AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

SYRIAN-IRANIAN RELATIONS AND THE CREATION OF HEZBOLLAH IN LEBANON

by
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A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
to the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
April, 2012

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe deep thanks to John Waterbury, my advisor, for his guidance and support throughout the research and writing process. I would like to thank Joshua Landis and Karim Makdisi for their valuable critiques and support. Thanks also to Hossein Shahidi for his feedback in the early stages of research and Aliya Saidi whose kind help was very valuable in completeing this work.

This work would not have been possible without the generosity of all those that gave their time to be interviewed in Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Pakistan and France, for which I am deeply grateful.

My friends in Iran and Lebanon were very helpful with their many criticisms and suggestions and their assiatnt in different phases of the research. I'm particularly grateful to Nasser, Ariyo, Vahid, Meisam, Loay, Abbas and Reza.

My family has been endlessly supportive and encouraging throughout my studies. I'm profoundly thankful for their loving support. I owe deep thanks to my wife, Susan who was relentlessly generous with her support and the insights she gave me throughout the resraech.

This research involved many reserahc travels. I would like to acknowledge the generous support I received from the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs as well as the travel grant that the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies at the American University of Beirut provided me to carry out my research in France and Syria.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Mohammad Ataei for Master of Arts
Major: Middle Eastern Studies

Title: Syrian-Iranian Relations and the Creation of Hezbollah in Lebanon

The decade of the 1980s, the formative years of the Iranian-Syrian alliance, was the most crucial and decisive stage of the Damascus-Tehran relationship. The chain of rapid events in the bilateral ties, grave regional developments coupled with a fierce political factionalism inside the Islamic Republic, which greatly impacted the Iranian foreign policy, makes this period stand out in the 30 year-old alliance.

This research covers the seminal years of 1979-82 of post revolutionary Iran and investigates the Iranian-Syrian relationship and Iran's policy in Lebanon through the post revolutionary factionalism in Iran. The central question of this research is how political factionalism in post revolutionary Iran influenced the Islamic Republic's relations with Syria and its policy in Lebanon. To answer the question, this work investigates Iranian ties with Syria and its role in Lebanon during the rule of the moderate provisional government from February 1979 to November 1979 and under the Banisadr presidency, from February 1980 to June 1981. By studying the two Iranian endeavors, in 1979 during the regin of moderats and 1982 under the radical rule, to dispatch forces to Lebanon this research analiyzes the the embryonic years of the Islamic Republic's involvement in the Levant and the background of creating Hezbollah in post 1982 period.

In this study, the post revolutionary power struggle and the role of various forces in the Iranian political scene are explained based on Crane Brinton's model of revolution. According to Brinton, after the fall of the ancien regime, a revolution moves through different stages from moderation to radicalism and then finally enters a Thermidorian period. The accession of radical clergy in the Islamic Republic and the consolidation of state power in 1981-89 period is analyzed based on Skocpol's theory of post revolutionary state building.

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

Al-Dāhiya al-Janūbiyya: the southern suburb of Beirut

AMUL: Association of Muslim Ulama in Lebanon, t*ajammu al-ulama al-muslimin fi lubnan*,

Ayatollah: the title for a high ranking Shii clergy, literally the Sign of God

Basīj: Mobilization or Volunteers Corps

Bāzārī : the "pre-capitalist" class of merchants

Etelāāt: the intelligence ministry of the Islamic Republic

Fatwa: religious decree

Fidā'iyīn: Palestinian guerrillas

FMU: the Freedom Movements Unit of the RG, *vahed-i nehzathā-yi āzādībaksh-i sepāh*

Fiqh: Islamic jurisprudence

Grand Ayatollah: the title for a top Shii clergy who is a Marja, literally the Great Sign of God, *āyatullāh al-uzmā*

Hawza: religious seminary, Shi'a's theological school

Hizbullah: the Party of God (in Lebanon)

Hizbullahi: a member or advocate of the Party of God

Husaynīya: place especially converted for the purpose of recitals of the suffering of Imam Hossein

Imam: religious leader / prayer leader

IRP: Islamic Republic Party, *hezb-i jumhuri-yi islami*

Khat-i seh: Third Line faction

LMI: Liberation Movement of Iran, n*ehzat-e azadi-e iran*

LNM: Lebanese National Movement, *al-harakat al-wataniya al-lubnaniya*

Majlis: the Iranian parliament

Marja: Source of emulation; (pl.: **Marāja)**

MKO: The People's Mujahedin of Iran, *sazman-e mujahedin-e khalq-e iran*

Mustakbarīn: oppressor

Mustażafīn: oppressed/downtrodden

Mufti: deliverer of formal legal opinions

Muharram: first month of the Islamic calendar during which the Shi'a commemorate the death of Imam Hossein

Mujahidin: strugglers in the path of God

N.d: no date

Pasdaran: plural of Pāsdār, a member of the Revolutionary Guards

PFLP: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, *al-jabhah al-shabiyyah li-tahrir filastin*

PLO: Palestine Liberation Organization, *munazzamat at-tahrir al-filastiniyah*

RG: Revolutionary Guards

SATJA: Revolutionary Organization of the Masses of the Islamic Republic, *sazman-e enqilabi-yi tudeha-yi jumhuri-yi eslami*

SAVAK: Shah's secret police, the Organization of the Country's Information and Security, *sazeman-e etelaat va amniyat-e keshvar*

Sayyid: literally, Mister. Is the title for a clergy who is a descendant of the prophet Mohammad

Sepāh: the Revolutionary Guards, Sepah is the short form of *sepah-e pasdaran-e enghelab-e eslami*

Shaykh: the title for a clergy who is not a descendant of Prophet Mohammad

Ulama: religious scholars or leaders

Umma: moral and religious community in Islam

Vali-yi faqīh: Iran's leader

Vilāyat-i faqīh: the Guardianship of Jurisprudent

Zaīm: powerful leader or land lord in Lebanon

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: IRAN'S REVOLUTION AND BRINTON'S MODEL

The decade of the 1980s, the formative years of the Iranian-Syrian alliance, was the most crucial and decisive stage of the Damascus-Tehran relationship. The chain of rapid events in the bilateral ties, grave regional developments, such as the Iran-Iraq war and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, coupled with a fierce political factionalism inside the Islamic Republic, which greatly impacted the Iranian foreign policy, makes this period stand out in the 30 year-old alliance.

The early years of the Iranian revolution were crucial in forging the ideological content and foreign policy direction of the new regime. Iran, from 1979 till 1982, witnessed power struggles between moderate and radical forces that vied to dominate the new regime. This research covers this early stage and investigates the Iranian-Syrian relationship and Iran's policy in Lebanon through the post revolutionary factionalism in Iran. The central question of this research is how political factionalism in Iran influenced the Islamic Republic's relations with Syria and its policy in Lebanon. To answer the question, this work investigates Iranian ties with Syria and its role in Lebanon during the rule of the moderate provisional government, from February 1979 to November 1979, under the Banisadr presidency, from February 1980 to June 1981, and finally the period

from June 1981 till June 1982. In this latter stage, radicals emerged as the dominant force in the new regime[1].

The post revolutionary power struggle and the role of various forces in the Iranian political scene are explained based on Crane Brinton's model of revolution. According to Brinton, after the fall of the ancien regime, a revolution moves through different stages from moderation to radicalism and then finally enters a Thermidorian period. The accession of radical clergy in the Islamic Republic and the consolidation of state power in 1981-89 period is analyzed based on Skocpol's theory of post revolutionary state building. The period of 1979-1982 which is covered in this study, begins with the reign of moderates and eventually leads to the rule of radicals in 1981. The dualism of power and struggle between moderate and radical factions in this period affected the foreign policy of the new regime and the Islamic Republic's role in Levant.

A. Literature Review

The 1979-1982 period is an overlooked stage in the studies of the Syrian-Iranian relationship and the Islamic Republic's involvement in Lebanon. This is despite the fact

[1] This research incorporates a great number of Arabic and Persian words and proper names. I have used the transliteration system of the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) as a guideline for transliteration of Persian and Arabic words. Where the pronunciation of Arabic words in Persian differs from their Arabic pronunciation (for instance, the Arabic Mustaḍafīn is pronounced Mustażafīn in Persian), they are treated as Persian in this work. The Arabic and Persian words that are found in Merriam-Webster's are spelled as they appear in that dictionary. For certain widely used words, such as ulama, Shaykh or Sayyid, I adhered to the IJMES exception word list. Personal names, place names, names of political parties and organizations, or title of books and articles are spelled in accordance with the IJMES transliteration system but without diacritics. Also in accordance with the IJMES transliteration system, personal and place names, such as Banisadr, Montazeri, Yasir Arafat, Tehran and Baalbek, which have accepted English spellings are spelled in accordance with English norms.

that the Damascus-Tehran alliance and its regional ramifications for Lebanon and Iraq have been subject to extensive academic research and journalistic works.

The point of departure in most related studies is the entrance of the Revolutionary Guards (RG) to Lebanon in 1982, when radicals took the reins in Iran and Israel invaded Lebanon. Given the fast and dramatic developments in Iran between 1979 and 1982, the internal divisions over relations with Assad's regime, and Lebanese and Palestinian groups, examining this period is important in understanding the backdrop of the Islamic Republic's approach to Syria and Lebanon. It is also a key stage in understanding the Islamic Republic's relationship with Amal and the creation of Hizbullah in Lebanon. Indeed before the Islamic Republic turned its back on Amal and established a strategic relationship with Syria, a lengthy debate and conflict occurred inside Iran. Understanding such conflicts and debates in the 1979-1982 period, gives deeper insight into the post-1982 phase of the Iranian-Syrian partnership. Nevertheless, this seminal period has received very limited attention in studies on Hizbullah or Syrian-Iranian relations.

Also an in-depth analysis based on primary sources which investigates the origins of Syrian-Iranian relations in the formative years of the 1980s has been absent in the related studies. Agha and Khalidi (1995), Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (1997) and Hunter (a book chapter;1998) provide a general review of the formative years of the relationship and focus on the continuation of the relationship. However, none of these works use primary sources such as interviews with the concerned officials.

Unlike these works, which have only provided a general overview of the two countries' partnership in the 1980s, Jubin Goodarzi (2006) provides a detailed academic

analysis of the evolution of the alliance between Damascus and Tehran. However, Goodarzi's work mostly emphasizes "the output and policies that emerged from the black box of Syrian-Iranian decision making" rather than focusing on the influence of domestic politics on foreign policy decision making inside both regimes (Goodarzi, 2006, 6). As a result, the book downplays the significance of factionalism inside Iran for the international role of the Islamic Republic.

Investigating Syrian-Iranian relations through the angle of post revolutionary factionalism in Iran, has received a very limited attention in the related studies. Ever since the revolution, the foreign policy was a turf of power struggle between radicals and moderates. It was intertwined with factionalism and class struggle over determining the ideological content of the new regime and the future economic, cultural and political course of revolution. During the reign of moderates, the 1979-1981 provisional government and Banisadr's presidency, and throughout the 1980s reign of the clergy issues such as the revolution's approach to Lebanon and Syria and relations with the PLO and Libya were extremely divisive and controversial.

Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (1997) briefly mention rivalry between radicals such as Alī Akbar Muhtashamī and the pragmatist faction, led by Akbar Hāshemī Rafsanjani, to explain certain issues, such as the Iranian internal difference over the western hostages in Lebanon and improvement in the Iranian-Amal relationship in the late 1980s. Agha and Khalidi (1995) do not discuss the internal divisions in the Islamic Republic and its effect on Damascus-Tehran relations. Even Goodarzi (2006), despite his focus on the formative years of the 1980s, only briefly addresses the effect of power struggle on Syria-Iran-Lebanon relations. Since Goodarzi's sources are mostly limited to official government

statements, periodicals and newspapers, his work is confined within the official level of the alliance. For instance it fails to address posting Iranian forces to Syria in 1979 and the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood ties with certain radical factions in the Islamic Republic.

In a number of studies on Hizbullah in Lebanon, there are efforts to shed light on the political factionalism in the Islamic Republic and its effect on Tehran-Damascus relations and Hizbullah's behavior in Lebanon. Sharara (1996), Ranstorp (1997) and Harik (2004) endeavor to explain Hizbullah's behavior and its internal changes, from the leadership of Subhī al-Tufaylī to Sayyid Abbās al-Mūsawī (1991), in light of the power struggle in Iran. However their reliance on secondary sources, many of them western or Israeli intelligence analyses, is a major weakness of their work. These sources led them draw connections between developments in Lebanon with factionalism in Iran which don't hold up upon more substantial research.

For example, Ranstorp (1997, 73-74) considers Muhtashamī and al-Tufaylī as one faction and Harik (2004, 56-57) claims that Muhtashamī was al-Tufaylī's "mentor". They relate replacing Shaykh Subhī al-Tufaylī with the moderate Sayyid Abbās al-Mūsawī to marginalization of radicals in the Islamic Republic and the demotion of Muhtashamī in 1991. Such claims are despite the fact that, from the early days of establishing Hizbullah in Lebanon, Alī Akbar Muhtashamī and Shaykh Subhī al-Tufaylī had an uneasy relationship and they disagreed over different issues (interviews; Subhī al-Tufaylī, Baalbek, 2009/11/11& Alī Akbar Muhtashamī, Tehran, 2010/07/17). Hence, as I discovered during my interviews in Iran and Lebanon, categorizing Muhtashamī and al-Tufaylī in one faction and relating their concurrent demotion was mostly based on those writers' speculation rather than facts.

In works on Hizbullah, Jaber (1997), Saad-Ghorayeb (2002), Fadlallāh (1994), Assadullāhī (1382/2003) and al-Madīnī (1999) the Iranian role in Lebanon and Tehran's policy towards Amal and Hizbullah is explained without dealing with factionalism in Iran. These works basically approach the Islamic Republic's policy as monolithic and do not take into consideration the effect of factional rivalry on Iran's Levant policy. Also Shaykh Naīm Qāsīm's Hizbullah (2002, 352-353) address the issue of Hizbullah's relations with different political factions inside the Islamic Republic in a very general and discreet way. He concludes that "hopes that Hizbullah's relations [with Iran] would be affected negatively by differences between the two main power blocs in Iran was vain" (Qasīm, 2002, 352).

B. Methodology

To examine how political factionalism in the Islamic Republic affected the Syrian-Iranian relationship and Tehran's policy in Lebanon, this research relies on primary sources as well as secondary sources such as Persian, Arabic and English newspapers, magazines, official documents and memoirs. Semi structured interviews, which were conducted with individuals who had been part of the Iranian-Syrian-Lebanese relationship, make up the core of the material for this research.

To write an original study about a widely addressed subject like the relationship between Syria, Hizbullah and Iran, conducting interviews with officials and religious leaders who had a role in the subject was of significance for this study. First, because of the lack of written sources on certain aspects of the relationship, it was necessary to refer to

people who had a role in the relationship. Second, given the secrecy and sensitivity of the subject, there has rarely been an academic effort to reach out to the concerned individuals.

This weakness is evident not only in English language research, but also in Persian and Arabic works written on the subject. Authors of the Arabic or Persian works did not have either access to the concerned individuals or the interest to contact them for conducting interviews. This lack of interest partly stems from this fact that many individuals, like Ayatollah Montazeri or Muhtashamī, who had been part of the formation of the Iranian-Syrian axis were dismissed from power in Iran. As a result, it is usually risky and a political taboo for them to speak publicly about their role in the past.

Consequently, there has been a tendency among many scholars in Iran to confine their study to the official narratives of Iranian-Syrian-Lebanese relations. As for the works written in English on the subject, they tried to address internal power struggle and aspects of the relationship that are considered sensitive. However, they mostly rely on secondary sources. For instance, Goodarzi states that Syrian and Iranian officials are inaccessible and hence he bases his research solely on secondary sources (Goodarzi, 2006, 4).

Since the relationship between Damascus and Tehran has always been covered in extreme secrecy, most accounts in newspapers and magazines on bilateral talks are either inaccurate or deal only with the formalities of the bilateral relations. This was another factor that made using primary sources inescapable for thorough research.

To fill this void and write an original work, I chose to refer directly to those individuals who had been involved in different stages of Iranian-Syrian-Lebanese relations. The result was conducting 104 semi-structured interviews with 63 individuals in Lebanon,

Syria, Iran, France and Pakistan. The interviews were carried out in Arabic, Persian and English. All of the interviews were one to one and on average one hour long. With the exception of seven interviews, all of them were digitally recorded after I had obtained permission from the informant. Due to the sensitivity of the subject, four informants, a member of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomaini's office, a member of the Hizbullah, a Lebanese clergy and a former leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, have requested anonymity.

My informants were generally among the principle actors in the concerned subject and had very detailed knowledge of the issue. The distribution of the interviewees varied as follows:

Iranian figures from different political factions, members of the Revolutionary Guards, diplomats and clerics.

Lebanese members of the Amal Movement and Hizbullah, Shii and Sunni clergy as well as Lebanese politicians who had a strong relationship with Damascus and were familiar with Syrian policy making.

Palestinian figures who were in association with the Islamic Republic and the Syrian government in the 1980s.

Syrian officials who were responsible for foreign policy and the Iran and Lebanon files under the late President Hafez al-Assad.

Given the sensitivity of the subject, before beginning the interview process I had expected that I may face difficulties in the interview process. In particular I was concerned about the possibility of securing interviews with Hizbullah members and Syrian officials.

However, thanks to friends in Iran and Lebanon, my success in arranging interviews with the members of these two organizations was beyond my expectations. Since I had enough connections in Iran, I was able to meet and talk to most of the individuals I had desired.

