's Open Letter Addressed to the Oppressed in Lebanon and the World'* where they argue that Israel is 'the spearhead of America in our Islamic world', see Alagha, Joseph. 2011. *Hizbullah's Documents, From The 1985 Open Letter to the 2009 Manifesto,* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. p. 48.
[788] Khamenei.ir. 1372/1993. *didār-e dabir-e koll-e jonbesh-e hezbollāh-e Lobnān bā rahbar-e enqelāb*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/news-content?id=9122> Accessed on 24 July 2021.

various high ranking officials involved in it.[789] The important role of Islam as the common identifier of the resistance alliance was stressed from the very beginning, such as in 1990 when co-founder of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Iran's former Ambassador to Syria, Hojjatoleslam Sayyed Ali Akbar Mohtashamipour reiterated that the Palestinian Liberation Organisation ought to 'put an end to its compromising policies with the United States and the Zionist enemy' since 'the liberation of Palestine can be achieved only through the path of God'.[790] Considering the prominent role of Syria in contemporary discussions on the Axis of Resistance, which we will return to later, it is worth noting that until the Syrian War of 2011, Syria was mostly framed in strategic terms as a reliable partner supporting the project when discussing the Islamic Resistance.[791]

Secondly, the objective of the Islamic resistance is also worth emphasising considering the dominant discourses of 'proxy wars', Iranian expansionism and 'destabilising efforts', as it was explicitly framed in the language of territorial integrity from the very beginning. For example, Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati stressed in 1996 that 'the Syrians agree with us that resistance should continue until the end of occupation' and that Lebanon which is an 'independent state' has the 'right to continue their resistance as long as the Israelis are occupying their land and committing aggression against the country'.[792] Similarly, Speaker of Majles, Nateq Nuri in his Jerusalem Day speech in 1996

[789] See for example: Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi in 1999 in *Ma'refat*, No. 31 Āzar-Dey 1378/November-Desember 1999; Velayati, Ali Akbar. 1384/2005 "Shi'ayān-e mantaqeh: tahlili az moqe'iyat-e siyāsi va rāh-hā-yeh hefāzāt az ānhā", *Shi'e shenāsi, 9*. pp. 205-224; Rouhani, Hassan. 1387/2008-2009. "goftemān: Ruykard-hā-ye howzeh-hā-ye 'elmiyeh va bāyestegi-hā-ye novin". *Nashriyeh-ye rahbord*. No. 49. pp. 5-26. p. 22; Khamenei.ir 1394/2015. *Bayānāt dar didār azā-ye majma'-e jahāni-ye ahl-e beyt aleyhom salām va etehādiyeh-ye radio va televizion-e Eslāmi*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=30524> Accessed on 17 September 2021; Hossein Amirabdollahian in Dolat.ir 1394/2015. *Amirabdollāhiyan: Irān az mehvar-e moqāvemat hemāyat mikonad, hezbollāh zinat-e moqāvemat ast*. Online: <https://dolat.ir/detail/265433> Accessed on 17 September 2021.

[790] FBIS-NES Daily Report. Near East & South Asia/Keyhan. 1990. "Mohtashemi Discusses Jewish Immigration Issue", 12 February 1990.

[791] See for example: Sheikholeslam. *Qarār nabud mājerāh-ye mak fārleyn resāneh-i shavad*. p. 239

[792] FBIS-NES Daily Report. Near East & South Asia/Paris Radio Monte Carlo. 1996. "Habibi, Velayati to Visit Syria "Shortly"", 3 January 1996.

stated that the United States ought to be aware of Iran's desire to 'support and defend the Islamic resistance' since 'they seek justice, because they plan to kick out the oppressor and send them back to their own homes.'[793] Thus, by the 1990s, the Islamic Resistance appears to be a combination of the religious movements of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Hamas in Palestine, Hezbollah and Amal in Lebanon, and the Syrian Government in opposing Israel and its military occupation of the aforementioned countries. Importantly, resistance against Israel's military occupation is as old as the regime itself, but what appears to be the difference from the establishment point of view—in line with the revolutionaries discussed in Chapter 2—is the Islamic character of the emerging forces of resistance. For example, Mohtashamipour argues that in Palestine, despite 'decades of self-sacrifice' and 'the death of thousands of fighters and holy warriors' it was only with the:

> Unparalleled and eternal power of God of the Palestinian nation in the form of the popular (*mardomi*) intifada … were they able to impose the first tangible defeats inside occupied Palestine against Zionist leaders and society.[794]

In other words, Mohtashamipour follows the classic revolutionary position on resistance being dependent on Islam to succeed when arguing that it was the Palestinian people's return to Islam which made victories against Israel possible. With the Second Intifada reflective of increasingly successful Islamic Resistance in Palestine, perhaps even more notable events in Lebanon would also shape the discourse of Islamic Resistance within the establishment. As mentioned in Part 2 of this Chapter, the Israeli withdrawal from large parts of South Lebanon in 2000 and the 33 Day War in 2006 where Israel renounced its stated objective of destroying Hezbollah, constituted two key episodes that would increase Iran's perception of power and shape the perception of the worldmaking alliance it was engaged in under the banner of Islamic Resistance.

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[793] FBIS-NES Daily Report. Near East & South Asia/Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network. 1996. "Iran: Nateq-Nuri Addresses Jerusalem Day Rally", 16 February 1996.
[794] Mohtashami, Sayyed Ali Akbar. 1382/2004. ""chālesh-hā-ye khāvarmiāneh va rāhkār-hā-ye moqābeleh bā ān" Nashriyeh *Ruydād-hā va tahlil-hā*. (177). pp. 57-59. p. 59.

According to Ayatollah Khamenei, the 2000 withdrawal was not the final victory of the Islamic Resistance and stressed that 'the resistance' ought to continue 'as long as Israel exists'.[795] For *Pāsdār-e Eslām*, the withdrawal also meant that the geopolitical landscape had altered significantly:

> This blow which defeated the undefeatable army of Israel, in its own way proved the defeat of Israel's security doctrine (*nazariyeh-ye amniyati*) and its deterrence capabilities and played an important role in mobilising various Palestinian groups around the Axis of Resistance (*mehvar-e moqāvemat*).[796]

Seeing Israel's withdrawal as the beginning of the end of Israeli military supremacy in the region, Israel's inability to achieve its stated objective of eliminating Hezbollah during the July 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, known as the 33 Day War (*jang-e si-o se ruzeh*) in Iran,[797] appears to have reinforced this perception. For example, Iran's Ambassador to Syria, Mohammad Reza Sheybani argued that the war demonstrated that:

> Today Israel cannot strike its targets with precision, nor can it remain in a war for an extended period of time[.] it will not be safe inside occupied Palestine (*felestin-e eshghāli*) and the depth of the Zionist regime is struck with the missiles of The Resistance. These three elements (*'onsor*) are the factors changing the previous balance [of power]; meaning that the military domination and predominance of the Zionist regime in the region has disappeared.[798]

The efforts and relative success of the Islamic Resistance is therefore immediately transposed into the establishment's self-understanding of its own power relations, reflecting another aspect of the broader understanding of an increasingly powerful Islamic Republic that has been discussed throughout this Chapter. The extent to which Iran saw developments in the Levant linked to itself is well reflected in the words of the former Deputy Foreign

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[795] Khamenei.ir 1379/2000. *didār-e emil lahoud ra'is-e jomhur-e Lobnān bā rahbar-e enqelab*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/news-content?id=11505> Accessed on 26 July 2021.
[796] *Pāsdār-e Eslām* No.252 Āzar 1381/November-December 2002. p. 19.
[797] The choice of names for Israel's wars against Iran's allies in the Levant appears to attempt to convey an understanding of Israeli decline following the Six-Day War, where emphasis is put on the fact that Israel's wars are becoming longer, and this is understood as being reflective of their military decline. In the words of Sheybani 'Israel started a war they though would finish within six days' but instead had to fight for 33 days, see: Sheybani, Mohammad Reza. 2014. *Mājerāh-ye jang-e 33 ruzeh,* in Ruzitaleb, Mohammad Hassan, and Mohammad Rahmani (eds.). "Tārīkh-e shafāhī-ye siyāsat-e khārejeh-ye jomhuri-ye Eslāmi-ye Irān" Tehran: Markaz-e asnād-e enqelāb-e Eslāmi. pp. 163-184. p. 171. This trend has continued up until today, with the 22-Day War in 2008-9, 12-Day War in 2021 in Gaza.
[798] Sheybani. *Mājerāh-ye jang-e 33 ruzeh*. p. 173.

