



Action for Democracy in Iran (NGO, Not-for-profit)

Democracy for Iran & Advocacy for Human Rights
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Proposal on Iran

Political Culture of the Leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran or Shiite Clerics' Machiavellian Policy- Making

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Iranian people of all trends, have revered the clergy as the guardians of their faith for centuries. This perception has undergone a gradual transformation since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, a direct result of which has been the loss of faith within the Shiite clergy. The widespread belief now seems to suggest that the men who wear the robe (aka Mullahs) and pretend to care only about spiritual matters are in fact among the most corrupt.

The sheer number of judicial cases against the mullahs, an abundance of independent media reports, as well as anecdotal accounts, suggest heavy participation of the clergy in extortion, sex crimes, financial corruption, involvement in terrorist activities (such as recruiting poverty-stricken juveniles for suicide missions in the Middle-East) and graft. However, despite such commonplace knowledge within the country, it seems that the ruling theocratic class and its world-famous operators have been able to deceive Western politicians and the media, many of whom have, over the past three decades, extended classic diplomatic protocol to the leaders of Iran over Tehran's nuclear standoff with the IAEA, its documented ties to Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, and its horrific human rights record.

The spread of Islamic terrorism and the nefarious condition in the Middle-East demonstrate that, generally, Western politicians are not sufficiently equipped to deal with the Shiite clergy's Machiavellian politics.

The Shiite clerics' political culture can be defined as the following:



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1-Not bound to a centralized power structure, each of the various factions of the Shiite clergy follows an individual interpretation of Islam. Based on their own view of the Islamic tenets, they choose a “Source of Emulation” --a superior leader who has published his views in the form of thousands of questions and answers with followers and students. Lower ranking clergy organize their personal, social and financial affairs according to their relationship with their Source.

Not only is each mullah free to have his own iteration of the history of religion, but in the interest of the clergy establishment, he freely espouses views on a range of topics from international relations to domestic policy. In other words, Shiite mullahs go so far as to use (and often, abuse) any doctrine, even the tenets of faith, as an ideological tool to prolong their joint rule. Everything they do and every political, social, and economic policy initiative is open to religious justification.

2-The history of Iranian political development indicates that as long as the Shiite mullahs were outside of the political power center, they would forge alliances through long or short-term agreements with tribal leaders, warlords, or foreign powers. They would exercise power and maintain their control over the faithful wherever they could by forming bands of thugs, a phenomenon that has evolved into terrorist cells in recent decades. In this way they could pursue and guarantee their interests cloaked by their ideological interpretation of Islam’s requirements.

3-Following the ascension of Khomeini to power, the majority of Shiite leaders and factions in Iran and the Middle-East sought to unite their forces under the guise of “Islam’s Interest” (*Maslahat-e- Islam*) and under the banner of a Worldwide Islamic Government. Their umbrella included even extremist tendencies and radical fringe groups opposing each other. All Shiite factions became partners in this way. They resorted to various violent means and terror tactics, both domestically and abroad, to increase their power after 1979. They branched out following Khomeini’s death and formed factions with names borrowed from the modern political lexicon such as “moderate”, “reformist”, “pragmatist” and the like, and began to compete with each other over his legacy which included the power and its benefits. But they all share the responsibility for the 1989 massacre of political prisoners (when a number between 4000 and 5000 were executed within a week), the assassination of cultural and political elite, corruption and graft, and the formation of international terror networks. Therefore, they will do all they can to prolong the life of their regime. To that end, they have already applied ruse as a tool of diplomacy on the international scene. There is no evidence suggesting they will not use all their cunning and deception in their future confrontation with the international community.

In order to fulfill that, the Islamic republic’s top leaders may use one, or a combination of, the following options:

a) A reform-minded politician with a modicum of credibility may be promoted, such as Mohammad Khatami, who in the past succeeded in confusing the public opinion of Iran, as well as the international community, by integrating western concepts such as democracy with Islam (“Islamic Democracy”), and Islamic values with human rights (“Human Rights with Islamic Values”). In the case of Mr. Khatami, he was able to promote the regime with a skillful use of international public relations.

b) An uncultured and bullying figure such as Mr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad, who threatens Israel’s very existence, and provocatively pursues uranium enrichment despite the United Nations’ sanctions, may be allowed to emerge out of the ballot box.



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c) A reputedly “pragmatist” figure, such as Mr. Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, may be given a mandate to make unenforceable deals with European officials or American companies in secret negotiations.

d) While it seems that the Iranian leaders are participating in dialogue with the West, they expand their networks of terror in the Middle-East and Europe, and pursue a shameless lobbying strategy in the United States.

e) No other has so clearly benefited from errors made by the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan than the leaders of Iran, who have skillfully manipulated the widespread corruption within the neighboring countries to meet their own objective.

A strong focus on the following is instrumental for a successful change in the Iranian regime:

1. Smart sanctions against the regime in the areas of oil purchase and selling arms.
2. Diplomatic pressure such as litigation against the leaders of the Islamic republic in international courts.
3. Providing support for democratic groups and institutions and defending human rights in specific cases of political and social dissidents.