As for the Syrian figures, because I did not have connections in Syria, and also due to the extraordinary security situation there and Syrian officials' reservation to talk about "inside matters", arranging interviews with Syrian officials was the least success in this research. I made three visits to Damascus in order to ask Syrian journalists and staff of the Iranian embassy to help with arranging interviews in Syria. The Iranian embassy in Damascus was unwilling to assist. Also referring to Syrian journalists, like Ahmad Sawān, or Māhir al-Taher, the Palestinian leader of the PFLP in Damascus, both very close to the Syrian government, was not of any use.

I also tried to secure interviews with Syrian officials through some Lebanese individuals who have close ties with Syrian leaders which was in vain. Consequently, the only Syrian officials interviewed for this research are former Syrian ambassador to Tehran, Ahmad al-Hasan (Damascus, 2008/03/11) and the former Syrian vice president, Abdel Halīm Khaddām (Paris, 2010/05/20). To compensate for this deficiency, I conducted interviews with Lebanese figures who have close relationships with the Syrian leadership and are familiar with both the power structure in Syria and the decision making process under the late president Hafez Assad.

Most of the interviewees found the subject of my research sensitive and were sometimes uncomfortable answering some of my questions. However, with a few exceptions, I managed to develop a trustful environment during the interview in order to

raise my questions from different angles and ask the informant to elaborate on their answers until I received a clear answer. The informants' reaction to my questions was sometimes very different. For instance, when I met Husayn al-Hāj Hassan, a Hizbullah MP (al-Dahiya al-Janubiyya, 2009/10/06) and Husayn Shaykhulleslām, a former Iranian ambassador to Damascus (Tehran, 2010/07/18), they flatly asked why I wanted to exhume past frictions and sensitive issues and talk about them again. Their reaction to my questions was such that I had to wrap up the interviews in less than half an hour. In contrast, individuals such as Husayn al-Mūsawī (al-Dahiya al-Janubiyya, 2009/09/30), Alī Akbar Muhtashamī (Tehran, 2010/07/17& 2010/07/18), Shaykh Subhī al-Tufaylī (Baalbek, 2009/10/24& 2009/11/11& 2010/06/21) or Mohammad Fneish (al-Dahiya al-Janubiyya, 2009/10/06), all key people for this research, answered my questions with great patience and talked about many details which I had expected they would be reluctant to discuss.

Usually when I told the informants about the individuals I had already interviewed, they showed a greater interest in my work. If I noticed circumlocution about a point, I quoted another interviewee to challenge the informant. This way I was not only able to take a more clear response from the informant, but also corroborated information given by another source.

Originally my semi-structured interviews were loosely structured around five subjects:

The role of different Iranian political forces and figures in Lebanon; the process of the foreign policy making under president Hafez al-Assad; the Syrian relationship with different factions inside the Islamic Republic; the political and social dynamics inside the

Shia community in Lebanon; the Amal Movements' relationship with the Islamic Republic and Syria.

These subjects were based on the preliminary studies, most of them secondary sources, of the topic. I originally chose my informants from mid level officials and those who were not at the heart of developments in the 1980s but rather on the sidelines and familiar with the events and history of the subject. The aim of conducting these "practice interviews" was to gain a better understanding of the subject and receive feedback on the questions before embarking on the central interviews. This greatly helped me to review and refine my interview questions before arranging meetings with top level individuals.

For instance, in the initial stage I interviewed Alī Hamdān (Beirut, 2006/05/22), the foreign affairs advisor of Nabih Berri and four cadres of Hizbullah, Musa Qasīr (al-Dahiya al-Janubiyya, 2006/03/23) and Yaqūb Qasīr (al-Dahiya al-Janubiyya, 2006/04/13), both former combatants in the party, Sāmī Khudrā (al-Dahiya al-Janubiyya, 2008/08/03), a cultural activist and author affiliated with Hizbullah and Shaykh Hassan Hamāda (al-Dahiya al-Janubiyya, 2008/07/31) who is active as a Sheikh within the party.

The interviews not only gave me a deeper insight of the subject it also shed light on aspects that have been vaguely addressed in relative studies, mostly secondary sources, I had used in the initial stage.

Besides the semi structured interviews, I was given access to a number of documents for my research. They included correspondence and minutes of meetings written by two Iranian clergy officials. These documents are not open to the public and are referred to in the work as document x. These sources allowed me put together different

pieces of the story that took place in Iran, Syria and Lebanon from 1979 to 1989 and to investigate the details of events which have been addressed in a very general way in previous studies.

C. Theoretical Frames

The 1979 revolution in Iran has been subject to extensive study by sociologists of revolution. In these studies, there are debates and disagreements about the outcome and nature of the Iranian revolution. There have been debates if the 1979 revolution was Islamic or not and whether Iran did in fact experience a full-fledged social revolution, with some seeing it, in the beginning at least, as "populist" and "anti-imperialist", while others have labeled it "petty bourgeois", "bourgeois" or even "fascist" (see: Behrooz, 1380/2001, 134&256). Skocpol (1982), Zonis (1991), Abrahamian (1982), Foucault (1979), Keddi (1986), Akhavi (1980), Moaddel (1991) and Afary (2005) and some Marxist writers approach the Iranian revolution and tried to explain the roots of the revolution in 1979. To a lesser extent, there have been works, O'Kane (2000), John Foran and Jeff Goodwin (1993), Farhi (1990), Bashiriyeh (1984 and 1381/2002) and Bakhash (1984), that focus on the aftermath of the revolution and shed light on the post revolutionary era in Iran. Some of these works, Nūrbaksh (1388/2009) Mohammadī (1387/2008) and Shirūdī (1389/2010) analyze the first decade of revolution in Iran based on Brinton's classic work, *The Anatomy of Revolution,* which deals with the causes and courses of four major western revolutions.

This section examines the concept of revolution and Brinton's analogy between this concept and fever as well as his revolutionary stages and their application to 1979 revolution. This will be followed by critiques of "natural historian" approach of Brinton by

theorists of revolution, in particular Theda Skocpol (1979&1982&1988) and her state-building analysis of the classic revolutions to investigate the ascendancy of radicals in the Islamic Republic and the beginning of the Reign of terror in 1981.

D. The Concept of Revolution

As a substantive deriving from the verb *revolver*, the word revolution in late Latin, means "to roll back" (Cohen, 1985, 52). The Oxford Dictionary of Politics defines revolution as a "complete overthrow of the established government in any country or state by those who were previously subject to it, or a forcible substitution of a new ruler or form of government" (Mclean, 1996, 127). From a sociological point of view, any fundamental, deep change in a society and its social structures, especially if it occurs suddenly and is accompanied by violence, is termed a revolution. In both the fields of history and political science, revolution is defined as fundamental changes to a political system, administration, and symbols of power[2].

The history of the concept of revolution cannot be separated from the history of the ways in which the word itself has been used. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the word revolution was applied to a series of social and political revolutionary events and a body of revolutionary theories began to develop around them. The usage of revolution as we understand it today- a change that is sudden, radical, and complete, often accompanied by violence or at least the exercise of force- can be traced back to the American revolution

[2] See: Daugherty, J.E., R.L.P. Baltz Graph, JN, Contending Theories of International Relations, New York: B.L. Linincott Company, 1971, P. 237 & Johnson, Chalmers, Tr. By Siasi, Homeira. Revolutionary Change: A Theoretical Study of the Phenomenon of Revolution. Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1984, P. 17.

in 1776 and the French revolution in 1789 (Cohen, 1985, 197). It is since the French revolution that the word has more specifically come to mean a major change in the political and socio-economic structure of an individual state, brought about by the efforts of its citizens (Kimmel, 1990, 4).

In the 1920s and 1930s, sociologists and comparative historians such as Crane Brinton (1938)[3], Lyford P. Edwards (1927) and George Sawyer Pettee (1938) investigated major revolutions of the West- the English Revolution of 1640, the American Revolution of 1776, the French Revolution of 1789, and also the Russian Revolution of 1917- to identify common patterns and similar phenomena in those revolutions. They succeeded in identifying a remarkable correspondence among the major events that comprised each of these four revolutions[4].

E. Revolution as a Fever

Crane Brinton defines revolution as the "sudden and violent replacement of the ruling establishment by a group which had hitherto been bereft of any political power" (Brinton, 1956, 4). In his famous book, *Anatomy of Revolution*, he draws an analogy between revolution and fever (Ibid, 26). Brinton uses the self-healing organism as an analogy for the process of social equilibrium. Fever which is the analogy for disequilibrium, is a disorder which goes through characteristic stages. Like a fever,

[3] For a good review of Brinton's work and life, see: Bien, David D. "*Crane Brinton*". French Historical Studies, Spring, 1969, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 113-119

[4] See: Goldstone. Jack A. The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions. Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 8, 1982, p. 189 & John, Foran. "Theories of Revolution Revisited: Toward a Fourth Generation". Sociological Theory 11, 1993, p.1.

revolution is preceded by symptoms. These symptoms can assume different forms such as economic problems, inefficiency of the government and desertion of intellectuals.

Brinton identifies different stages of revolutions. The years preceding the outbreak of revolution, in all the four societies which are studied by Brinton, witness developments that lay the ground for revolution. He also discusses the outcomes of revolutions. Following the fall of the ancien regime, the common enemy disappears from the scene. Consequently, the revolutionary coalition falls apart and revolution enters new phases which are characterized by the polarization of the revolutionary forces between moderates and radicals.

F. Stages of a Revolution

Prior to a revolution, elites withdraw their support from the old regime. The ancien regime faces a mass “desertion of intellectuals” and part of the ruling class, professionals and bureaucracy join the opposition’s call for major reform (Brinton, 1956, 52). While pervasive dissatisfaction with the regime’s performance extends to the top ranks of the old regime, the regime loses its resolution to decisively suppress the dissent of a popular uprising.

Just prior to the fall of the old regime, the ruling class attempts to meet the sharpest criticism by undertaking major reforms. However, such reforms backfire as the opposition sees them as a sign of weakness in the ruling class (Ibid, 79).

The ruling elite's inability to deal with economic, military, or political problems, brings about the actual fall of the regime. The crisis may take the form of a

state bankruptcy or a paralysis of command in the armed forces. Revolutionary leaders, which may have been active for a long period, then suddenly find themselves with the upper hand, due to the incapacity of the ruling class and inability to make decisive use of force. Brinton calls this situation "loss of self-confidence among the ruling class" (Brinton, 1956, 106).

After the downfall of the old regime, a brief "honey-moon" period introduces the first post revolutionary stage. This is a period of optimistic idealism. The revolutionaries engage in much perfectionist rhetoric and radical and moderates are untidily struggling against the counter-revolutionary forces (Ibid, 111). However, this unity will soon be replaced by splits inside the revolutionary bloc as moderates who seek limited reforms and radicals who seek rapid and drastic change begin to struggle.

The first group to seize the reins of state after revolution are moderate reformers. The moderates, once in power, show a lack of hegemony and discipline. They face the problems which plagued the old regime, without having the power to solve them. By the latter part of their rule, a "dual sovereignty" exists between the institutions of the moderates and the newly establish organs that are under the control of radicals. While the moderates seek to reconstruct rule on the basis of moderate reform, idealist radicals, who enjoy better organization and effective leadership, manage to eliminate them[5] (Ibid, 149).

Reigns of terror and virtue begin with the accession of radicals. Radicals such as Independents, Bolsheviks or Jacobins are fanatics who seek to bring heaven to earth (Ibid,

[5] In France, the moderate Girondin assembly faced the radical Jacobin clubs; in America, the moderate Continental Congress was outpaced by the more radical Patriots Societies; in modem Iran, the moderates of the provisional government of Mahdi Bazargan and President Abol Hassan Banisadr were ousted by radicals of the Islamic Republic Party.

230). They begin to impose order through coercion and force as they try to put an end to the disorder which was brought about by revolution. This radical phase of the revolution eventually gives way to a phase of pragmatism and moderation which Brinton designates as thermidor.

According to Brinton, as the human body reacts to disease and seeks to restore its normalcy, societies also attempt to restore themselves to a state similar to what was before the revolution. Thermidor is "a convalescence from the fever of revolution" and a reaction to the excesses of radicals (Ibid, 244). By the end of this phase, revolution moves back to a more moderate position.

G. Criticism of Brinton's Model

The Anatomy of Revolution is considered a classic work among revolution theories. In this work, which is the most widely read of Brinton's works among social scientists (Bien, 1969, 117), Brinton identifies a number of uniformities in the causes and courses of four major western revolutions.

Since the book's debut, Brinton's study has been exposed to different critiques, especially in light of political developments in the west and third world countries. The conclusions of the *Anatomy of Revolution* are based on only four revolutions[6]. In light of the political developments of the past six decades, a major criticism on the *Anatomy of*

[6] In the introduction of his book, Brinton states that the uniformities described for the four case studies are not necessarily applicable to other cases and "any extension of such conclusions to other revolutions, or to revolution in general, is to be undertaken with caution and humility" (See: Brinton, 1956, 14).

Revolution is to question the extent to which these four revolutions are typical representatives of the "class" of revolutions[7].

In particular, since World War II, revolutions have occurred exclusively in the third world. Such a shift in the locus of revolution from the older sovereign states of the West to the states of the third world, linked revolution to a new set of issues and raised the question to what extent Brinton's model is applicable to revolutions such as the Iranian and Nicaraguan revolutions of 1979. For instance, Marxist theories of revolution in the third world, criticize Brinton's notion of society as a closed, self-equilibrating system and question his approach to revolution which takes place within established territorial states without taking into account the international context and the effect of the global capitalist structure[8].

Revolution theorists also criticize Brinton's methodology. *The Anatomy of Revolution* belongs to the generation of "natural history" theories that are, according to Jack Goldstone, "primarily descriptive". They identify preconditions and stages in the process of revolution and investigate the pattern of events found in revolutions, but lack a broad theoretical perspective (Goldstone, 1980, 425& 427).

In response to this methodological weakness, critiques of natural historians, such as Tilly, 1975 & 1978 and Skocpol, 1979, adopted a different approach which "differs in two major respects from that of natural history theories. They are far better grounded

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[7] See: Nadel, George. "The Logic of the Anatomy of Revolution, with Reference to the Netherlands Revolt". Comparative Studies in Society and History, Jul., 1960, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 473-484, & Mumford, Richard L. "Crane Brinton's Pattern and the Chinese Revolution of 1911". Journal of the History of Ideas, Oct. - Dec., 1981, Vol. 42, No. 4, pp. 707-722.

[8] See: Knutsen, Torbjørn L& Jennifer L. Bailey. "The Anatomy of Revolution at Fifty". Journal of Peace Research, Nov., 1989, Vol. 26, No. 4, p.p. 424-427

historically: their analyses arise from a detailed examination of a greater variety of revolutions than had been studied by previous analysts. Furthermore, they are more holistic, seeking not only to explain why revolutions occur, but also to account for their diverse outcomes" (Ibid, 426). For example, in her detailed examination of the causes and consequences of social revolution in France, Russia, and China, Theda Skocpol (1979) analyzed the internal factors and the international context which pave the way for the mass-mobilizing revolutionary elites to win the post revolutionary power struggle. As will be discussed later, her approach is a complement for the "descriptive pattern of Brinton" and is useful in analyzing the rise of radical clergy and the beginning of the terror in June 1981.

1. The Reign of Terror

Brinton conceptualizes revolutions in terms of stages. Among the explanations for these stages, the reign of terror is given prominence by Brinton (1965, 198-203). In Brinton's conception the reign of terror, the radical stage that follows the rule of the moderates, is an inevitable stage of revolution (O'Kane, 2000, 970). It is a reign of fanatics who seek to bring heaven to earth and impose order through coercion and force (Brinton, 1956, 230).

Unlike what Brinton defines, the comparative studies of revolutions in the third world reveal that a reign of terror is not a necessary stage of revolution. O'Kane (2000) in his study of three third world revolutions, compares Ethiopia (February 1974) and Iran (February 1979), where terrors occurred with Nicaragua (July 1979), where a reign of terror was avoided to show that a reign of terror "is not an inevitable stage of revolution."

(O'Kane, 2000, 970). Also Foran and Goodwin (1993) in their research, “Revolutionary Outcomes in Iran and Nicaragua”, demonstrate how internal and international factors led to the consolidation of state power in Iran through violence but, unlike Iran, there was not a violent scramble to consolidate state power in Nicaragua immediately after the fall of the old regime:

> The Sandinistas were quickly able to assert their political dominance over the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie in the immediate post- insurrectionary period, and they were willing and able to do so in a nonviolent fashion. Unlike much of the opposition in Iran, the Sandinistas' internal opponents were essentially unarmed, and they were tolerated for the most part so long as they did not oppose the regime through extra-legal means or economic sabotage (1993, 238).

A reign of terror begins with the setting up of the extraordinary revolutionary organizations, the introduction of the wide laws on counter-revolution, the construction of the machinery of revolutionary terror - the courts, the trial procedures, the police and secret police systems, the makeshift prisons.

Intensifying over time as the organizations grow and the implementation of summary justice spreads, terrors are most easily identified by their peaks, when the toll of victims and the level of suffering reach their most shocking proportions. The end of a terror is marked by the curtailment of the extraordinary revolutionary courts and forces and by a sharp decline in executions (O'Kane, 2000, 974). Applying this view of a reign of terror, we can consider the 1981-89 period the reign of terror in Iran.

2. The Reign of Terror in Iran

The 1981-89 period in Iran is characterized by an offensive foreign policy, radical economic measures and strict cultural policies. While at war with Iraq and in a continuing confrontational mode with the U.S., the Islamic Republic was attempting in this period to bring about uniformity in its leadership and to consolidate power by eliminating all opposition. In this context, almost the entire political opposition, be they leftist communists, MKO, or Islamic liberals, were taken on in an often violent, sometimes civil-war-like, confrontation. The end of this period saw the mass execution of leftist and MKO prisoners in the summer of 1988 as the Iran-Iraq war came to an end (see: Behrooz, 2005). The end of the Iraq-Iran war (August, 1988) and the demise of Ayatollah Khomaini (June, 1989) mark the end of the terror in Iran.