Minister and Ambassador to Syria, Hossein Sheikholeslam who stressed that Iran is 'inseparable' from Hezbollah as they constitute 'one line, one thought, and one front.'[799]

However, the statements above are also reflective of another development related to Islamic Resistance that took place at the turn of the 21st century; namely another round of discursive synthesis and transformation between Iran and the Levant, which saw Iran adopting a label used by its Palestinian and Syrian allies to describe the regional alliance that constituted the Islamic Resistance; namely the 'Axis of Resistance' (*mehvar-e moqāvemat*), which would become the dominant name used to describe its regional alliance especially following the war in Syria from 2011 onwards.[800]

Besides the emergence of the Axis of Resistance, the word resistance (*moqāvemat)* itself underwent a notable transformation during the same period, as it no longer functioned exclusively as an adjective (*moqāvemati*), or as an attributive noun (*moqāvemat*), qualifying some other term such as 'national resistance' (*moqāvemat-e melli*). This is primarily how resistance has been used by groups and individuals discussed thus far in this thesis, such as the National Resistance Movement (*nehzat-e moqāvemat-e melli)* studied in Chapter 2. However, as I demonstrated in Chapter 2, the word 'resistance' in that case was adopted from the French resistance, and their discourse of resistance was predominantly limited to primary resistance. Other leftist organisations who mostly fall out of the scope of this thesis also used resistance in their discourses but appear to have directly adopted the terminology from the Communist International's discourse of resistance and liberation.[801]

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[799] Sheikholeslam, Hossein. 2014. *Qarār nabud mājerāh-ye mak fārleyn resāneh-i shavad, Mehdi Hāshemi hameh chiz rā beham rikht,* in Ruzitaleb, Moḥammad Ḥassan, and Mohammad Raḥmani (eds.). "Tārīkh-e shafāhī-ye siyāsat-e khārejeh-ye jomhuri-ye Eslāmi-ye Irān" Tehran: Markaz-e asnād-e enqelāb-e Eslāmi. pp. 185-245. p. 229.

[800] The concept appears to have been first used by a Libyan newspaper in February 2002, see: Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily, February 12, 2002. Also used by Iran's allies a few months later, see: IRNA.ir. 1381/2002. *"Fatah-e entefāzā": Irān, suriye Lobnān mehvar-e moqāvemat-e ommat-e 'arab va mosalmān hastand*. Online: <https://www.irna.ir/news/5567175> Accessed on 24 July 2021.

[801] While the genealogy of resistance in Palestine falls outside of the scope of this thesis, it is worth noting that due there is a chance that the Palestinians themselves adopted 'resistance' from the Communist International

However, Levantine influences appear to have enabled the word to function as a noun in its own right in Iranian discourse, similar to the way that Hezbollah refers to its particular political project in the Lebanese context as 'The Resistance' (*al-muqāwamah).*[802] This marks a semantic shift in the Persian language in general, but for the Islamic Resistance in particular, which has by this point matured to demarcate a particular coalition and set of convictions that informs the establishment's resistance and worldmaking project. As such, from 2006 onwards we see the noun becoming solidified, and able to exist as a free-standing entity, rather than as a qualifier for other concepts or entities, as is apparent in Raouf-Sheybani's quote above, or in Rafsanjani's televised discussion with Egyptian theologian Yusuf al-Qardawi on Al Jazeera in 2007, where he argued that the outcome of the 33 Day War was 'also the victory of the resistance in all Islamic countries (*piruzi-ye moqāvemat-e hameh keshvar-hā-ye Eslāmi).*'[803]

These discursive developments would gain increased currency following the post-2011 'Arab Spring' uprisings in West Asia and North Africa, understood in Iran as a continuation of the Islamic Awakening (*bidāri-ye Eslāmi*), a historical trajectory within which the establishment also situates the Islamic Revolution.[804] While the establishment was largely supportive of uprisings in most of the countries, the uprising and subsequent war in Syria was understood to be a separate phenomenon from the Arab countries' popular uprisings against their rulers. In Iran, the uprising and instability in Syria was immediately understood as a conspiracy aimed at weakening the Axis of Resistance, as explained by Ayatollah Khamenei on 30 June 2011 shortly after the armed opposition gained momentum:

> The oppressed nation of Bahrain is like the nation of Egypt, it is like the nation of Tunisia, it is like the nation of Yemen. There, the case is the same. It does not make sense to separate them … Today, the United States seeking to replicate what has taken place in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen,

due to their close relationship with the Soviet Union, and that it then entered the vocabulary of religious resistance groups whose understanding of resistance became hegemonic.

[802]Saad Ghorayeb, Amal. 2002. *Hizbu'llah: Politics and Religion*. London: Pluto Press. p. 53; pp. 116-117.

[803] *Meyghāt-e hajj* No.59 Bahār 1386/Spring 2007. p. 134.

[804] Khamenei.ir. 1394/2015. *Bayānāt dar didār-e mas'ulān-e nezām va sofarā-ye keshvar-hā-ye Eslāmi*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=29736> Accessed on 24 July 2021.

> Libya, and the like, has realised that it is difficult to cause trouble in Syria, which is in the line of resistance (*khat-e moqāvemat*). The nature of the issue in Syria is different from the nature of the issue in those countries. In those countries, the movement was anti-American and anti-Zionist, but in Syria the hand of the United States is apparent and conspicuous.[805]

For Ayatollah Khamenei, the objective of the Syrian insurgency was to 'deal a blow to the line of resistance in the region' since 'Syria supports the Palestinian resistance and the Islamic Resistance of Lebanon.'[806] This sentiment was echoed across the establishment, with Foreign Minister Salehi claiming that 'Syria is the strongest link in the chain that is the Axis of Resistance in the region',[807] and according to the Senior Advisor to the General Command of the IRGC, Mohammad Hossein Safar Herandi, the war was a natural next step for the enemies of the Axis of Resistance, since:

> Today, the Zionist regime is engaged [militarily] on the borders of the occupied territories, and the slogan of from the Euphrates to the Nile has become a dream and myth, in the way that the leaders of this usurping regime consider the 33 Day War with Hezbollah the first war between Iran and Israel and acknowledge that they were defeated … Since the domineering order does not have the power to confront the Islamic Republic, it is trying to inflict damage on the Axis of Resistance.[808]

Therefore, by 2011, the Islamic Resistance is increasingly propagated as the Axis of Resistance, possible due to secular Syria's augmented role in the alliance consisting of Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria to challenge American and Israeli domination and occupation in the Levant.[809] While the summer of 2012 saw the Justice-Seekers hand over power to the proponents of multilateral diplomacy, Deputy Foreign Minister for the Middle East and

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[805] Khamenei.ir. 1390/2011. *Bayānāt dar didār-e mas'ulān-e nezām dar ruz-e eyd-e ma'bas*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=12834> Accessed on 24 July 2021.
[806] Khamenei.ir. 1390/2012. *Didār-e dabir-e kolle jahād-e Eslāmi-ye felestin bā rahbar-e enqelab*. Online: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/news-content?id=18890> Accessed on 24 July 2021.
[807] IRNA.ir. 1390/2012. *Sālehi: suriyeh qodratmandtarin halqeh-ye moqāvemat dar mantaqeh ast*. Online: <https://www.irna.ir/news/30795934/> Accessed on 24 July 2021.
[808] IRNA.ir. 1390/2011. *Moshāver-e 'āli-ye farmāndehi-ye koll-e sepāh: fetnegarān jor'at hozur-e khiyābān nadārand*. Online: <https://www.irna.ir/news/7115478/> Accessed on 24 July 2021.
[809] It is worth noting that this trend is not without its exceptions, with for example Ahmadinejad's Deputy Vice President, Mohammad Reza Rahimi once claimed that North Korea was a part of the Axis of Resistance, see: Dolat.ir. 1391/2012. *Rahimi dar didār-e ra'is-e majma'-e 'āli-ye jomhuri-ye khalq-e Koreh-ye Shomali: Irān va Koreh-ye Shomali har do dar mehvar-e moqāvemat va mobārezeh bā emperiālism qarār dārand*. Online: <https://dolat.ir/detail/219561> Accessed on 27 June 2020, while head of the Popular Mobilisation Forces, Mohammad Reza Naqdi argued following the electoral victory of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt that the country was also a part of the Axis of Resistance, see: IRNA.ir. 1392/2013. S*ardār Naqdi: nābudi-ye esrā'il az noqāt-e moshtarek-e mosalmānān-e jahān ast*. Online: <https://www.irna.ir/news/80759241z Accessed on 24 July 2021.