The peak of the terror in Iran was from June 1981 till January 1984. By Banisadr's dismissal in June 1981 a small civil war began between the militant leftist groups and MKO on one side and the pro-Khomaini forces in Tehran and other cities. From June 1981 to September 1982, leftist and MKO guerrillas were pitted against the Revolutionary Guards and pro-Khomaini factions which resulted in numerous bombings and assassination of pro-Khomaini figures. It is estimated that between 12,000 to 20,000 opposition forces lost their lives during this period[9] (Nimā, 1983, 114-115).

By 1984, the ruling clerical factions consolidated their power following a decisive victory over the opposition and MKO militants. In January 1984, the revolutionary courts were brought under the control of the Ministry of Justice. The arbitrary executions were

[9] At this time, with urban guerrilla warfare and street demonstrations breaking out throughout the country, a full-scale campaign was launched against all counter-revolutionaries defined as anyone considered in sympathy with Banisadr. Between June 1981 and March 1982, executions mounted, with a total of 600 announced by September, 1,700 by October and 2,500 by December (Abrahamian, 1989, 220).

brought to an end and the situation in prisons began to improve. Also the Intelligence Ministry was established to bring an end to the function of unruly intelligence bodies (Arjomand, 1988, 16& Behrooz, 2005, 16).

Despite these changes, the MKO forces' military operation from Iraq in 1988 sparked a new wave of executions in prisons. The MKO forces made a quick thrust into western Iran and captured some border areas. Shocked by the operation and MKO's imminent threat, the leaders of the Islamic Republic executed hundreds of MKO members in jails. The number is estimated around 4,500 prisoners (Behrooz, 2005, 20).

One of the causes of terror, according to Brinton's model, is a foreign war. This is not true in the case of the Iranian revolution. "In Iran, it was civil war, in large part provoked by government policies and methods, which led to the reign of terror, with foreign war a contributory factor" (O'Kane, 2000, 978). The reign of terror neither began nor developed in reaction to a foreign war. It began after the outbreak of the war with Iraq in September 1980. The terror was at its worst not during September 1980-March 1981 when war fortunes were at their lowest but between June 1981 and May 1983 when they were high (Sick, 1990, 112). The second escalation in terror occurred after the end of the Iran-Iraq war when the Islamic Republic executed hundreds of MKO prisoners in the summer of 1988.

3. Skocpol criticism of Brinton's Model

Brinton considers foreign and civil war and economic problems as the causes that turn government into a war machine (1956, 236-243). These are themes central to Theda Skocpol's (1979 and 1988) analysis of revolutionary state outcomes where state-building is

viewed as the development of bureaucratic centralization for the purpose of war mobilization.

While Skocpol believes that Brinton's model provides insight into revolutionary processes, she criticizes the methodology of the *Anatomy of Revolution* and other natural historians. She argues that natural historians "analyzed revolutions by trying to fit either parts of various cases (e.g., Edwards) or a few entire cases (e.g., Brinton) to metaphors that seemed to best describe their shared stages of development, hence the sequence putatively "natural" to revolutions" (Skocpol ,1979, 37).

She also criticizes Brinton for the lack of "comparisons of historical cases to validate" his model. "Instead", Skocpol argues, "the theoretical hypotheses were simply applied to the analysis as a whole, and the historical materials used primarily to illustrate the metaphorical stage sequence" (such as Brinton's metaphor of disease) (Ibid, 38).

Explaining her comparative historical approach in *States and Social Revolutions: a comparative analysis of France, Russia, and China* Skocpol distinguished between her method of analysis and that of "natural historians":

At first glance, comparative historical analysis may not seem so very different from the approach of the "natural historians" Lyford Edwards, Crane Brinton, and George Pettee. They, too, analyzed and compared a few historical cases in depth. Actually, however, comparative historical and natural-history approaches to evolutions differ both in objective and in method of analysis. Whereas the goal of comparative historical analysis is to establish causes of revolutions, the natural historians sought to describe the characteristic cycle, or sequence of stages, that should typically occur in the processes of revolutions (Ibid, 37).

In contrast to the approach of natural historians, comparative historical analysis "uses comparisons among positive cases, and between positive and negative cases, to identify and validate causes, rather than descriptions, of revolutions" (Ibid, 38). Moreover, a comparative historical analysis does not in any way assume or attempt to argue that revolutionary processes should appear descriptively similar in their concrete trajectories from case to case. For analytically similar sets of causes can be operative across cases even if the nature and timing of conflicts during the revolutions are different, and even if, for example, one case culminates in a conservative reaction, whereas another does not (at all or in the same way). In a comparative historical analysis, such differences are not obstacles to the identification of similar causes across cases of revolution. At the same time, they represent variations that can themselves be explained by comparisons of the positive historical cases among themselves (ibid).

H. Skocpol and the Rise of Radicals

Historians have often puzzled over why revolutions characteristically show a progression to the "left," toward more extreme radicalism (Goldstone, 1991, 434). Radicals, according to Brinton, are fanatically devoted to their cause, disciplined, more organized and obedient to their leadership (Brinton, 1956, 155-160). Hence this "organizational advantage" helps them to overcome the moderates and dominate the new regime[10]. Skocpol from a structural perspective analyzes the ascendancy of radicals and the buildup of new revolutionary state organizations (Skocpol,1979, 5).

[10] The collapse of the Old Regime creates a new situation, in the sense that competition is now open among formerly subordinate elite groups to dominate the polity and offer solutions to the

From all three revolutions that Skocpol investigates in *States and Social Revolutions (A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China)*, a strengthened state emerged which was more centralized, bureaucratic, and autonomously powerful at home and abroad than the old regime:

Under the Old Regimes, the privileges and the institutional power bases of the landed upper classes had been impediments to full state bureaucratization and to direct mass political incorporation. These impediments were removed by the political conflicts and class upheavals of the revolutionary interregnums. At the same time, emergent political leaderships were challenged by disunity and counterrevolutionary attempts at home, and by military invasions from abroad, to build new state organizations to consolidate the Revolutions. Success in meeting the challenges of political consolidation was possible in large part because revolutionary leaderships could mobilize lower-class groups formerly excluded from national politics, either urban workers or the peasantry. Thus, in all three Revolutions, […the new regimes] were more potent within society and more powerful and autonomous over and against competitors within the international states system. (1979, 161)

The particular political leadership that created such state organizations had the "appropriate political resources" to win out in the consolidation of state power in a social-revolutionary situation. They are "equipped with mass-mobilizing political capacities and with ideological world-views that gave them the self assurance to use unlimited coercive

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problems that brought down the Old Regime. In this competition, groups that have prior national organization and programs are at an advantage. It is not necessarily their radical views that put them at the forefront; for example, the Puritan gentry in the 1630s and the Jacobin clubs in the 1780s were clearly moderate and reformist, not revolutionary. Rather, their organizational advantage allows them to take the lead in disseminating their viewpoint. (Goldstone, 1991, 434)

means to establish vanguard control in the name of the whole revolutionary people". (Skocpol, 1982, 276)

In Iran after the demise of the Shah and the partial disintegration of his state, it was the radical clerics, organized in the IRP, who could develop the appropriate resources to triumph as revolutionary state-builders. In "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution", which was published four years after the fall of the Shah, Skocpol tries to explain how the international context and organizational resources facilitated the rise of radicals:

> The Islamic Republican clerics shared a commitment to a political ideology that gave them unlimited warrant to rule exclusively in the name of all the Shi'a believers[…]
>
> Moreover, the Islamic Republican clerics and their devout nonclerical associates did not hesitate to organize, mobilize, and manipulate mass popular support, including the unemployed as well as workers and lower-middle-class people in Teheran and other cities. […] the emerging clerical authoritarianism repeatedly benefited from international conditions and happenings that allowed them to deploy their ideological and organizational resources to maximum advantage (1982, 276).

As the study of the three classic revolutions demonstrates, wars and imperial intrusions were the midwives of the revolutionary crises, and the emergent revolutionary regimes consolidated state power not only amidst armed domestic conflicts but also in militarily threatening international circumstances (Skocpol, 1979, 285).

The types of organizations formed and the political ties forged between

revolutionary vanguards and supporters (in the course of defeating other elites and consolidating the new regime's state controls) can readily be converted to the task of mobilizing resources, including dedicated officers and soldiers, for international warfare. Guerrilla armies and their support systems are an obvious case in point. So are urban militias and committees of surveillance, which seem to have served as splendid agencies for military recruitment from the French Revolution to the Iranian. Moreover, if revolutionary leaders can find ways to link a war against foreigners to domestic power struggles, they may be able to tap into broad nationalist feelings as well as exploit class and political divisions in order to motivate supporters to fight and die on behalf of the new regime.

In Iran the radical clerics were helped immensely by a facilitating geopolitical context and protracted international warfare to mobilize people. From 1979 through 1982, the Islamic Republic Party systematically reconstructed state organizations to embody direct controls by Shi'i clerics. Step by step, all other leading political forces liberal Westernizers, the Mujahidin (MKO), the Tudeh Party, and technocrats and professional military officers loyal to Abol Hassan Banisadr-were eliminated from what had once been the all-encompassing revolutionary alliance. The party did this by deploying and combining the classic ingredients for successful revolutionary state building (Ibid, 165).

The admission of the deposed Shah to the United States, the subsequent seizure of the American embassy by pro-Khomeini youths, and the ensuing unsuccessful efforts of the U.S. authorities to free the American hostages, all created an excellent political matrix within Iran for the clerics to discredit as pro-American a whole series

of their secular competitors for state power. Then, in the autumn of 1980, the secularist-Islamic regime of Saddam Hussein in neighboring Iraq attacked revolutionary Iran; since the Iraqis perceived Khomeini's regime as weak and internally disorganized, they expected it to fall. What happened with the Jacobins in 18th century revolutionary France then repeated itself in revolutionary Iran. At first, the foreign invaders made headway, for the remnants of the Shah's military, particularly the army, were indeed disorganized at the command level. Islamic fundamentalists and Iranian secular nationalists pulled together, however grudgingly, to resist the common enemy (Skocpol, 1982, 166).

I. Conclusion

Discussing the tendencies of a society prior to a major revolution, Crane Brinton sees a prerevolutionary society as having a combination of social and political tensions, caused by a gradual breakdown of the values of a society. This leads to a fracture of political authority and fall of the old regime. After the revolution, power is first handed to moderates and then to radicals. Radicals create a totalitarian system to materialize their goals. Under the pressure of internal and external forces, revolution returns to moderation and the totalitarian ruling body is replaced by moderates.

Despite its limitations, criticized by revolution theorists, Brinton’s pattern of uniformities and similarities in four classic revolutions can be still a model for investigating the 1979 revolution in Iran. The different phases which are identified by Brinton for his case studies show a remarkable resemblance to the post revolutionary stages in Iran between1979-1989. Between February 1979- June1981, the moderate governments of

Bazargan and Banisadr take the reins. These two years are marked with dualism of power as their governments are vying with radicals in the IRP. In this period, the Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI) and the National Front were important moderate factions that controlled the government. The IRP and the Third Line as well as the secular leftist groups, i.e. MKO and Tudeh party, were major radical groups.

The 1981-1989 period is the reign of terror and war when the Islamic Republic party and the Third Line dominated the new regime. This period witnessed a shift to an offensive foreign policy, radical economic measures and strict cultural policies in the country. The end of terror is marked by the end of the Iraq-Iran war (August, 1988) and finally the demise of Ayatollah Khomaini (June, 1989).

The Thermidorian period begins in 1989 as moderate government of Rafsanjani takes the power in Iran. In the aftermath of Khomaini's demise, radical clerics who were associated with him lost their influence and political posts. Under the leadership of pragmatist Khamenehi and Rafsanjani, the Islamic Republic adopted a clear market economy policy and detent foreign policy to improve relations with conservative Arab regimes and the West. By this time the ministry of Revolutionary Guards and the Revolutionary Committees were dismantled and their functions were assigned to the regular police. Also the Revolutionary Courts, which had been responsible for executing many anti-regime individuals since 1979, became limited and put under the supervision of the Justice ministry.

The struggle between the radical and moderates and religious and secular forces inside the Islamic regime during these stages can be analyzed and understood in light of the

life-cycle which Brinton draws from the old order to a moderate regime to a radical reign and eventually to Thermidorian reaction. However, Brinton's pattern does not provide insight into the post revolutionary outcomes and the internal and external factors that account for the rise of radicals. Hence, in this research Skocpol's theory of post revolutionary state building is used to analyze the rise of radical clergy in 1981.

The radical clerics who were organized within the IRP had all the organizational advantage to overcome the moderates in June 1981 and create a more centralized and mass-mobilizing regime. "In the classic social revolutions", writes Skocpol, "liberals and democratic socialists - people who wanted to limit or to decentralize state power invariably lost out to political leaderships able and willing to mobilize and channel mass support for the creation of centrally controlled agencies of coercion and administration" (Skocpol, 1982, 267). This was the same process in Iran when the moderate Islamist liberals, Bazargan and Banisadr, lost to the IRP and radical clergy.

The radical clergy were a mass-mobilizing and state-building revolutionary elite who organized themselves in the IRP as well as within the newly established revolutionary organs such as the Revolutionary Guards and Basīj[11]. They had ideological and leadership resources, built around the Vilāyat-i faqīh authority, to mobilize popular support in the course of struggles for state power.

In consolidating their power, the international context greatly facilitated their task against the moderates as the radical clergy mobilized popular zeal against a distant superpower and channeled it into a war against Iraq. Advocating the export of revolution and backing freedom movements in other countries was instrumental in

[11] Volunteers Corps

undermining the Bazargan and Banisadr governments. By linking the foreign war and confrontation with the U.S. to an internal power struggle, radicals could effectively silence the leftist and Islamist liberal dissidents and gather popular support behind the rule of Vilāyat-i faqīh during the 1981-89 period.

J. Radical and Moderate Concepts in the Iranian context

In this work, different revolutionary forces that became polarized in the wake of the fall of the imperial regime are categorized in two blocs: radical and moderate. The definition of radical and moderate is based on their foreign policy and economic stance at the time.

Radical:

In the realm of foreign policy radicals:

are anti-American and anti-imperialist,

support exporting the revolution

seeking to establish ties with freedom movements in other countries

Economically radicals support:

land reform

nationalization of the private sector and the foreign trade of Iran

establishment of worker and peasant councils.

Moderate:

In the realm of foreign policy moderates:

pursue a non-alignment foreign policy to reach a balanced relationship with the United States and Soviet Union

emphasize the importance of state-to-state relations

rejecting exporting the revolution

In the economic sphere, moderates are:

supportive the private sector

against the nationalization of major industrial sectors and the foreign trade of Iran

against land reform

against empowering the workers and peasants councils

CHAPTER II
1979-1980 PERIOD

This chapter covers the 1979-81 period of Iranian-Syrian relations and investigates divisions in Iran over its relationship with Damascus and Lebanese groups. These internal divisions are explained in the context of political factionalism in post revolutionary Iran. As a power struggle between moderates and radicals developed over a variety of internal and foreign policy issues such as ties with the US, exporting revolution and supporting freedom movements, these factions became divided over relations with Amal, the PLO and Libya. At this time, the most significant development in Iranian-Syrian-Lebanese relations came as the radicals endeavored to dispatch volunteers to southern Lebanon in December 1979.

Internally, posting the Iranian forces was an attempt to defy the moderate provisional government by radical clergy. The subsequent factional disagreement between radical clergy and moderates in Iran and the Syrian, Lebanese and PLO's uncooperative stances, thwarted the Iran's first bid to send forces to Lebanon. Understanding these developments sheds light on the future course of Iranian-Syrian relations and their cooperation in Lebanon which experienced periodic friction throughout the 1980s.

A. The Years of Turmoil and the First Revolutionary Endeavor to Reach Lebanon

No sooner had the imperial regime fallen, than cracks began to appear in the revolutionary unity which had formed against the *ancien regime*. Questions over the ideological content of the new regime and its economic and cultural path, as well as the

foreign policy course of the revolution deeply divided radicals and moderates and secular and religious groups that had joined forces against Mohammad Reza Shah under the charismatic leadership of Khomaini. From February 1979 till June 1981, Iran went through upheavals and drastic development that left a lasting effect on the future course of the revolution. This internal turmoil, aggravated by an Iraqi all-out attack in September 1980, overshadowed the foreign policy of the revolutionary regime.

The first stage of the 1979-81 period, from the downfall of the Shah in February till November 1979, was marked by dualism of power. The provisional government under the control of moderates, alongside the Islamic Revolutionary Council, Shūrā-yi Inqilāb-i Islāmī, which was mostly under the influence of radical clergy of the Islamic Republic Party (IRP), jointly ruled the country.

A number of radical episodes, most notably the capture of the American embassy in Tehran by students, brought about the end of this stage and sealed the fate of Bazargan government. In the second stage, after the resignation of the provisional government, the country entered a period of rapid radicalization which lasted until June 1981. Indeed with the elimination of Bazargan and LMI[12], factionalism began to grow between the Islamic Republic Party[13] and the office of President Abol Hassan Banisadr. The end of the second stage culminated in the impeachment of President Banisadr and a bloody showdown

[12] The Liberation Movement of Iran, *Nehzat-i Azadi-yi Iran*

[13] The Islamic Republic Party (IRP) was founded in February 1979. It was considered the party of the clergy as Ayatollah Beheshtī, Mūsavī Ardebīlī, Mahdavī kanī, Ali Khamenehi, Hāshemī Rafsanjani and Mohammad Bāhonar were prominent members of the IRP. All of these figures later took key posts in the 1980s.

between the secular and religious groups which ultimately brought about the reign of clerical rule.

From February 1979 till 1982, the regime was pinned down by the volatile internal situation which was exacerbated by concomitant unrest in the minority provinces of the north, west and south of Iran. On top of all this, the Iraqi attack in September 1980 and the invasion of large parts of Iranian territory by Saddam Hossein's powerful war machine plunged the new regime into an even deeper chaos. The internal situation was so chaotic that Saddam Hossein believed that his army would be able to reach Tehran in less than a week.

Externally, the dualism of power that manifested itself in the struggle between the newly established revolutionary institutions and the governmental entities marred the foreign policy of the nascent revolutionary regime with confusion and discordance. Both radicals and moderates strived to dominate foreign policy which could in return increase their internal sway. Anarchy and disorder in the revolution's foreign policy is evident from what occurred during the first official visit of the Iranian ambassador to the Syrian presidential palace where Hujjat al-Islām Alī Akbar Muhtashamī-pour[14] was to submit his credentials to President Assad. "Two years after the revolution, the [Iranian] embassy [in Damascus] was in such confusion that in the Presidential palace, after the Syrian national anthem was played, to our astonishment the corps started to play the Shah regimes' anthem instead of the one of the revolution", remembers Muhtashamī, "when the Iranian embassy made an official complaint to the Syrian foreign ministry and asked for clarification, they

[14] He is usually known as Alī Akbar Muhtashamī as the suffix "pour" is dropped from his family name.

replied that the Iranian foreign ministry had so far failed to provide them with the new anthem" (Interview; Ali Akbar Muhtashamī, Tehran, 2010/07/17).

B. Class Struggle and Factionalism in Post Revolutionary Iran

Compared to the lifespan of the Islamic Republic, the period of February 1979-June1981 is very short. Yet it was a very complicated political era during which many heterogeneous and transitory coalitions between secular and religious groups as well as moderate and radical factions determined the future course of the revolution. Factionalism in this period stemmed from class struggle around social cleavages that were activated in the wake of the downfall of the imperial regime[15] (Bashiriyeh, 1984, 125). Strife over foreign policy and the divergent approach of radicals and moderates to the Levant in this period was an integral part of this factional rivalry; a phenomenon which is only comprehensible in the wider context of power struggle between moderates and radicals in post revolutionary Iran.

The moderates held key positions in the provisional government of Mehdi Bazargan which was introduced a few days before the downfall of the Pahlavi regime. The elements of the first government of the revolution were mostly members of the LMI, National Front[16], the Nationalist party and JAMA.[17] In terms of social background, most members of

[15] Social cleavages are structural differences that have roots in historical events of a society (such as the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe). Social cleavages separate people along economic, language, religious and other lines (see: Lipset, 1963, 71& Lipset& Rokkan, 1967, 52).

[16] *Jebhe-yi Melli*

[17] The only radical group which took part in the provisional government was JAMA, the Revolutionary Movement of the Muslim People of Iran. Established in the 1960s, this Islamic leftist group advocated Islamic socialism and the rule of councils system, *neẓam-i Shūrā'I*, in Iran (see:

the provisional government were large land owners and capitalists and a number of them had held governmental positions under Pahlavi.[18] Indeed, the Bazargan government represented the bourgeois and was the major force behind undermining efforts to turn the 1979 revolution into a social revolution (see: Bashiriyeh, 1984, 134& Behdad, 1995, 105). As the class struggle over the land reform, workers councils and nationalization of foreign trade was set in motion after the revolution, the provisional government emerged as the main challenge to radicals and their call for radical foreign policy and economic measures.[19]

The radical bloc was composed of Islamist factions, most notably the Sazman-i Mujahidin-i Inqilab-i Islami, the Islamic Republic Party[20] and Khat-i seh, as well as a constellation of leftist groups[21] that were struggling against the moderates for influence in the new regime's institutions. Controlling the Revolutionary Guards (RG) and the Islamic Revolutionary Council was key in this power struggle. The Islamic Revolutionary Council,

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Nekūrūh, 1377/1998, 51). JAMA stepped down from the Provisional government in protest to the moderate polices of the ruling government (see: Ibid, 227-228).

[18] Individuals such as the oil minister Ali Akbar Moīnfar, treasure minister Ali Ardalān and Dr. Mūlavī, the head of the Central Bank, all held high rank positions before the 1979 revolution (See: Bashiriyeh, 1984, 134).

[19] On the class struggle in post revolutionary Iran and the role of provisional government, see: Moaddel, 1991, 317-343; Ashraf, 1361/ 1980, 31; Bashiriyeh, 1984, 126-128. For an insightful overview of workers struggle after the 1979 revolution, see: Bayat, 1987, 100-194.

[20] It is important to note that the IRP had a strong Bāzārī -conservative wing in that time. The frictions between the Bāzārī -conservatives and the radicals inside the party who were known as Maktabīs, led into the abolition of the IRP in 1987. However, under Ayatollah Beheshtī as the secretary general, the IRP was pursuing a clear radical agenda and the right wing of the party was subdued to the radical wing (see: Behrooz, 1991, 600-601& Moslem, 2002, 68).

[21] The main leftist groups in this period were the Tudeh party, The Organization of Iranian People's Fadāīān, Peykār and the People's Mujahidin of Iran (MKO) which was led by Masūd Rajavī.

whose members were appointed by Ayatollah Khomaini, was mostly under the control of the IRP clergy[22]. They were contending with lay politicians of both moderate provisional government and leftist groups such as MKO and Peykar to dominate the new regime.

The IRP was established only ten days after the collapse of the Imperial Regime. From the very beginning, IRP leaders were people from the top ranks of the new state. Emerging from the Revolutionary Council, this leadership was able to put its people in charge of important posts including the RG (see: Behrooz, 1991, 600-602). Facing the rapid expansion of the IRP, Mehdi Bazargan accused the IRP's leaders of being "impatient with and intolerant of all other views" saying that they "genuinely believe that only they know what is best for the people and Revolution" (see: Najmabadi, 1986, 148). Likewise, President Banisadr who won the presidency over the IRP's candidate, Jalāleddīn Fārsī, saw the party's ultimate goal as creating a single-party state, *nizām-i tak hezbī*, in Iran (interview; Banisadr, Paris, 2010/05/22).

Despite IRP's bitter confrontations with the leftist and secular forces, there was also a simmering rivalry between the party and the clergy in Khat-i seh for gaining influence in the RG. Replacing the first chief commander of the RG, Abbās Zamānī with Morteżā Reżā'ī and the removal of Sayyid Mehdi Hāshemī from the RG's unit of Freedom Movement were consequences of such contentions over the RG (see: Bakhash, 1984, 109-110).

[22] The five men put in charge of establishing the IRP were members of the Revolutionary Council. These clergy were: Rafsanjani, Khamenehi, Javād Bāhonar, Mūsavī Ardabīlī and Ayatollah Beheshtī (see: Behrooz, 1991, 600). Ayatollah Beheshtī who became later the secretary general of the IRP exerted most influence in the council (Montazeri, 1379/2000, 333).

Two prominent clerical figures of the radical factions were Ayatollah Husayn Ali Montazeri and Ayatollah Mohammad Husayn Beheshtī, who was the founder and secretary general of the IRP[23]. While Beheshtī was trying to organize religious forces in the IRP and pursue revolutionary measures through the party, Ayatollah Montazeri remained independent and sought to carry out his radical visions above the ongoing factionalism. Yet he was considered the de facto leader of *Khat-i seh*, third line, which was a loose concentration of radical clergy[24] who were neither in the IRP nor supported the moderates in Bazargan and Banisadr governments (interviews; Sayyid Hādī Hāshemī, Qom, 2005/05/14& Banisadr, Paris, 2010/05/22).

Montazeri, who elected by the Council of Experts in 1985 as Ayatollah Khomaini's successor, advocated establishing ties with freedom movements and creating an Islamist International, beynul mellal-e eslami. Throughout the 1980s, his office was a hub of patronage for revolutionary movements around the world. "We believed that we had to support them", says Ayatollah Montazeri about revolutionary groups in other countries.

“The holy goal of the revolution was uprising against arrogance, estīkbār, and suppression. Other suppressed nations have the same right to rise up and for this we were supporting them as we had sought backing during our revolution (interview; Ayatollah Montazeri, Qom, 2007/07/24). His high revolutionary credentials and jurisprudential status

[23] Ayatollah Beheshtī was killed in 1981 alongside many other IRP members in a bomb explosion which destroyed the party's headquarters.

[24] Prominent figures in this faction were some members of Ayatollah Khomaini’s office, including his son Ahmad, Sayyid Mohammad Mūsavī Khū’īnīhā, Serājeddīn Mūsavī, members of Ayatollah Montazeri’s office such as Sayyid Hādī Hāshemī, Sayyid Mehdi Hāshemī, Shaykh Hassan Ibrāhīmī, Dr. Hādī Najafābādī, Isfahan’s Friday prayer leader, Ayatollah Jalāleddīn Ṭāherī, Abdollāh Nū’rī, Shaykh Abbās Ali Rūhānī and Alī Akbar Muhtashamī (interview; Sayyid Hādī Hāshemī, Qom, 2005/05/14, also see: anonym, 1377/1998, 80).

inside the seminaries, made Ayatollah Montazeri the only prominent clergy who backed radical economic reforms and advocated exporting revolution (see: Akhavi, 1986, 66& Menashri, 1990, 96-97; 128). In fact, while radicals basically lacked the backing of prominent ulama in Qom, both Ayatollah Montazeri and, to a lesser degree, Ayatollah Beheshtī, provided a religious umbrella for their agenda[25].

One major manifestation of factionalism in the 1979-81 period, was friction between revolutionary organs and the state apparatus. Moderates in the Bazargan government wanted to act within the existing bureaucracy which was inherited from the *ancien regime*, while radicals sought to surpass them by consolidating the revolutionary institutions, nahādhā-yi inqilab-i, that worked side by side with governmental entities and the bureaucracy that had existed before.

The Revolutionary Guards which constituted a parallel army operated along with the regular army and was a major tool for advancing the radicals' foreign policy goals in other countries, particularly in Lebanon. The Komītehs[26] functioned in the same area as the established police, while Revolutionary Courts made judgments on matters in the jurisdiction of still-existing civil courts. The Basīj, Mobilization or Volunteers Corps and the Foundation of the Deprived, Bonyad-i Mustazafan as well as the Islamic Societies

[25] Among radical economic plans in that time, the most significant was a progressive land reform known as *Band-i jīm*, which was proposed by Ayatollahs Montazeri and Beheshtī. The plan authorized confiscating land lords' lands and distributing them among the peasants. This unleashed a fierce opposition from moderates and conservative *ulama* (see: Abrahamian, 1986, 109& Floor, 1980, 520& anonym, 1377/1998, 513).

[26] Revolutionary Committees that were in charge of the security of cities.

throughout the country were other institutions that were functioning under the IRP's control and parallel to the state apparatuses (see: Miller, 1986, 187& Behrooz, 1991, 600).

The revolutionary institutions, which were mostly under the control of radical clergy in the IRP and Khat-i seh, “not only duplicated and usurped the functions of the existing bureaucracy; they also constituted a formidable machinery for patronage, mass mobilization, ideological education and a many faceted repression” (Bakhash, 1984, 243).

Apart from all the internal ramifications, the protracted struggle over controlling nascent revolutionary institutions and the state apparatus had a long-lasting impact on the new regime's foreign policy; as both moderates and radicals exploited their influence within them to advance their divergent agendas regarding Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere.

C. Bazargan’s Foreign Policy

The foreign policy was a major subject of conflict between the moderate and radical factions, especially over the issue of exporting the revolution and supporting freedom movements in other countries. While being critical of the Shah’s alliance with the United States, Mehdi Bazargan, his nationalist allies such as Karīm Sanjābī and figures like Ibrahim Yazdi, Sādeq Qotbzadeh and Abol Hassan Banisadr were never committed anti-Americans. Indeed these figures who steered the diplomacy of revolutionary Iran between 1979-1981, sought a reasonable relationship with the US and at the same time viewed the Soviet Union as a greater threat to Iran’s security and independence (see: Hunter, 1990, 81).

Moderates in Bazargan's, and later Banisadr's, government, formed their policy towards the Great Powers based on non-alignment and emphasized that revolutionary actions should not create problems in the state-to-state relations of Iran. In contrast, radicals criticized the neutral stance of the provisional government and its effort to thwart their attempts to establish connections with freedom movements and revolutionary forces around the world. They believed that the provisional government, under the influence of the Amal movement, was not inclined to support the Palestinian resistance or establish strong ties with revolutionary countries like Libya. "The provisional government in fact wanted to rule", says Ayatollah Montazeri, "it was in their minds that we have to comply and come to terms with all the governments in the world. [They said that] this sort of revolution that you are talking about hinders the consolidation of the government" (interview; Ayatollah Montazeri, Qom, 2007/07/24).

By adopting a nonalignment approach, the provisional government's policy toward the Great Powers followed the tradition of former nationalist prime minster Mosadeq, which was better known as "negative equilibrium"[27] (see: Ramzani, 1989, 203-204). This principle was, according to the foreign minister Ibrahim Yazdi, the basis of the future course of Iran's foreign policy (see: Keyhan, 1358/07/22-1979/10/14 & Jumhuri-yi Eslami, 1358/03/27-1979/06/17).

Mehdi Bazargan justified his non-hostile US policy within this concept of negative equilibrium and in defiance to the pugnacious anti-American literature of radicals, he

[27] Negative equilibrium, movāzene-yi manfī, was the program of Mohammad Mosaddeq', the toppled Prime Minister of Iran from 1951 to 1953. It postulated that developing Iranian national sovereignty would necessitate a policy of non-alliance with both the United States and Soviet Union (see: poulson, 2005, 168-169).

asserted that "if America is the great Satan the USSR and [the pro-Moscow communist] Tudeh party are greater ones" (Bazargan, 1363/1983, 174). In the same vein, Mustafā Chamrān, whose role in the provisional government and then RG was much hated by leftist groups (see: Nakhaī, 1387/2009, 69), argued that revolution should be an internal process and cannot be exported (Jumhuri-yi Eslami, 1358/07/14-1979/10/06). In fact, from February till November 1979, the provisional government that deeply distrusted the Soviet Union's intentions in Iran and its proxy the Tudeh party,[28] tried to maintain a friendly relationship with Washington and even made several significant economic and military contracts with the United States, including intelligence cooperation against the Soviet's involvement in Iran[29] (see: Valībeygī, 1381/2002, 222& Bakhash, 1984, 70).

A mere three days before the occupation of the US embassy in Tehran, prime minister Bazargan flanked by his foreign minister Ibrahim Yazdi and defense minister Mustafā Chamrān held a meeting with President Carter's advisor, Brzezinski, in Algeria. This meeting, which took place amid the increasing antagonism between radical clergy in the IRP and Khat-i seh with the provisional government, brought Bazargan sharp attacks from radical factions that branded his government as pro-American and pro-Imperialist. The unabated dispute between the provisional government and radicals culminated in the seizure of the US embassy in November 4, 1979.

[28] Just a few days after Bazargan's takeover, he demanded outlawing the pro-Moscow communist party of Iran, Tudeh, because, according to Bazargan, Tudeh was banned by the Pahlavi's constitution and therefore its activity was not legal (Keyhan, 1357/01/11- 1978/03/31). Tudeh depicted the Bazargan government in its official organ as the liberal representative of bourgeoisie (see: Menashri, 1990, 114).

[29] On the relationship between the provisional government and the Soviet Union, see: (Hunter, 1990, 81-85).

The occupation of the US embassy and the subsequent support of Ayatollah Khomaini and radical factions to the student captors, not only aimed to eliminate the US presence, it also was a consequence of internal calculations. It was indeed an opportunity for radical clergy to enervate the moderates and take the initiative vis-à-vis the leftist groups[30] that categorically depicted the clerical factions as reactionary and only ostensibly anti imperialist (Behrooz, 1380/2001, 194). While radical clergy in the IRP and Khat-i seh immediately lent their support to the students, the leftist groups did not have any other choice except approving the seizure of the US embassy[31].

Two days later, Bazargan resigned, marking the early decline of moderate liberals vis-à-vis their assertive clerical opposition (see: Baqī, 1376/1997, 35-38& Bakhash, 1984, 150). The seizure of American hostages radicalized the political sphere and transformed the very character of Iran's foreign relations. In the words of Mehdi Bazargan, it altered the Khomaini regime's stance from "defensive" to "confrontational" (Ramzani, 1985, 62).

D. Lebanon and the Post Revolutionary Dualism of Power

Lebanon from the very beginning had central importance not only in the international approach of the "Islamic revolution", but also in the factional rivalries inside the Islamic Republic. The historical ties between Iran and the Lebanese Shia, the geostrategic importance of Lebanon and its proximity to Israel made this small

[30] A few weeks earlier, Fadāīān, a leftist organization, captured the US embassy briefly, however the provisional government managed to expel them from the embassy.

[31] On the seizure of the US embassy in Tehran and its political ramifications, see: (Baghei, 1376, 20-38).

Mediterranean country a natural regional platform for the international goals and rhetoric of the Islamic revolution.

The constitution of the revolutionary regime articulates such international rhetoric and slogans through emphasizing "a single world community". It depicts the Islamic revolution as "a movement aimed at the triumph of all the *Mustażafīn*, deprived, over the *Mustakbarīn*, arrogant oppressors" (Algar, 1980, 22). As Ayatollah Husayn Ali Montazeri, who was the head of the Constitution Assembly (August-November 1979), describes the general rationale at the time, "our government was Islamic and Islam recognizes no border" (interview; Ayatollah Montazeri, Qom, 2007/08/11).

In this vein Lebanon, with a sizable Shii population and host to the politico-military infrastructure of the PLO was considered a primary ground for the revolutionary aspirations in Iran. Figures that advocated the idea of exporting revolution saw Lebanon as pivotal to their goal. "Syria and Lebanon were the primary turf for vaulting the revolution and if it were not for those activities in Syria and Lebanon, exporting the revolution might have been left unmaterialized as a chimerical aspiration," says Muhtashamī who played a key role in founding Hizbullah years later (interview; Ali Akbar Muhtashamī, Tehran, 2010/07/18).