North Africa, Hossein Amirabdollahian stressed that 'the change in administration and president in the Islamic republic of Iran, will not change our policy regarding that country [Syria] and in this strategic view, [we] will [continue to] support Syria as the axis of resistance.'[810] While this certainly remained true, the scope and target of the Islamic Resistance would transform significantly due to external developments, such as the rise of Daesh in 2014-2015 and the Western-backed Saudi-Emirati invasion of Yemen in 2015.

In a similar vein to how the war in Syria was understood to be an American-Israeli conspiracy against the Axis of Resistance, the rise of Daesh and its military advancements and territorial conquests in Iraq and Syria at the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015 would largely be understood as a part of this broader pattern of seeking to undermine the Axis of Resistance which was finding itself at the height of its power, as noted by Majles Speaker Ali Larijani after a meeting with Palestinian members of the Resistance in Lebanon:

> We said from the very beginning that the issue of Syria is an unnatural [case of] adventurism (*yek mājerā-juyi-ye gheyr-e tabiʿi*). If they are after reform, why are they doing it with guns and tanks … Afterwards Daesh attacked Iraq, where the issue was not democracy, so the situation is something else.[811]

The emergence of Daesh also sees the rise of another partner to the Axis of Resistance, namely the Defenders of the Shrines (*modāfeʿān-e haram)*, which is the name given to the Shia Muslim volunteers who enlisted to fight Daesh and protect the Shia shrines in Iraq and Syria. Spearheaded by the IRGC, the broader narrative of the Islamic Resistance remained despite these developments, as Daesh was consistently linked to Israel, as reflected when Major General Mostafa Izadi argued that Israel seeks to destroy the Axis of Resistance through Daesh but is being resisted by Iran and the defenders of the shrines 'to preserve the

[810] Dolat.ir 1392/2013. *Amirabdollāhiyān: gharb bā tahvil-e selāh be terrorist-hā dar suriyeh mas'ul-e jenāiyat aleyhe mardom-e in keshvar ast*. <http://dolat.ir/detail/228111> Accessed on 24 July 2021.
[811] Irna.ir. 1393/2014. *Lārijāni: barāye āzādi-ye felestin bāyad howl-e mehvar-e moqāvemat jam' shod*. Online: <https://www.irna.ir/news/81435415> Accessed on 24 July 2021.

Axis of Resistance'.[812] Similarly, Amirabdollahian, who remained in his position during the first term of the Rouhani administration, argued that the main objective of the 'extremist and terrorist tendency is to plunder Muslim wealth and destroy the Axis of Resistance against Israel', calling on Saudi Arabia to support The Resistance rather than being a 'disgrace to the Islamic world' by bombing Yemen on Jerusalem Day of 2015.[813] The gradual inclusion of Saudi Arabia as the target of establishment rhetoric due to the Saudi-Emirati invasion of Yemen also expanded the scope of the resistance, as the establishment appears to identify the emergence of a triangle consisting of Israel, the United States and Saudi Arabia in the region from the spring of 2015.

The expansion of the scope and alliance of the Axis of Resistance beyond the Levant also resulted in a re-emphasis on a key aspect of the Islamic Resistance from the 1990s, namely an increased focus on territorial integrity. In the words of Head of the Expediency Discernment Council, Mohsen Rezaei in May 2015:

> It has been seventy years in the central Islamic region [West Asia], since irridentism (*marzshekani*) emerged: first the Zionists, then Saddam, and afterwards the Takfiris [Daesh] are pursuing this. And now the Al-Saud rulers are seeking to adjust the borders in the region … the position of Iran with regards to these conspiracies is that we say that the current borders and integrity of the countries has to be supported. Simultaneous to the front of this aggression, the Resistance Front took shape in the region. The objective of the Resistance Front is to respect the territorial integrity of the countries and prevent foreign intervention.[814]

A few weeks later, Ayatollah Khamenei presented a similar line of argument defending the resistance movements in the region that constitute the Axis of Resistance, comparing their efforts to the French Resistance during World War Two.[815] This re-emphasis on territorial integrity in West Asia also resulted in the scope of the alliance expanding to also include Iraq and Yemen, and even in some instances, Bahrain, in speeches

[812] Irna.ir. 1395/2016. *Sarlashkar Izadi: niru-hā-ye mosallah, emruz resālat-e 'azim-tari nesbat be dowran-e defā'-e moqaddas bar 'ohdeh dārand*. Online: <https://www.irna.ir/news/82244545> Accessed on 24 July 2021.
[813] Irna.ir. 1394/2015. *Amirabdollāhiyan: hamleh-ye so'udi-hā beh yaman dar ruz-e qods māyeh-ye sharmsāri-ye jahān-e Eslām ast*. Online: <https://www.irna.ir/news/81678063> Accessed on 24 July 2021.
[814] Irna.ir. 1394/2015. *Rezāyi: 'arabestān-e so'udi, parcham dār-e marz shekani dar mantaqeh ast*. Online: <https://www.irna.ir/news/81607456/> Accessed on 24 July 2021.
[815] Khamenei.ir. 1394/2015. *Bayānā dar didār-e mas'ulan-e nezām va sofarāye keshvar-hā-yeh Eslāmi*.

and statements about the Axis of Resistance.[816] A notable example can be seen in IRGC Commander Sayyed Yahya Rahim Safavi claiming that Ayatollah Khamenei is not only the Commander-in-Chief of Iran, but also the 'commander of the defence of the Islamic lands in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Yemen and Bahrain.'[817] It is worth noting the limits of this expansion, that the regional and particularistic character of the alliance remained important, with cooperation with Russia being justified due to their support for the objectives of the Axis of Resistance in Syria, often accompanied with assertions that Russia is not a member of it, but an ally.[818]

Therefore, having emerged in the Levant, the Islamic Resistance today is propagated as a wide-ranging inter-sectarian resistance movement in the strict sense that seeks to achieve one of the key objectives of the Islamic Republic's primary resistance discourse that were achieved domestically following the end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988, namely expelling foreign military presence. Elevating its primary resistance to the regional level, this worldmaking endeavour in which the Islamic Republic seeks to bring an end to the Zionist occupation of Palestine and the United States' military presence in West Asian states constitutes a key trend in the discourse of State Resistance that has evolved and remained dominant in the establishment discourse independently of various presidencies and their respective approaches for the past three decades.

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[816] Irna.ir. 1394/2015. *Velāyati: mehvar-e moqāvemat az beyn nemiravad/eqtedār-e defā'I va amniyati-ye jelowtar az sannad-e cheshm andāz*. Online: <https://www.irna.ir/news/81707352> Accessed on 24 July 2021; Irna.ir. 1394/2015. *vazir-e defā': dowlat ehtemām-e jeddi beh bakhsh-e defā'I dārad*. Online: <https://www.irna.ir/news/81729833> Accessed on 24 July 2021.

[817] Khabaronline.ir. 1398/2019. *Revāyat-e sarlashkar safavi az talāsh-e hāshemi barāye edghām-e artesh va sepāh/rahbari farmudand agar janggi dar khalij-e fars rokh dadah khodam bar shoma farmāndehi khāham kard*. Online: <https://www.khabaronline.ir/amp/1267684> Accessed on 24 July 2021.