The Islamic dimension of the 1979 revolution gave a model of resistance for Muslims and in particular the disinherited Shia in Lebanon (see: Kramer, 1987, 6-13& Norton, 1987, 213) whose ties to Iran extended centuries back to the Safavid's relations with Shii scholars from Jabal 'Amil[32] (see: Hourani, 2005, 51-61). After the revolution, in

[32] While the two Pahlavi rulers did not take this too seriously domestically, in their foreign relations it presented a certain interest for Shia outside Iran – if for no other reason than that Iran represented

popular speeches on the regional role of the revolution, this old tie was brought up as a reference point. When Mustafā Chamrān returned to Iran, in his public speeches, he pointedly introduced himself as arriving from Jabal ʻAmil "whose people throughout the 1400 year history of Islam have been under constant suppression" (anonymous, 1378/1999, 17).

In the same vein, Mohammad Montazeri who led the Iranian volunteers to Syria and Lebanon to take part in battles against Israeli occupation forces depicted the move as "a traverse to the land of Jabal ʻAmil where our civilization originates from" (an-Nahar, 1979/12/10).

However such attitude towards Lebanon did not meet with consensus in Iran and even added fuel to internal disagreements. Revolutionary Iranians watched the Lebanese arena and Amal-Palestinian confrontations through their own pre-revolution experience and background in Lebanon and hence envisaged contradictory approaches for the new regime's policy towards Lebanon.

Individuals like Jalāleddīn Fārsī, Mustafā Chamrān, Ibrahim Yazdi, Abbās Zamānī, Ali Akbar Muhtashamī and Mohammad Montazeri who influenced the Iranian policy towards Lebanon had chosen their allies from different warring factions in Lebanon based on their own ideological background and reading of the Lebanese internal situation. In essence the dispute in Tehran at that time was over the question of who was eligible to be the main Iranian ally in Lebanon and represent the Islamic Republic there.

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a beacon of hope for many non-Iranian Shia, given that most of them were either of low socio-economic status or even suffered more or less overt discrimination.
In Lebanon privileged contacts with some Shia notables afforded the Shah's regime a certain inside track into the political system. These confessional ties help explain why in the beginning the Shah's regime was quite willing to subsidize the activities of Musa Sadr (see: Chehabi, 2005, 25-26).

E. The Provisional Government: Old Ties with Amal

The LMI members,[33] who held key positions inside the provisional government, along with several conservative figures[34] were in favor of close relations with the Amal movement. They all had significant experience in Lebanon and indeed their cordial ties with Amal and its founder, Musa Sadr traced back to the 1960s and 70s.

The most prominent pro Amal figure in the provisional government was Mustafā Chamrān who served as Bazargan's defense minister. Chamrān was a member of Amal and his residence in Lebanon from 1971 till 1979 afforded him strong ties with the movement's leaders and a close relationship with Musa Sadr[35]. During the final two days before the collapse of the imperial regime, Chamrān organized 500 Amal militants to fly with them to Tehran via Damascus to take part in street combat against the disheartened forces of the Shah[36] (anonymous, 1378/1999, 16). However, he did not return to Iran until 17 February 1979 when he entered with a delegation from the Amal movement and the Lebanese Shia Higher Council to meet with Grand Ayatollah Khomaini in Qom.

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[33] Mehdi Bazargan, Yadullāh Sahābi, Ezatollah Sahābī, Hassan Nazīh, Abbās Sheybānī, Sādeq Ṭabātabā'ī and Ali Asgar Hāj-Sayyid Javādī all were members of LMI who took important posts in the provisional government. Also Musṭafā Chamrān, Ibrahim Yazdi and Abbās Amīr Enteẓām who were leading the LMI in the northern America before the revolution became prominent members in the provisional government (Meisamī, 1378/1999, 99).

[34] Ayatollah Hassan Qomī and Ayatollah Sayyid Kāzem Sharīatmadārī had close ties with Musa Sadr (see: Keyhan, 1358/2/22).

[35] For a personal account by Chamrān on his views and activities in Amal, see: anonym, 1376/1997.

[36] According to Chamrān, before they can fulfill the task, the street combats were over and the revolution was materialized (anonym, 1378/1999, 16).

After the disappearance of Musa Sadr, Chamrān held considerable influence inside the movement and therefore his departure came as a disappointment to many of Amal's rank and file who saw him as a potential leader after Musa Sadr (interviews, Rubāb Sadr, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2010/04/22 & Aql Hamīya, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2009/10/22).

Ibrahim Yazdi, who was deputy prime minister in charge of revolutionary affairs and then foreign minister in the Bazargan government, was also a friend of Musa Sadr and backed Amal's position. His close ties with Sadr's family, according to Musa Sadr's sister, gave Yazdi a status as significant as Chamrān (interview, Rubāb Sadr, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2010/04/29). Based on Yazdi's advice, in the early 1970s Musa Sadr invited Mustafā Chamrān to Lebanon to manage the technical school he had established for the Shia in Tyre (Chehabi, 2005, 183). During his tenure in the foreign ministry, Ibrahim Yazdi was the target of the sharpest criticism from radicals and the PLO. This animosity deepened particularly following his decision to assign pro Amal individuals to the Iranian embassy in Beirut (Document x, Tehran). Another pro-Amal figure in the provisional government was Musa Sadr's nephew, Sādeq Tabātabā'ī who became government spokesman in early July. He was one of the staunch anti-Libyan elements in the government.

Outside the provisional government, Sādeq Qotbzādeh who was the head of the national radio and television sympathized with Amal. He was a member of LMI and before 1979 was working in association with Chamrān and Yazdi in the US. Because of his close ties with Musa Sadr, Ayatollah Khomaini had assigned him to a follow up mission in to inquire the fate of the Lebanese Shii leader after his disappearance in August 1978 (interview; anonymous, Tehran, 2007/08/31). Following the fall of Bazargan government, Qotbzādeh who had parted ways with Bazargan, was appointed to the foreign ministry

where he remained active in undermining radical clergy' efforts to warm relations with Libya and dispatch revolutionary forces to Lebanon. By and large, the pro-Amal tendency of these figures and their approach to the relation with Libyans and Palestinians gained fame for them as pro-Amal faction, Amalīsthā, in Iran (see: Omid-e Iran, 1358/05/01/- 1979/07/23, No. 25& 1358/05/15/- 1979/08/06).

At another level, the warp and woof of ties between the LMI, which controlled the provisional government and Amal were woven through the ideological affinity of the two groups. Both LMI and Amal had a strong anti left stance and both were in essence reformist rather than revolutionary[37]. Amal inherited its reformist tradition from Musa Sadr whose main goal was improving the status of the Lebanese Shia within the sectarian system of Lebanon (see; al-Madīnī, 1999, 86-87& Shanahan, 2005, 160-161).

Unlike LNM and leftists groups which posed as an alternative to the Lebanese state, Amal sought entrenchment in Lebanon's confessional politics and contrary to what radicals in Tehran envisaged, the preeminent Lebanese ideology of the Amal movement[38], necessitated a separation between the Lebanese crisis and regional trends (see: Aruri, 1985, 7& al-Madīnī, 1999, 72; 54-55). This clearly concurred with the political agenda of moderates in Iran who were neither desirous of the idea of exporting revolution nor supportive of the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon.

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[37] On the history and ideology of LMI, see: H. E. Chehabi, Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: The Liberation Movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini (London: I.B.Tauris, 1990).

[38] Amal is not a Shii movement devoid of nationality. Amal defines itself, in its Mīthāq Haraka-t Amal, Charter or Covenant of the Amal Movement, as a Harakat wataniyya, national movement, "that strongly believes in the preeminence of the nation, in the unity of the nation [al-waṭan], and in maintaining [the nation's] sovereignty intact." (see: Norton, 1987, 74& al-Madini, 1999, 87).

F. Frictions between Moderates and Radicals over Controlling Foreign Policy

Ever since the revolution, radicals and moderates fought to control foreign policy. It was intertwined with factionalism and class struggle over determining the ideological content of the new regime and the future economic, cultural and political course of revolution. During the reign of moderates, the 1979-1981 provisional government and Banisadr's presidency, issues such as relations with the US, exporting revolution and supporting freedom movements were extremely divisive and controversial. The controversy, in fact, outlived the moderate "Islamic liberals" era and remained a bone of contention throughout the 1980s reign of the clergy. Against this background, disagreements over relations with Amal and the PLO impacted the foreign relations of Iran under the Bazargan government.

Iranian radicals and the PLO alike saw the Bazargan government a pro American entity whose approach to Lebanon and adverse stance towards the Palestinian resistance was forged under the influence of Amal[39]. Conflict over Amal and the PLO characterized much of the moderates-radicals foreign policy debate under Bazargan. The strife in the Iranian embassy in Beirut which witnessed a prolonged contention between the pro-Palestinian radicals and pro-Amal moderates over controlling the embassy, inviting members of the PLO and Amal by rival factions to Iran for training Pasdarans in the newly established RG and posting volunteer forces in Lebanon by radicals in late 1979 to defy the provisional government were manifestations of this dispute.

[39] When Yasir Arafat met with an Iranian delegation, headed by Mohammad Montazeri, in Libya, he expressed his disappointment with the provisional government by saying that "Imam [Khomaini] is anti American but they are negotiating with the US and moving in the opposite direction" (interview; Hassan 'Aṭā'ī, Beirut, 2009/10/03).

G. Pro-Palestinian Revolutionaries

With the advent of revolution, radicals found a long-awaited opportunity to transform their ties with Palestinian and revolutionary groups into a strategy of action. Among these radicals, Hujjat al-Islām Mohammad Montazeri was a principle player in the period of 1979-1981. He was an internationalist whose bold personality, self-effacing demeanor and high revolutionary credentials made him popular with Iranian revolutionaries and Palestinian and Lebanese radicals alike (interview; Talāl Salmān, Beirut, 2009/08/19).

The young cleric began his anti-Shah activities when he was still a teenager. He was imprisoned and tortured many times by SAVAK.[40] In the late 1960s, he fled Iran to Pakistan and then moved to Iraq, Syria and Lebanon where he made connections with Islamist and revolutionary groups including the PLO (see: anonymous, 1362/1983, 69–79). In Syria and Lebanon, he set up a network in association with the PLO for recruiting Iranian and Afghan activists for military training, transferring arms to anti-Shah groups in Iran and revolutionary forces in Middle East as well as financing and facilitating their operations and movements across the region and even in Europe.

After the 1979 revolution, to maintain and strengthen these ties, Montazeri established SATJA and the Freedom Movements Unit in the RG. “Mohammad [Montazeri] argued that as the revolutionaries such as the Palestinians supported us [before the Revolution], it falls on us to support them too”, recounts Abbās Zamānī (interview; Abbās

[40] SAVAK was the acronym for the Shah's secret police, Sazeman-i Etelaat va Amniyat-e Keshvar, national intelligence and security organization.

Zamānī, Rawalpindi, 2008/11/05). He sought an Iranian revolutionary presence in Lebanon and made the first bid to dispatch Iranians to southern Lebanon in cooperation with al-Fatah. Like many other radicals such as Abbās Zamānī, Ali Akbar Muhtashamī[41] and Jalāleddīn Fārsī, the young cleric was intimately involved in the Lebanese arena, had strong ties with the PLO and abhorred Amal's non-revolutionary and anti-Palestinian vision. Politically, all these figures, except Jalāleddīn Fārsī who was a member of the IRP, were considered Khat-i seh and acted under the umbrella of Ayatollah Montazeri's tutelage.

Abbās Zamānī, also known as Abū Sharīf, worked in association with Mohammad Montazeri and other radicals in Lebanon. His sobriquet, Abū Sharīf, was inherited from Lebanon where he resided in Bourj al-Barajneh camp between 1970- 1979. In the camp, he set up a network to recruit Iranians for arms training in the Palestinian camps[42] (interview; Abbās Zamānī, Rawalpindi, 2008/11/05). Later, as a founding member of the RG, he continued his close ties with Mohammad Montazeri and Sayyid Mehdi Hāshemī at the Freedom Movements office and invited Palestinians to Tehran to train Pasdarans.

Another pro-Palestinian was Jalāleddīn Fārsī whose relationship with PLO, like Abū Sharīf, originated from Lebanon where he resided between 1970-72. He was one of the most fiery critics of anti-Palestinian attitudes of Musa Sadr and Mustafā Chamrān[43]. In

[41] Muhtashamī's background and exploits will be discussed in the next chapter.

[42] Abbās Zamānī did not spend all this period in Lebanon and in fact he was residing in Pakistan, Iran and Europe for a while. See his interviews with: al-Sharq al-Awast, 1979/12/04& Teshrien, 1980/02/16.

[43] During a telephone chat with Jalāleddīn Fārsī (Tehran, 2010/01/18), he told the author that Musṭafā Chamrān was not only against PLO, but also against Palestinians and their cause. He proclaimed that Musṭafā Chamrān in one public speech where he was among the audience attacked the Palestinians and their cause.

a book he published on his memoirs in Lebanon, he flatly accused Sadr and Chamrān of being anti-Palestinian[44]. This book was in Persian and drew an angry reaction from Amal that regarded the work an effort to tarnish the face of the movement and its founder Musa Sadr among the Persian speaking Iranians. “After the revolution”, says a former member of Amal, “books and speeches were published in Iran from people like Jalāleddīn Fārsī to distort the history of Imam Sadr" (interview; Husayn al-Husaynī, Beirut, 2009/10/23).

In the post revolution period, Fārsī did not play any significant role in forging the Iranian policy in Lebanon. He was nominated by the IRP to run for the first presidential election against Banisadr. However, he had to step down after it was discovered that his father was Afghan and hence he was not qualified to run.

Apart from these individuals, other political and military figures who took later key offices in the Islamic Republic were associated with Mohammad Montazeri’s international network. All the Iranian dissidents, excluding the Marxists, who went to Lebanon in the 1970s for receiving guerilla training, were received and organized by Montazeri and his disciple[45]. Mohammad Gharażī who held a number of ministerial positions like the “Oil” and “Post and Telegraph”, Sayyid Serājeddīn Mūsavī, the head of Islamic Revolution Committees and former ambassador to Pakistan, and Sayyid Yahyā Rahīm Safavī who was the RG commander from 1997 to 2007 all went through this network to Syria and Lebanon in 1970s and resided in al-Fatah camps for training in guerrilla warfare. As one of

[44] Jalāleddīn Fārsī. *Zavāya-yi tarīk*. (Tehran, 1373/1994). For his acrimonious language, Fārsī is one of the most resented anti-Sadr individuals among Amal leadership.

[45] On Iranian left ties with Palestinians and their presence in Lebanon, see: (Chehabi, 2005, 185-190).

Montazeri's disciples points out, "the origin of military training of many commanders of Sepah and forces that had a role in [Iranian] revolution, was the martyr Mohammad Montazeri (Jamālī, 1389,2010, 130).

The pro-Palestinian faction enjoyed the backing of some members of Ayatollah Khomaini's office, in particular his favored grandson, Sayyid Husayn Khomaini and Shaykh Mohammad Sādeq Khalkālī. They lambasted the foreign policy of Bazargan government and the conservative economic approach of moderates[46] and advocated strong ties with PLO and Kaddafi.

A few months after the fall of the Shah, Sayyid Husayn Khomaini and Mohammad Sādeq Khalkālī visited Lebanon and made speeches that drew angry reactions from Amal's leaders and Imam Musa Sadr's family. Interestingly, during the visit, they were hosted by al-Fatah and not the Shii Amal (interview; Hānī al-Fahs, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2010/05/01& as-Safir, 1979/10/23). Khalkālī during his visit to the south claimed that Imam Musa Sadr had been killed in Rome and there are efforts to conceal his body to protract the problem (as-Safir, 1980/04/08). Their stance was extremely annoying to Amal leaders who held Colonel Kaddafi responsible for Sadr's disappearance. "Mr. Khalkālī and Mr. Husayn Khomaini were leading efforts to tarnish the relation between Amal and Iran," explains Rubāb Sadr, "they caused much damage to the issue of Imam Musa Sadr and Amal's relation with Iran" (interview; Rubāb Sadr, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2010/04/22).

[46] See: Sayyid Husayn Khomaini's speech against Ayatollah Āzarī Qomī (Keyhan, 1358/07/22-1979/10/14) when the latter asserted that according to the tradition the Islamic government cannot limit the capital and wealth of the citizens.

1. Mohammad Montazeri and the Islamist International

In the early years of revolution, Hujjat al-Islām Montazeri was the most outspoken critic of the "non-revolutionary" foreign policy of the provisional government and a staunch proponent of exporting the revolution. He argued that without promoting the revolution beyond the Iranian borders and establishing strong ties with revolutionary countries and movements, the revolution in Iran would besiege and succumb to enemies[47] (interview; Hassan 'Atā'ī, Karaj, 2008/07/30& Mahmūd Dordkeshān, Isfahan, 2008/08/13).

Indeed, within the ranks of the clergy, at a time of chaos and turbulence when they lacked organization and unity, Mohammad Montazeri was one of the few clergymen with a solid vision of organizing the revolutionary forces. This lack of centrality originated partly from the centuries old tradition inside the Shii clerical system which rules out any educational hierarchy and central authority that is in fact scattered among top marāja, sources of emulation. Contrary to this dominant tradition that is honored by traditional clergy as *our order is in our disorder*, Hujjat al-Islām Montazeri believed in the necessity of training cadres and organizing the revolutionary clergy (interviews; Husayn Mahdavī, Najafabad, 2008/08/09& Mahmūd Vāhed, Najafabad, 2008/08/09). Establishing SATJA, Revolutionary Organization of the Masses of the Islamic Republic, was a move in this direction[48]. The vast network of ties with Leftist and anti-establishment groups in other

[47] To uphold his bid to send revolutionary volunteers to Lebanon, for instance, he argued that "we intend to strike Zionism which is a derivation of conspiracy against the revolution. Indeed we are attacking the roots" (an-Nahar, 1979/12/19).

[48] He also established an educational center in ẓafar Street in Tehran for training carders for the revolution's diplomacy. He believed that the revolution needs diplomats with a revolutionary ethic (interview; Mahmūd Dordkeshān, Isfahan, 2008/08/13).

countries that he inherited from long years of pre-revolution activities, laid the context of his quest after the revolution.

SATJA was a hub for organizing Iranian and non-Iranian revolutionary forces and the provenance of the unit of freedom movement in the RG. It was also the headquarters for organizing volunteers to be dispatched to battle front in the southern Lebanon. As "an international party", in the words of Saīd Montazeri, (interview; Saīd Montazeri, Qom, 2008/08/23) SATJA was established to materialize the concept of Islamist International, *beynol mellal-e eslāmī*, that Mohammad Montazeri was soliciting for since the beginning of his anti-Shah activities in 1963[49]. Other than Palestinian and Lebanese, Afghan, Eritrean, Irish and Filipino activists, individuals from the Latin America and members of the Muslim Brotherhood and Sahara's Polisario were frequenting SATJA (interviews; Saīd Montazeri, Qom, 2008/08/23& Asghar Salehī, Qom, 2008/04/21).

Mohammad Montazeri, known among Palestinians by his sobriquet, Abū Ahmad, attached great importance, in the eyes of his rival excessive importance, to the Palestinian resistance and the PLO[50]. This was not merely ideological. It also stemmed from operational and practical considerations. PLO was resourceful and had very well trained and adroit cadres. Also their intelligence apparatus was strong and Palestinians were always a source of information for Hujjat al-Islām Montazeri who intended to use their

[49] On Mohammad Montazeri's struggles and views, see: *Farzand-i Eslam va Quran.* Teheran: Vahed-e farhangi Bunyad-e Shahid, 1362/1983, vol. 1& 2.

[50] Ayatollah Montazeri says when Arafat visited Iran as the first foreign leader after the revolution and met with him, "he kept talking about Abū Ahmad. I told him who is Abū Ahmad? Arafat said we call Mohammad [Montazeri] Abū Ahmad" (interview; Ayatollah Montazeri, Qom, 2007/07/24).

experience to establish the revolutionary institutions in Iran. “Palestinians had very good knowledge of the region and Arab governments and [in his eyes] this was one of the values of working with Palestinians”, explains an associate of Montazeri (interview; Hassan ‘Atā’ī, Karaj, 2008/07/30). Indeed, such capabilities, and not exclusively ideological factors, were behind the creation of strong ties between anti-Shah radicals and the PLO in pre-1979 period. Speaking of their relations with Palestinians and Amal, Ahmad Movahedī who was based in al-Fatah camps says: “our relation was not limited to Palestinians. We also had ties with Amal. However, Amal was poor in terms of its means and even their members received military training in the Palestinian camps” (interview; Ahmad Movahedī, Tehran, 2010/07/04).

Radicals chose their ally in the Arab world by embracing PLO that was responsible, in the eyes of Amal leaders and their Iranian friends, for creating divisions between the Islamic Republic and the Shia movement (interview; Aātif Aoūn, al-Zahrani, 2009/11/04). As Imam Musa Sadr’s sister says, “The Palestinians, and in fact al-Fatah, after Imam Musa Sadr [disappearance] began propaganda and slander against Amal” (interview; Rubāb Sadr, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2010/04/22). On the other hand, radicals believed that the provisional government under the influence of its ties with Amal had failed to support the Palestinian cause and play a proper role in this regard (interview; anonymous, Tehran, 2007/08/31). “When we invited Palestinians to Iran and asked them to train the Revolutionary Guards, the interim government objected”, says the first commander of Sepah. “This stance was a reflection of Musa Sadr in Lebanon” (interview; Abbās Zamānī, Rawalpindi, 2008/11/05). Disagreement between moderates who supported Amal and radicals of Khat-i seh and IRP were not confined to this point. The issue of Iranian relations

with Libya and ties between the office of Ayatollah Montazeri and Libya deepened the animosity between radicals and Amal leaders and their allies in Tehran.

H. Controversy over Relations with Libya

Since the 1969 revolution in the oil-rich Libya, Muammar Kaddafi had been a generous supporter of revolutionary groups in the Middle East. The Iranian opposition of the Shah was no exception as they received financial and military aid from Tripoli. In the eastern flank of the Arab world, Lebanon was a place of interest for the Libyan leader. There he sponsored and backed many leftist, Nasserist and Palestinian groups that were at odds with Amal. The sour relation between the Shii movement and Libya culminated in Musa Sadr's disappearance in Libya which took place merely three months before the fall of the imperial regime in Iran. After the 1979 revolution, Amal leaders and Sadr's family expected that the new regime would confront and pressure Tripoli into revealing the fate of the Shia leader. Nevertheless, radicals in Tehran opted for strengthening ties with Libya which consequently deepened rifts between moderates and radicals.

Following the 1979 revolution, radicals in Iran advocated a close cooperation with Libya which was considered a main sponsor of the revolutionary movements in the world. "Mohammad [Montazeri] believed that among the Arab countries, the only revolutionary one was Libya", says Ayatollah Montazeri, "now that we made our revolution, we have to work with them against America and colonizers" (interview; Ayatollah Montazeri, Qom, 2007/08/11). He saw a strong relation with Tripoli necessary for the international role of the revolution and believed that if the Islamic aspect of the revolution in Iran merged with the revolution in Libya, it could gain many international achievements (interview; Hassan

Ibrāhīmī, Tehran, 2008/04/06). In the same vein, for the Libyan leadership "an unattainable dream" was materialized by the revolution in Iran and, of course, they considered themselves a natural ally of this triumph that they had been aiding since Kaddafi's takeover in Libya (as-Safir, 1979/05/06).

During the 1979-81 period, the pro-Amal figures and the provisional government made extensive efforts to undermine any opening with Kaddafi. Prime Minister Bazargan, whose relationship with Musa Sadr dated back to the 1960s (see: Chehabi, 2005, 152), was determined to keep the diplomatic doors closed to Kaddafi. He was particularly agitated over Major Jallūd's visit that took place without any official invitation from his Iranian counterpart[51] (interview; Banisadr, Paris, 2010/05/22).When a group of clergymen and Friday prayer leaders met Prime Minister Bazargan to ask him to resist any opening to Libya, he said that despite mounting pressures on him during Jallūd's visit to set up diplomatic relations with Tripoli, he was resolute to pursue a policy of exclusion towards Libya (Keyhan, 1358/07/12-1979/10/04).

Jallūd's visit brought the issue of relations with Libya to the forefront of factional rivalry between the radicals and moderates. In June 1979, when a revolutionary delegation made up of RG members and 65 cadres of the Islamic Republic Party[52] were to travel to Tripoli, the provisional government stopped them at the Mehrabad airport and did not

[51] Banisadr who met with the second in command of Libya on the request of Mohammad Montazeri says that the then prime minister Bazargan raised the issue in the Revolutionary Council meeting and complained that another countries' prime minister is brought to Iran without his knowledge (interview; Banisadr, Paris, 2010/05/22).

[52] Jalāleddīn Fārsī who ran later in the presidential election from the IRP against Banisadr was among the delegation (see: Jumhuri-yi Eslami, 1358/03/22- 1979/06/12).

allow them to fly to Libya. This led to a sit-in at the airport by the delegation and an exchange of accusations between Mohammad Montazeri, who arranged the trip, and the provisional government (See: Jumhuri-yi Eslami, 1358/03/21- 1979/06/11). Following that, the Islamic Republic Party criticized "some individuals in the provisional government" for preventing the revolutionary Iranians' trip to the brother country of Libya which had been supportive of the anti-shah resistance (Jumhuri-yi Eslami, 1358/03/21- 1979/06/11 &1358/03/24- 1979/06/14).

One month later, when Mohammad Montazeri and three other colleagues wanted to go to Libya, the provisional government again stopped them at the Mehrabad airport. However, this time after encounters between Montazeri's armed bodyguards and airport security forces, they managed to get on board under the protection of their bodyguards[53]. To downplay the visit which was aimed to "strengthen the ties between the two countries" (Jumhuri-yi Eslami, 1358/04/16- 1979/07/07), the provisional government spokesman, Sādeq Tabātabā'ī, announced that Montazeri neither represented the Iranian government nor was his visit to Libya official[54] (Keyhan, 1358/04/14- 1979/07/05& 1358/04/16- 1979/07/07).

Efforts to warm relations with Libya began only a few months after the disappearance of Musa Sadr in Libya. This was at a time when Amal's clashes with pro

[53] The three other companies were Salmān Safavī, Abū Hanīf and Ghafūrī who was an Afghan activist (interview; Saīd Montazeri, Khaveh, 2008/08/23).

[54] Following that, Bazargan and Ayatollah Mahdavī Kannī issued an arrest warrant for him. Afterward, Mohammad Montazeri increased his sharp criticism against the Prime Minister Bazargan and foreign minister Ibrahim Yazdi in his magazine, *Payam-i Shahid*. Consequently the attorney general for the revolutionary courts, Ayatollah Azarī Qomī, banned his magazine on the charge of enervating and profaning the provisional government (Keyhan, 1358/06/04- 1979/08/26 & 1358/06/06- 1979/08/28).

Libyan forces had increased in Lebanon, and Musa Sadr's advocates in the Sadr brigade, carried out retaliatory missions by bombing the Libyan embassy in Beirut (Jumhuri-yi Eslami, 1358/04/21- 1979/07/12).

The family of Imam Musa Sadr and Amal leaders were unhappy with this trend[55] and Amal's Secretary General, Husayn al-Hossein, criticized Mohammad Montazeri's stance and proclaimed that that contrary what Kaddafi claimed, Montazeri did not represent the Iranian government and was acting on his own (Keyhan, 1358/05/07- 1979/07/29). Radicals disputed claims about the Libyan role in Sadr's disappearance and saw behind persistent attacks on Libya an intention to "undermine the unity of revolutionary countries and the Palestinian revolution". Indeed, they ascribed the disappearance of the Lebanese Shii leader to a Zionist and imperialist plot.

I. The First Bid to Post Revolutionary Forces in Lebanon

December of 1979 was a turning point in the Islamic Republic's relations with Syria and Lebanon. Iranian volunteers, who were organized by SATJA, arrived in Damascus to take part in resistance operations alongside Palestinian forces in southern Lebanon. This initiative eventually failed to achieve its goal; however, it became a precursor to the Islamic Republic's involvement in Lebanon and posting the Revolutionary Guards to Bekaa two years later.

[55] See: Rubāb Sadr's speech in Yazd (Keyhan, 1358,02,22) that urged the Islamic government to pressure Libya before it becomes too late.

Dispatching the volunteers brought about a chain of reactions in Iran, Lebanon, Syria and also from the PLO. It was engineered by Mohammad Montazeri and executed through al-Fatah and pro-Palestinian individuals[56] in Lebanon. While the Lebanese government and the Amal movement were firmly opposed, both the Syrian government and al-Fatah tried to circumscribe and pigeonhole the initiative. Neither Yasir Arafat nor President Assad, who conceded stationing the volunteers to al-Fatah bases in Syria, yielded to Iranian pressures to open the Lebanese front to the impassioned volunteers. "Mohammad Montazeri was acting above the predominant equation in Lebanon", says Inīs al-Naqqāsh who was a liaison between al-Fatah and the volunteers. "Both Assad and Arafat were concerned about whom he was going to side with in Lebanon" (interview; Inīs al-Naqqāsh, Tehran, 2008/04/08).

In Iran the volunteers went initially through preparation and military training in Bagh-i Aqdasiye, a SATJA base in Tehran. After a few weeks, they flew to Syria in different stages (see; Etelaat, 1358/09/27- 1979/10/19& 1358/10/03- 1979/12/24). The mission was carried out in an increasing radicalized milieu, following the seizure of the American embassy which was sanctified by Ayatollah Khomaini as *the Second Revolution* and the fall of provisional government. However, pro-Amal figures like Sādeq Tabātabā'ī, who was in charge of the prime minister's office, and Sādeq Qotbzādeh, who replaced Ibrahim Yazdi in the foreign ministry, were still in influential positions to hamper the mission.

[56] Among these people Mohammad Saleh al-Husaynī and Inīs al-Naqqāsh who was a Lebanese member of al-Fatah played an important role.

The government, which was emboldened by the ambivalent position of the Revolutionary Council, stopped the first group of 280 volunteers at the airport and did not allow them to board a plane for one week (see: Etelaat, 1358/09/20- 1979/12/11). The ostensible reason, according to the officials, was that the volunteers could not leave until they paid the exit toll. Mohammad Montazeri, enraged by their decision, argued that most of the volunteers were coming from poor backgrounds and were not going on a lavish trip (interview; Husayn Mahdavī, Najafabad, 2008/08/09).This led to a sit in inside the airport and in front of the foreign ministry which was under the acting foreign minister, Sādeq Qotbzādeh (an-Nahar, 1979/12/14).

Disputes over paying the exit toll went on for days and Mohammad Montazeri's meetings with Qotbzādeh and other officials was futile. Facing the defiant officials, members of SATJA made a statement and threatened the government that if they hindered their trip, they would "recourse to revolutionary measures" to solve the issue and go to southern Lebanon (an-Nahar, 1979/12/08). Finally money was obtained from different sources and donations by people who attended Friday prayer and only after that volunteers were allowed to depart the country[57]. Despite the final acquiescence, foreign minister Sādeq Qotbzādeh contacted the Lebanese ambassador to Tehran, Fuād al-Turk, to inform him that the Iranian government is not a party to the initiative and that admitting them to

[57] A number of women were among the volunteers. This was a matter of dispute among the organizers as some of them did not deem it expedient and necessary. Mohammad Montazeri believed that at least it would have a symbolic effect that some women participate (interview; Asghar Salehī, Qom, 2008/04/21). Later conservatives in Iran and members of Amal vituperated hoj Montazeri for dispatching women and exposing them to an impious milieu and to sinful members of al-Fatah.

the Lebanese territory is a matter of Lebanese government's decision[58] (an-Nahar, 1979/12/08).

Against this backdrop, sending the forces to Syria was a move to snub the moderates internally and introduce Iran an avant-garde revolutionary force internationally. Mohammad Montazeri managed to exploit the backing of some members of the Revolutionary Council, notably Sayyid Ali Khamenei and Akbar Hāshemī Rafsanjani, and clergy in the office of Ayatollah Khomaini to dispatch the volunteer corps to the Levant. But, defying moderates in Tehran was not the end of story; bigger challenges were lying ahead in Syria.

1. Volunteers in Syria

Mohammad Montazeri personally led the first group of volunteers and flew to Syria in early December 1979. Before departure, he gave a speech at Mehrabad airport and told the volunteers that the Revolutionary Council had approved the move; however they were remiss to fulfill their pledge to fund the trip (Etelaat, 1358/09/20- 1979/12/11). He also blamed both the Iranian and Lebanese governments and the latter's failure to grant them visas (as-Safir, 1979/12/10).

Once they arrived in Damascus, the Iranian corps who carried placards which read "the united global front of the downtrodden from the West Arab world, al-maghrib al-

[58] The Lebanese government that had been notified by Qotbzadeh that dispatching the volunteers is not supported by the Iranian government, instructed its embassy in Tehran not to grant visa to hoj Montazeri and the volunteers and the Beirut airport officials not to allow landing any Iranian airliner there (see: an-Nahar, 1979/12/19& as-Safir, 1979/12/10& Chehabi, 2005, 207).

araby, to the Philippines"[59] went directly to al-Fatah bases in the Yarmuk camp and a village near Damascus called Hamorriya. They were told that they were to receive intensive guerilla warfare training and preparation before being dispatched to Lebanon (interviews; Husayn Mahdavī, Najafabad, 2008/08/09 & Asghar Salehī, Qom, 2008/04/21). "There we felt that it smelled fishy", says one of the assistant of Montazeri who was surprised that they were taken to Hamorriya instead of Lebanon (interview; Mohamad Sādeq al-Husayni, Tehran, 2009/07/01).

The revolutionary zeal and propagandistic eagerness of the Iranians in Syria was new to Syrian people and concerned the Syrian officials. "We were going to different cities in Syria such as Aleppo and Lattakia", recollects one of the SATJA volunteers, "as we learned from Mohammad Montazeri, we took every opportunity in the bus, in taxi or at shops to talk with ordinary people, to explain to them the goals of the revolution and our causes. We were not fluent in Arabic, but we used our basic Arabic knowledge and Quranic verses to communicate with them" (interview; Husayn Mahdavī, Najafabad, 2008/08/09). The fervent members of SATJA who wanted to "take the opportunity of being in Syria to convey the message of the revolution to Syrian people" (Ibid) made several stands in Zeynabiya where the Sayyida Zeynab shrine is located for the purpose of propaganda. There they handed out revolutionary leaflets and Arabic magazines they had brought from Iran. They also distributed magazines and leaflets among university students at the Damascus University and held debates with the students and professors to talk about the revolution in Iran. After a while, the volunteers' presence in Damascus became noticeable

[59] See an-Nahar correspondent's report, Michel Nūfel, from Mehrabad airport in Tehran on the day of departure, (an-Nahar, 1979/12/11).

in many quarters of the city. “We were drawing graffiti of Imam [Khomaini] and slogans on the walls everywhere in Damascus”, says one of the volunteers, “One of the slogans was "al-itihād al-muslimīn yomken dimār al-zālimīn”, the unity of Muslims can destroy the oppressors” (interview; Asghar Salehī, Qom, 2008/04/21).