[818] Irna.ir. 1391/2012. *Mo'āven-e vazir-e khārejeh: didgāh-hā-ye rāhbordi-ye rusiyeh va tehrān dar more-e suriyeh hamkhun ast*. Online: <https://www.irna.ir/news/82244545> Accessed on 24 July 2021.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

As this conclusion is being written in Tehran during the autumn of 2021, key developments are taking place for State Resistance that have not and cannot be covered in this thesis. The 13th presidential administration led by President Hojjatoleslam Ebrahim Raisi has successfully appointed a key figure for the Islamic Republic's State Resistance, Hossein Amirabdollahian, as Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran. At a time where United States' withdrawal from large parts of the West Asia is edging closer, Amirabdollahian, a diplomat who rose through the ranks of the foreign ministry while also having significant experience with the Axis of Resistance is likely to head the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during a crucial period in the history of State Resistance as one of its key objectives is being achieved. All indicators suggest that the historical period that will succeed this thesis is likely to be as significant for State Resistance as the past that is covered in it.

The historical period in modern Iranian history that has been the focus of this thesis started with Ayatollah Modarres' call for Iranian neutrality in the Majles in 1921 ended with the end of Islamic Republic's 12th presidential administration in August 2021. In writing the history of Iran's century of defiance, this thesis has sought to demonstrate the extent to which State Resistance is a common political heritage shared across the pre-revolutionary opposition's idiosyncratic political landscape, and the extent to which this characteristic is still visible in the establishment of the Islamic Republic's contemporary propagation of resistance politics. State Resistance, here understood as an intersubjectivity that shapes a particular politics of defiance where the subaltern struggles for justice, was born out of the country's perceived need to survive but transcended these origins to become an expression of the pursuit of true independence, justice, and non-domination. In other words, Iran's century of defiance was a journey that started with the struggle for survival and culminated

in a worldmaking project. Studied from the perspective of intellectual history, this thesis has hopefully contributed with at least an alternative to existing approaches that are blighted by politicisation, polemics, and weak scholarship.

Seeking to avoid the common pitfalls and shortcomings common to the contemporary study of the non-western world in general, but of Iranian studies in particular, this thesis identified discourses around the ideas of neutralism and political independence as the starting point for State Resistance, discourses in which the strategies of the Qajar and Pahlavi monarchies were challenged by former constitutional revolutionaries turned parliamentarians in the first half of the 20th century. Starting with Modarres' negative balancing (*movāzeneh-ye 'adami),* this discourse was later elevated to a state policy during Mosaddeq's brief premiership (1950-1953) in the name of negative equilibrium (*movāzeneh-ye manfi*) as Iran sought to assert its political and economic independence from the British empire and an increasingly assertive Soviet Union. During Mosaddeq's premiership, his colleagues began to theorise more sophisticated and comprehensive ideas of neutralism that entered the realm of non-alignment, most notably Khalil Maleki's theory of the third force (*niru-ye sevvom),* where the pursuit of justice was separated into two parts, the third force in general (*niru-ye sevvom be ma'nā-ye 'amam*) on one hand, and the third force in particular (*niru-ye sevvom be ma'nā-ye 'akhas*), the former being the general anti-imperial struggle for independence and neutrality, and the expression of solidarity with countries in a similar position, while the latter was a domestically oriented campaign for achieving an ideal social order.

At the same time that the National Front was engaging and theorising Iran's politics of resistance, significant developments were taking place underground, often in opposition to the National Front's policies. The most notable example covered here was The Devotees of Islam's (*Fadāʾiyān-e Eslām)* populistic discourses that emphasised a total rejection of

both East and West, whilst emphasising the need for Muslim solidarity, rather than the non-aligned solidarity which was propagated by the National Front. Rivals until 1953, these thought collectives would overlap and synthesise after the Anglo-American coup in 1953, which saw key National Front members imprisoned and side-lined from the political scene, with more junior and religious members taking on increasingly important roles as proponents and propagators of State Resistance were forced underground until 1979. In the period between 1953 and 1979, we see the gradual sacralisation of State Resistance, as well as an increased scope with regards to the target of resistance. While the resistance propagated as state policy in the language of neutralism under Mosaddeq was concerned with ending foreign presence and achieving control over the country's natural resources, the resistance that would be phrased in the language of non-alignment, namely Neither East nor West, after the revolution presented strict requirements for independence that transcended the political and economic realm, and included spiritual, ideological, and cultural independence.

Therefore, the resistance propagated by the Islamic Republic under Ayatollah Khomeini during the first decade after the Islamic Revolution placed a greater emphasis on aspects of independence related to religious and political authenticity, even though the key aspect was limited to primary resistance due to the context of war and state consolidation that were taking place in parallel for most of the 1980s. From 1989 onwards, however, as the state became consolidated at least to the extent that it becomes meaningful to talk about an establishment discourse of resistance, the Islamic Republic began to formulate and propagate discourses of resistance related to its resistance politics. From visions of a just post-cold war world order in accordance with the objectives of the Non-Aligned Movement, to conceptualising Iran's position amongst Muslim states in the form of *omm al qorrā* or to confronting violent unilateralism and submission to it through the discourse of world

arrogance, the Islamic Republic would gradually begin to crystalise its resistance politics during the 1990s. The legacy of the revolutionary emphasis on cultural, ideological, and spiritual authenticity would also manifest itself in discourses of cultural invasion (*tahājom-e farhangi)* and soft war (*jang-e narm)* as they sought to challenge these threats, with the latter carrying a greater emphasis on engaging and challenging the threats to the Iranian 'self' identified for the past century. What is more, the post-Khomeini era has also been characterised by a growing emphasis on economic resilience, transcending early calls for self-sufficiency, to become a comprehensive state discourse spearheaded by Ayatollah Khamenei under the name of a resistance economy (*eqtesād-e moqāvemati*) that would ensure strategic trade relations, essential goods being produced domestically whilst utilising various strategies to reduce Iran's economic vulnerability to both sanctions and global financial developments as it seeks to change the existing world order.

Besides threats to Iran's physical and spiritual independence, the last three decades are also characterised by various presidencies seeking to achieve the objectives of Neither East nor West whilst forging a new world order that would ensure non-domination through different means. Starting with the Khatami administration's (1997-2005) discourse of dialogue among civilisations (*goftogu-ye tamaddon-hā*) where the government sought to achieve the objectives of the state through dialogue, and civil society interaction between Iran and the world. As the language of moderation was met with rejection and isolation, the Ahmadinejad administration (2005-2013) embarked on a radical revisionist campaign characterised by the politics of confrontation in which they essentially sought to challenge what they understood to be the 'fundamental truths' of the West's military presence in the region, namely the holocaust and the 11 September attacks, while arguing for reforming the United Nations in accordance with the objectives of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Following 16 years of unsuccessful dialogue, and arguably even more unsuccessful radical revisionism, the Rouhani administration (2013-2021) utilised multilateral diplomacy (*diplomāsi-ye chand-jānebeh*) as its tool for achieving justice and non-domination. Seeking to utilise international organisations and their international legitimacy, the Rouhani administration began to propagate worldmaking discourses intended to change the way foreign powers interacted with Iran, with various approaches related to extremism and regional security arrangements that exclude the west being presented, but perhaps the most notable one being the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, known as the nuclear deal which the administration appears to have understood to be the first of many deals that would alter inter-state interaction away from violent unilateralism.

As governments were devising various strategies and discourses of resistance, one consistent discourse of resistance was evolving within the core of the establishment was that of the Islamic Resistance (*moqāvemat-e Eslāmi*). Perhaps better known as the Axis of Resistance (*mehvar-e moqāvemat*) today, the Islamic Republic has propagated a discourse of 'regional primary resistance' in which it is seeking to expel what it understands to be foreign domination, namely the state of Israel and United States military presence in West Asia, through an Islamic alliance that started in the Levant but expanded to include Yemen and Iraq in recent years.

Therefore, as the once fragile state blighted by imperial domination is today seeking to challenge the international order, this thesis has sought to provide a more appropriate approach to understand the ideas and discourses that are driving this shift. From classic primary resistance ending in 1988, to worldmaking endeavours being pursued in the 2000s, Iran's century of defiance is one that I believe this thesis has demonstrated can be better understood through the lens of resistance. While this is by no means a complete work on State Resistance, as other groups, individuals, and events ought to be included in a future

monograph, it is nonetheless intended to function as the beginning of an alternative approach to the politics of defiance, one which can appreciate the subjectivity and intentions of the subaltern without using flawed, pejorative, or apologetic approaches to do so. Hopefully, this approach to resistance can be utilised elsewhere to better understand individuals and movements across the world that are challenging the status quo, often using tools deemed unacceptable by its guardians.

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