During the Muharram month, when the Shia commemorate the martyrdom of their third Imam, the volunteers’ activities took a new turn. They organized and held a demonstration to Hażrat-e Roqaya shrine, located in the heart of Damascus, where their procession merged with the Iranian pilgrims and then the large throng of Iranians made its way towards Damascus University. The organizers intended to go onto the campus of the university to chant slogans and hold a debate. Despite painstaking efforts by the police to cordon off the procession, they managed to get into the university (interviews; Husayn Mahdavī, Najafabad, 2008/08/09 & Asghar Salehī, Qom, 2008/04/21).

Such activities caused sporadic confrontations with Syrian security forces and led to the detention and finally the expulsion of some volunteers[60]. “One time we were drawing the graffiti of Imam [Khomaini] on Jisr al-thūra and police arrested us”, remembers a member of SATJA who was in the volunteers’ corps, “However they never treated us in a seriously bad way and even expressed sympathy with what we were doing. They were

[60] Asghar Salehī who was a member of SATJA and later the Freedom Movement Office was one of the ardently active volunteers in Syria. He was arrested three times, before finally being expelled from Syria. He recounts one time when he got arrested by Syrian security forces: “during the interrogation in the intelligence headquarters, I was told that Syria would support and give you whatever you need if only you draw the graffiti of Hafez al-Assad next to the one from Imam [Khomaini]. The interrogator even said that they would provide us with one stencil of Assad. I said it is impossible; because we do not know who Hafez al-Assad is! In fact we wanted to materialize exporting the revolution” (interview; Asghar Salehī, Qom, 2008/04/21).

apprehensive about the Muslim Brotherhood members" (interview; Husayn Mahdavī, Najafabad, 2008/08/09).

The Syrian B'ath regime was at the time in a serious confrontation with its own Islamic movement. Since 1977, Islamic militants had mounted a sustained and violent challenge against President Assad (see: Hinnebusch, 2001, 93-103). Assad, then in the throes of life and death struggle with Muslim Brotherhood, watched the religious regime in Iran and its anti Israeli rhetoric with cautious hope. Naturally, the Islamic connotation of the slogans and propaganda which were promulgated by the volunteers in Syria raised fear among Syrian officials who were wondering if the bearded men with their Islamic slogans had any connection with the Muslim Brotherhood (interview; Asghar Salehī, Qom, 2008/04/21).

The volunteers were sympathetic to the Islamic Movement in Syria and did not see the Syrian government's heavy handed measures acceptable. They felt, as one of them explains, this responsibility to break "the deadly silence" among the students and people who were daunted by the severe measures of Assad's regime and killing of Muslim Brotherhood members in Aleppo (interview; Asghar Salehī, Qom, 2008/04/21). The Syrian authority was not the only party to be apprehensive and perplexed by the passionate Iranians. Al-Fatah was no less worried about the repercussions of such challenging activities in Damascus for its relation with Syrian officials. Syrians' increasing complains to al-Fatah finally made Khalīl al-Wazīr, Abū Jihad, who was the Palestinian liaison between Iran and Syria, hold a meeting with the volunteer corps to demand that they stop holding demonstrations and confine their activities to the camps (interview; Husayn Mahdavī, Najafabad, 2008/08/09). His effort was, in fact, fruitless, as the implacable

volunteers saw such concerns and diplomatic observation reactionary and an obstacle to expanding the words of revolution.

2. Syria's Stance amid Divisions in Tehran

From the very beginning, President Hafez Assad welcomed the 1979 revolution and the hearty Iranian offers of support to the Arab anti-Israeli camp. Assad was quick to sense the coming change which the fall of the Shah was to make in the regional balance of power. He was able to discern the potential lying under the skin of a newly born revolution for his regime, which had had to reshuffle all of its regional cards in the wake of the Egypt-Israeli rapprochement. For Assad, in the words of his vice president, "Iran adopted the Palestinian cause and this was impossible to overlook" (interview; Abdel Halīm Khaddām, Paris, 2010/05/20). Iran, Assad argued, was a natural counterweight to Egypt; Israel had gained Egypt by the peace treaty, but lost Iran to the revolution (see: Seale, 1988, 352& Tallās, 1990, 9). But embracing the Islamic Republic never meant a full, or in the words of former vice president Khaddām, "blind", support for the Iranian regional aim. President Assad had his own unique approach to the revolutionary regime; a way to both circumscribe and harness such vast revolutionary energy in Iran. This approach was evident in the Syrian handling of the first Iranian bid to post forces in Lebanon.

It was evident that dispatching revolutionary volunteers benefited Syria as it was an unprecedented show of Iranian solidarity with the *steadfastness front*[61] against Israel.

[61] The *Steadfastness and Confrontation Front* was formed in response to Sadat's 1977 visit to Jerusalem and included Syria, the PLO, Libya, Algeria, and South Yemen.

However Syrians did not like either the scope of this initiative, i.e. to post the corps in Lebanon, nor the revolutionary faction which was behind the plan. But Assad was astute enough not to reject the initiative outright. Syrians conceded to stationing the volunteers in Syria; however, President Assad remained altogether inflexible regarding the notion of any Iranian military presence in Lebanon. Indeed, the very same stance was taken by Assad in 1982 towards the Iranian proposition to dispatch Pasdarans to Lebanon when he discovered that, unlike what he had initially believed, it was not a mere Iranian propaganda and that hundreds of Pasdarans had already landed in Damascus airport (Document x, Tehran).

The B'ath regime was obviously apprehensive about the repercussions of sending Iranians to southern Lebanon and drawing Damascus into a new war with Israel. "They knew very well our disposition", says one of the field commanders of volunteers' corps, they "knew that we would go there [in Lebanon] and do things on our own which would trouble Palestinians and Syrians and Lebanese and entangle them with Israel" (interview; Salmān Safavī, Tehran, 2010/07/17). The Syrian government even had initially assured the Lebanese government that the Iranian plane would not be allowed to land in Damascus (as-Safir, 1979/11/12).

However, President Assad did not want to turn down the effort openly and hence appear as an obstacle to a revolutionary move which was aimed to support the Palestinian cause. Any open rejection could have put the relation with the revolutionaries in Iran at stake. Instead, the Syrian government decided to send its newly appointed ambassador in Tehran, Ibrahim Yūnes, to Ayatollah Montazeri in order to clarify the Syrian stance and persuade him and Mohammad Montazeri to modify the initiative.

During the long meeting[62], Ibrahim Yūnes explained to Ayatollah Montazeri that dispatching all the volunteers to southern Lebanon was tantamount to posting an army and could incur an Israeli retaliation on Syria and Lebanon. He went on to propose that instead of sending all the Iranians at once, Syria preferred to dispatch them in different stages and in small numbers to Lebanon. This request did not meet Ayatollah Montazeri's consent who argued that Israel had been attacking Lebanon with or without pretext and posting the volunteers would pave the way for sending millions of Arab and non-Arab forces to liberate Jerusalem (see: an-Nahar, 1979/12/11). The meeting was not successful and neither side could convince the other.

In fact, the Syrians' ambivalence originally stemmed from their reading of the divided political scene in Tehran. Posting the volunteers, as the former president Banisadr says, had neither the support of the Revolutionary Council nor the provisional government (interview; Banisadr, Paris, 2010/05/22). No wonder that the Iranian embassy in Damascus remained distant from the initiative and only heard news of the volunteers' arrival via radio (an-Nahar, 1979/12/19). More significantly, Ayatollah Khomaini refrained from supporting the mission publicly. In essence, unlike posting the RG forces in 1982, the mission lacked official coordination between the Iranian and Syrian governments which could have otherwise made Damascus more cooperative.

The Revolutionary Council, which was mostly under the control of radicals, remained divided over dispatching the volunteers and failed to provide funds for the

[62] The meeting was also attended by Mohammad Montazeri and a top Syrian intelligence official in the embassy, īyād Sālim al- Mahmūd, who was in charge of gathering information on anti-Syrian activities in Iran (see: as-Safir, 1986/10/05).

mission (an-Nahar, 1979/12/11& 1980/01/21). However, Rafsanjani and Khamenei, both IRP leaders and members in the council, favored the initiative. According to Salmān Safavī, who was in charge of the volunteers' corps in Syria, "the equipment needed for the forces was provided by Mr. Sayyid Ali Khamenei" (interview; Salmān Safavī, Tehran, 2010/07/17). A mere month before the first presidential election in Iran, radical clergy saw dispatching the volunteers as an opportunity to boost radicals' status vis-à-vis moderates. Last but not least, in the wake of the occupation of the American embassy in Tehran, which intensified the radicalism in Iran, the Revolutionary Council was not able to openly defy a revolutionary move such as posting the volunteers and thereby incur the public obloquy for forestalling it.

At another key level, Ayatollah Khomaini did not bless dispatching the volunteers publicly. His word was respected by both moderates and radicals and had he backed the move publicly, the official apparatus in both Iran and Syria would have shown more cooperation with Mohammad Montazeri's initiative. His stance is better understood in the wider context of his approach to several critical foreign policy and economic issues[63].

Despite the fact that Ayatollah Khomaini's political inclination was towards the radical camp and that he generally supported their agenda, he always maintained a vague policy regarding a number of issues including exporting the revolution and supporting freedom movements. (Behrooz, 2005, 13 &Akhavi, 1987, 185).

[63] For instance, Ayatollah Khomaini initially backed a plan, Band-i jīm, proposed by radicals in 1980 for confiscating large lands and distributing them among poor peasants. However, facing the angry objection of conservative clergy and some ulama in Qom and Mashhad, he was made to ask radicals to temporarily suspend the plan and afterwards remained silent about the plan (see: Floor, 1980, 520; anonym, 1377/1999, 513; Vothūqī, 1375/1996, 232-233).

The Ayatollah not only showed reservations regarding Mohammad Montazeri's solicitude, he also disfavored posting the Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon two years later in 1982[64] (Interviews; anonymous, Tehran, 2007/08/31& Hādī Najafābādī, Tehran, 2010/01/18). Abū Hishām, the founder of the Islamic Amal, harikāt al-amal al-islāmīyya, in the wake of stationing the RG in the Bekaa, explains the similarity of Ayatollah Khomaini's stance in both cases:

> If his [Mohammad Montazeri's] attempt [in sending the volunteers] was to be successful, he would have had to receive Imam Khomaini's support. Imam Khomaini, from the very first day, said that the Iranian presence in Lebanon was not intended for the battle field, that the [Lebanese] nation could take on this duty and that we would support them (interview; Husayn Al-Mūsawī, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2009/09/30).

Khomaini's reticence, however, was balanced by the active support of some influential clergy in his office. His grandson, Sayyid Husayn Khomaini as well as Shaykh Sādeq Khalkālī, who enjoyed considerable influence in the office[65], were pushing for the plan. "Husayn [Khomaini] assured us that Imam [Khomaini] was approved of dispatching the volunteers", says an associate of Mohammad Montazeri, "We used his influence to advance our work" (interview; Mohammad Sādeq al-Husaynī, Tehran, 2009/07/01). He

[64] The Iranian former Prime Minister, Mir-Husayn Mūsavī points out, in a Television debate during the presidential election of 2009, that after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, there was a consensus inside the government over sending forces to Lebanon under the commandership of Ibrahīm Hemmat who was one of the prominent commanders of the RG. During the tripartite meeting to discuss the issue, Ahmad Khomaini who was also present told that Imam [Khomaini] says the Jerusalem path is going through Karbala and this means that you have to concentrate on your duty; sending forces in Lebanon is not your business (see: Etelaat, 1388/03/14- 2009/06/04).

[65] Sayyid Husayn Khomaini in the first two years after the revolution was considered one of the most influential figures around Ayatollah Khomaini. He fell out of favor after a while and left politics to live in seclusion in Qom. Ayatollah Khomaini's son, Ahmad, replaced Husayn Khomaini in influence as he became the most influential figure in the office of Ayatollah Khomaini in the 1980s.

also arranged a meeting for Mohammad Montazeri with the revolution's leader in Qom where he obtained Ayatollah Khomaini's approval for the mission (an-Nahar, 1979/12/18).

Finally Akbar Hāshemī Rafsanjani met with the Syrian ambassador and asked for Syrian cooperation. Following that, Syria issued a collective entrance visa for the volunteers (an-Nahar, 1979/12/13& as-Safir, 1979/12/15). Yet since Damascus had earlier made a pledge to the Lebanese government regarding allowing the volunteers on Syrian territory, they sought to put off the volunteers' arrival till the last minute (an-Nahar, 1980/01/14).

Divisions and ambiguities concerning the extent of official support to the mission were not the only factor behind the Syrians' reluctance. Syrians were also deeply skeptical about the goals of this initiative which was masterminded by radicals who had ties with two major enemies of President Assad, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and Yasir Arafat.

The clerics, under the auspice of Ayatollah Montazeri's office, viewed neither Assad's Bathist regime and its heavy handed internal policies positively nor intended to necessarily act within the traditional Syrian framework. Their tense relation with Syria's main ally in Lebanon, Amal, and sympathy with anti-Syrian forces such as LNM only added to the mutual distrust between the clergy affiliated with Ayatollah Montazeri and Damascus[66].

[66] Once arrived to Beirut, Mohammad Montazeri in his first speech expressed his gratitude for the support of the Lebanese national Movement and Palestinian revolution for the volunteers and praised the late Kamal Janballat for his efforts to unite the Lebanese and Palestinians (as-Safir, 1979/07/13).

3. A Lion in Lebanon: the Anti-Syrian tendencies of Mohammad Montazeri

"Dismayed and angered," is how one of the anti-Shah activists describes the predominant mood towards Assad among his Iranian peers in the wake of 1976 Syrian intervention in Lebanon. For radicals, like Mohammad Montazeri and Abbās Zamānī, President Hafez Assad was never a "revolutionary"[67]. His policy of "equilibrium of power"[68] in Lebanon, in their eyes, was a mere facade for Syrian clandestine coordination with the US and Israel[69] (interview; Abbās Zamānī, Rawalpindi, 2008/11/05). They scorned Assad's approach to the Lebanese progressive front and the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and shared the view of their Lebanese-Palestinian counterparts that the Syrian military intervention in Lebanon was intended to dominate its neighbor and domesticate the Palestinians (see: Ma`oz, 1995, 164-166). When in August 1976, Tal-el-Zatar camp fell to the Phalange and Camille Shamūn's militia and they massacre hundreds of Palestinians there, their bitterness against Assad deepened even more. Iranian radicals and Palestinians alike saw Damascus and Amal in connivance in the tragedy. "In this event, the stance of many became clear," says a disciple of Montazeri who resided in an al-Fatah base for guerrilla training:

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[67] Regarding the Iranian adverse attitude toward the Assad regime, Fażlollāh Salavātī, a former MP in the Majlis, said when for the 11th anniversary of the Libyan revolution, an Iranian delegation went to Tripoli, he gave a speech during the ceremony. He praised Kaddafi and criticized all Arab leaders, excluding Hafez al-Assad and King Khāled of Saudi Arabia. After he finished his speech, Mohammad Montazeri who was at the ceremony went to Salavātī and reproached him for not mentioning Syria and Saudi (Salavātī, 1390/2011, 172).

[68] Equilibrium of power, tawazun al-qūwa, as expressed publicly by President Assad was the logic of his policy in Lebanon to preserve the balance of power between Lebanese factions. The most dramatic example of Syria's application of the principles was the 1976 intervention which came only after months of secret contacts with the Christian Maronite leadership (See: Waterman, 1987, 6-7).

[69] On the Syrian-American convergence in 1976, see: (Batatu, 1999, 298-299).

> Syria and those who were in agreement with Assad, backstabbed the Palestinian revolution. One of them was the Movement of Disinherited. [Leaders of this movement] needed Hafez Assad and if they wanted to confront him, they could have lost all the support which was coming from Hafez Assad. That was why they approved Assad's position and paid the price for it, which was in other words, the separation of some combatants from the movement (Jamali, 1389,2010, 130).

In the aftermath of the Tal-el-Zatar massacre, Syrians closed down PLO training camps in Syria and hence displaced Iranians who were based there for guerrilla training. "We were in an al-Fatah base in Duma, Syria, which was under the supervision of Abū Jihad. Besides me, Abū Sharīf and Abū Hanīf resided in this camp", recounts Ahmad Movahedī who was part of a network of anti-Shah dissidents in Syria. "This base was active until Syria attacked Tal-el-Zatar. Afterward it was closed down and we had to move to Zahrani base near Sidon, in Lebanon" (interview; Ahmad Movahedī, Tehran, 2010/07/04).

The Syrian security apparatus' behavior with pro-Arafat elements and Assad's alignment with "the Lebanese rightist camp" left a lasting effect on the Shah dissidents, who themselves were subjected to sporadic harassment and detention by Syrian security forces[70]. They began, like their Palestinian comrades, calling President Assad among themselves, in the words of Abbās Zamānī, "a Lion in Lebanon, mouse in Golan, al-*Assad fi lubnan, al-fer fi joulan*" (interview; Abbās Zamānī, Rawalpindi, 2008/11/05).

This sentiment towards the Assad regime was always in the back of their minds and reflected the radicals' approach to Damascus in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution. In his

[70] One such cases of detention was Mohammad Salh al-Husaynī who, according to his brother, was jailed a number of times in Syria over his ties with Palestinians (interview; Mohammad Sādeq al-Husaynī- Tehran, 2009/07/01).

speeches, Mohammad Montazeri, who had ties with both LNM and the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, did not conceal his disapprobation for the Bathist regime's policies and openly sympathized with the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood (interview; anonymous, Tehran, 2007/08/31). "Mohammad Montazeri was not on terms with Syrians before the revolution and he was even jailed a couple of times there", Muhtashamī recounts, "the reason was that he had very strong ties and intimate relations with the PLO and he diverged with Syria over the issue of backing the Palestinians" (interview; Ali Akbar Muhtashamī, Tehran, 2010/07/17).

With the advent of the 1979 revolution, Assad carefully watched the PLO courting of Khomaini's Iran. "We were greatly delighted", says Abdel Halīm Khaddām, "that Iran adopted the Palestinian cause. […] Especially because the Shah had strong ties with Israel" (interview; Abdel Halīm Khaddām, Paris, 2010/05/20). But this was not the whole story for Damascus. Syrians "were eager", according to an Iranian diplomat, "to make the new regime in Iran adopt its Palestinian vision and ensure that the Islamic Republic did not go too far with Arafat" (interview; Mohammad Irānī, Tehran, 2010/01/23). "There was no deep relation between Arafat and Iran", emphasizes the former vice president Khaddām, "we knew that the Iranian leadership would very soon discover Mr. Arafat's path" (interview; Abdel Halīm Khaddām, Paris, 2010/05/20). However, things at the time were not that clear. Pro-Palestinian factions were influential within the ranks of revolutionary forces and also their power had been growing ever since the establishment of the new regime.

For radicals, the raison d'etre of posting the volunteers in south Lebanon was to support the Palestinian organizations that had joined forces with the LNM against Amal.

But “cooperation with Abū Ammār in the southern Lebanon who was fighting with the Syrian ally, Amal”, says an Iranian diplomat, “was a red line for Assad” (interview; Mohammad Irānī, Tehran, 2010/01/23).

When Mohammad Montazeri came to Beirut to discuss the entrance of the volunteers’ corps with PLO, he attended a Palestinian military parade for the anniversary of the Palestinian revolution in Kornīsh al-Mazra, a Sunni neighborhood in West Beirut, to publicly announce the imminent arrival of the Iranian forces. Addressing the Palestinians, he praised the Lebanese National Movement and its leader, Kamal Janballat and reminded the “Arab brothers” of what Yasir Arafat had proclaimed a few months earlier in Tehran: the Iranian and Palestinian revolutions are one revolution (see: as-Safir, 1979/12/10& an-Nahar, 1980/01/14).

From the perspective of President Assad, the translation of an emerging Iranian-PLO alliance into creating an independent axis in Lebanon could have undermined his Lebanese grand strategy which was contingent on eliminating al-Fatah autonomy and Arafat’s state-within-a-state; the “Fakhānī Republic” in his backyard (see: McLaurin, 1989, 20-21). “Syrians never wanted Iran to support Arafat in Lebanon”, says the Iranian former ambassador in Beirut, “therefore we did not have much margin for a strong official relation with Arafat” (interview; Mohammad Irānī, Tehran, 2010/01/23).

Assad’s Palestinian policy was ignored by Mohammad Montazeri and his radical associates. This was a chief factor in the failure of revolutionary Iran’s first bid to dispatch forces to Lebanon. Nevertheless, over time, Tehran’s official line steadily converged with

Assad's "Palestinian vision" which became a factor in deteriorating the once much hoped for Iran-Arafat partnership.

4. PLO's Stance

As the conflict in Lebanon progressed, the Shia increasingly became the communal victims of the Palestinian-Israeli war in the south. Al-Fatah which held exclusive sway in parts of the country, faced mounting pressure from Shia leaders to limit its operations (see: Brynen, 1989, 56). At such a juncture, Iran's revolution came as an opening for al-Fatah leaders who sought through alliance with Iran, a new power alignment in the region that could keep the military option open for the Arab rejectionist camp (Ioannides, 1989, 79).

The Iranian quest to dispatch forces to Lebanon was a chance to prop up Arafat's position vis-à-vis Amal; however, this never meant that al-Fatah leaders were ready to embrace the volunteers in the south. Just a few days before the arrival of Iranian forces to Syria, PLO spokesman in Lebanon, Abū Meyzer, hinted that the entrance of a large number of volunteers to the south could pose a problem to the PLO and that "before combatants, we are in need of financial and political support" (Etelaat, 1358/09/25- 1979/12/16).

In early January, while tens of volunteers have been stationed in Damascus and many more waiting in Tehran to join them, Mohammad Montazeri illegally entered Lebanon over land and tried to hold a press conference at Hotel Bristol in Beirut. The

Lebanese government which had already been on alert to prevent the volunteers' entrance, ordered the security forces to cordon off the hotel to stop the press conference[71].

Interestingly Yasir Arafat who was not aware about Montazeri's unexpected arrival to Beirut did not receive him and shunned requests by his entourage to concede holding the press conference in one of the al-Fatah offices. "Finally Mohammad [Montazeri] said that I need neither the hotel nor Arafat's office. I will go to the Mosque and announce our plan there", recounts Inīs al-Naqqāsh who liaised between volunteers and Arafat. "He eventually went to al-Jamaa al-Arabiya's mosque and held a press conference there to announce the plan" (interviews; Inīs al-Naqqāsh, Tehran, 2008/04/08& Beirut, 2010/05/05). There he quoted Ayatollah Khomaini that "today Iran and tomorrow Palestine" and announced the volunteers are financially supported by the Iranian masses and would come to Lebanon conveying the revolution's message to the Lebanese Mustażafīn, deprived people (as-Safir, 1980/01/03).

A few days after the entrance of volunteers in Syria, their field commander met with Abū Jihad in Beirut to discuss the details of coordination between Palestinian and Iranian forces. "The outcome of our meeting was establishing a joint war-operation room, which was led by I and Abū Jihad", says Salmān Safavī (interview; Salmān Safavī, Tehran, 2010/07/17). Afterward, al-Fatah leaders refrained from taking any further steps to facilitate transferring the volunteers to Lebanon.

[71]The news of possible entrance of volunteers caused uproar among the right wing groups in Lebanon. Earlier, parliament members like Kamīl Chamoun and Pierre Gemayel asked the government to take all the necessary measures to prevent their entrance to the Lebanese territory (see: an-Nahar, 1979/12/06).

Facing Iranian persistence, Abū Jihad who was al-Fatah's liaison with the volunteer corps, eventually informed them of al-Fatah leadership's definite abnegation, asserting that posting the corps was impossible; because "Assad and the Lebanese government do not support it and southern Lebanon's front is silent and we are not able to handle another war" (interview; Inīs al-Naqqāsh, Beirut, 2010/05/05). Mohammad Montazeri wanted the revolutionary plan to reshuffle all the cards inside the Lebanese scene (interview; Inīs al-Naqqāsh, Tehran, 2008/04/08) while some al-Fatah leaders did not wish to see a second party be involved in their actions and operations in the south[72] (An-Nahar, 1980/01/14).

Al-Fatah remained obdurate to any posting of volunteers collectively in the Fatah Land. Ultimately it proposed a very modified version of what the Iranian side wanted; that volunteers could enter two-by-two and incorporate into, a separate guerrilla cell in southern Lebanon. This fell short of the minimum of 15 member-group that the Iranian commanders requested in order to join the Palestinian guerilla units. "We did not want to enter into [the Palestinian] groups one by one. This could have enervated our forces and affected our personnel's ideology, whereas most Palestinians were secular. Therefore we decided to leave it to the choice of the volunteers; whoever wishes can go to Lebanon on his own and whoever wants can go back to Iran" (interview; Husayn Mahdavī, Najafabad, 2008/08/09).

[72] On Arafat's position, an-Nahar analyst wrote that he did not want that the initiative distort the Palestinian-Shia relation in Lebanon (see: an-Nahar, 1980/01/21).

J. Conclusion

Divergence over the revolution’s approach to Lebanon and relations with the PLO and Libya in 1979-81 was to a great extent a reflection of pre-revolutionary controversies and disagreements among revolutionary Iranians who had resided in Lebanon. Internal turmoil and dualism of power along with the weakness of the ruling organs explains the extent of factional influence in the new regime’s foreign policy and contradictory approaches to Lebanon in this short period.

While debate in Tehran over alliance with Amal and the PLO reached its apex, the most significant development in Iranian-Syrian-Lebanese relations came as radicals endeavored to dispatch forces to southern Lebanon. This mission was carried out following the capture of the US embassy, when the revolution had entered its radical phase. Strong power centers in Iran, including Ayatollah Montazeri's office, Khat-i seh faction, some figures inside the office of Ayatollah Khomaini and the Revolutionary Council supported the mission.

Despite succeeding in overcoming the moderate's objections in Iran, none of the major players in the Lebanese scene, neither Damascus, Amal nor the PLO, which controlled the southern front was inclined to back the mission. In fact, after a short while, it became clear that Yasir Arafat was also standing on the same side as President Assad, Amal leaders and moderates in Tehran positioned to thwart the first revolutionary efforts by the radicals to dispatch forces in Lebanon.

Unlike posting Pasdarans in the Bekaa in 1982, which faced similar resistance by Damascus as well as Amal and the Shia Higher Council leaders in Lebanon, the mission

did not culminate in creating a pro-Islamic Republic voice inside the Lebanese Shia community. As will be explained in detail later, in 1982, Damascus withheld the RG forces from being posted to Beirut and the southern front. Facing the initial Syrian resistance to confine Pasdarans to the Zabadani base, ambassador Muhtashamī put pressure on Syrian officials to open a channel for RG forces to enter the Bekaa and establish direct ties with the Shii individuals who were disappointed with Amal's conservative approach and general Shia passiveness in the face of the Israeli invasion (interview; Shaykh Subhī al-Tufaylī, Baalbek, 2010/06/22). As one of Hizbullah's leader in the Bekaa describes, "What Mohammad Montazeri did was not successful; however it left a notable impression on some of our brothers here that the Palestinians cause is a priority for the revolution in Iran. It left also an emotional impression on people here that the Iranians came here and broke an air of submissiveness [in the face of Israel] which was prevalent in our areas" (interview; Mohammad Khātūn, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2009/09/10).

It is true that neither the moderates in the Iranian government, nor the PLO or the Amal movement supported the plan; however, President Assad's concerns and his distrust of the initiative was the major factor in stranding the mission. As the Iranian former ambassador in Lebanon puts forward, "any cooperation with Yasir Arafat in southern Lebanon who was fighting with the Syrian ally, Amal, was a red line for Assad (interview; Mohammad Irānī, Tehran, 2010/01/23). This was understandable in light of the development in Iranian-Syrian relations after the Israeli invasion in 1982.

Mohammad Montazeri's initiative ignored the importance of the Syrian regional role and its dominance in its backyard, Lebanon. In contrast, the Islamic Republic, in the post 1982 period, began to realize the limits of revolutionary maneuver and the merit of

cooperation with Hafez al-Assad in Lebanon and, as an Iranian diplomat describes, the revolutionary regime learnt that “any initiative in Lebanon needs to be defined under the Syrian consent to become effective” (interview; Mohammad Irānī, Tehran, 2010,01,23). This was a fact that Iranian policy makers in the Levant, such as Muhtashamī, closely observed later to materialize their ambitions in Lebanon.

CAHPTER III

THE 1980-82 PERIOD

The occupation of the US embassy in Tehran sealed the fate of the Bazargan government. But it was Banisadr who inherited the aftershocks of the so-called, as Ayatollah Khomaini described, Second Revolution. The capture of the embassy transformed the very character of revolutionary Iran's foreign relations to a more aggressive stance while internally strengthened the position of the committed anti-American radicals.

From February 1980 till June 1981, the power struggle grew between the office of President Banisadr and the Islamic Republic Party (IRP). Apart from these two blocs, there was a third faction, Khat-i seh, which consisted of radical figures who were sympathetic with the radical wing of the IRP and at the same time, criticized the IRP's monopoly of power. This period culminated in the dismissal of Banisadr from the presidency in June 1981. From the summer of 1981 on, the IRP became the sole ruler of the state and radicals eventually dominated the diplomatic apparatus of Iran. Yet this was also the beginning of factionalism inside the Islamic Republic and polarization of forces that, aside from their differences, all believed in the Vilāyat-i faqīh.

As was the case under the Bazargan government, factional rivalries during Banisadr's presidency and later on in the 1981-1989 period had a direct bearing on the foreign policy of the revolutionary regime. Relationships with the US and Soviet Union, establishing ties with freedom movements and exporting the revolution were controversial issues during all of these stages. President Banisadr, similar to Bazargan, pursued a

nonalignment policy toward the Great Powers and placed emphasis on state-to-state relations and economic developments. In contrast, radicals and in particular Khat-i seh, emboldened by the fall of Bazargan government, took advantage of their influence in the RG to advance the strategy of exporting the revolution and supporting the freedom movements.

Lebanon was central to this strategy. They embarked on aiding and networking with Lebanese radical and clerical groups. This resulted in organizing radical forces in Lebanon, through holding two conferences of freedom movements in Iran in 1980 and 1982, and also establishing joint Sunni-Shii missionary groups and pro-Islamic Republic clerical movements. In this process, the gap between Tehran and the moderate Shii forces, i.e. Amal and the Shia Higher Council, became wider and they lost ground to the more radical pro-Khomaini forces in Lebanon.

In the embryonic years of the Islamic Republic's involvement in the Levant, clerical activities, which were mostly sponsored and supported by the office of Ayatollah Montazeri, laid the foundation of the new regime's policy in the Levant. Investigating the Iranian approach to Lebanon and Syria in this formative stage of the Islamic Republic's policymaking, 1979-82, would shed light on the nature of Iranian ties with Syria and Lebanese factions in later years when Hizbullah emerged as a principle factor in Tehran-Damascus relations. This early stage, which witnessed significant developments such as the first post-revolution endeavor to dispatch volunteer forces in Lebanon (1979), increasing Iranian-Syrian cooperation in the wake of Iraqi invasion of Iran in September 1980 and the Iranian radicals' quest to establish ties with radical groups in Lebanon, culminated in the posting of Revolutionary Guards corps in the Bekaa in 1982.

Indeed, dispatching Pasdarans to Lebanon was the consequence of major regional developments: the Iranian victories in the war front against Iraq and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, as well as internal changes in Iran, i.e. the consolidation of the Islamic Republic and ascendancy of radicals in the state in the wake of eliminating the moderate "Liberal Islamists"[73]. Defeating the internal armed opposition groups and decisive victories in Iraq-Iran war front not only returned the self-confidence of the regime, but also allowed Tehran to undertake a more active foreign policy. The regime was eventually able to disentangle its foreign policy from internal divisions and the dualism of power which extensively paralyzed the foreign policy from 1979 to 1981. This resulted in more centralized and coherent policymaking towards Syria and Lebanon in the wake of the appointment of Alī Akbar Muhtashamī, a close disciple of Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomaini, as the ambassador in Damascus in September 1981.

The 1979-1982 period is an overlooked stage in the studies of the Iranian-Syrian relationship and the Islamic Republic's involvement in Lebanon. The point of departure in most related studies is the entrance of the RG forces to Lebanon in 1982. Given the fast and dramatic developments in Iran from 1979-1982, the internal divisions over relations with Assad's regime, Lebanese and Palestinian groups, examining this period is important in understanding the post-1982 phase of Iranian-Syrian partnership.

This chapter deals with factionalism under Banisadr; radicals' quest to export revolution through the Freedom Movements Unite of the RG and clerical missions; Iranian clerical politics in Lebanon and the establishment of pro-Khomaini Sunni-Shii groups to

[73] Liberal Islamists was at the time a reference to the LMI, Bazargan and Banisadr.

propagate the Islamic Revolution in Lebanon. The Syrian approach to revolutionary Iran and dispatching the RG forces to Bekaa in 1982 and the impact it left on the Islamic Republic's strategy towards the Shia of Lebanon will be discussed in the next chapter of this work.

A. Banisadr's Presidency and Factionalism in Iran

On January 25, 1980, Abol Hassan Banisadr was elected as the first president of the Islamic Republic. He took office amid heated debates over the capture of the US embassy in Tehran and the ensuing conflicts between the president and radical clergy of the Islamic Republic party. The capture of the US embassy, played into the hands of radicals. It enervated the moderates and unleashed a new wave of radicalization at the popular level by emboldening worker movements in factories and peasants against landlords (see: Bayat, 1987, 101-102). Banisadr, who had himself been a critic of the Bazargan government, once in power, found himself in the same position in which Bazargan was vis-à-vis radicals. He criticized the capture of the US embassy in Tehran and tried to transfer control of the hostages from their captors to the government so as to obtain their eventual release. He accused the student captors of acting as a state within state,[74] arguing that workers and

[74] The US embassy was captured when Banisadr was in charge of the foreign ministry. He met with the students at the embassy premises and vituperated them for trespassing and violating the sovereignty of another country. He and Sādeq Qotbzādeh supported the visit of a United Nations commission of inquiry to Iran for releasing the hostages, but the students opposed it. Finally, when the commission was allowed to visit, even before its arrival in Tehran, Ayatollah Khomaini decreed that the hostage dispute would be settled by the Majlis, which was yet to be elected. At Banisadr's urging, the Revolutionary Council recommended (by a vote of eight to three) the transfer of the hostages to government control, only to be rejected by Ayatollah Khomaini (see: Ramzani, 1989, 208& Ahmadi, 1380/2001, 90-91).

governmental employees were taking after them to challenge the state's authority (see: Ramzani, 1989, 208& Bakhash, 1984, 114-115).

Under Banisadr's presidency, political factionalism grew basically between the office of the president and the IRP. The widening gap between the IRP and Banisadr, who was moving closer to the LMI and the militant MKO[75], gravely polarized the political scene between two sides that were vying for hegemony over the state apparatus and revolutionary organs. This conflict soon took a sharp turn in March, 1980 when Banisadr's adversaries won the majority in the first parliamentary election. As a result Banisadr and the IRP-dominant parliament, the Majlis[76] entered a long-lasting quarrel over designating a consensual person for the premiership and the choosing of cabinet members. The mutual distrust between the parliament and President is apparent in the words of Akbar Hāshemī Rafsanjani, who was at the time the speaker of the parliament: "Banisadr did not want to recognize the Majlis" whereas "revolutionary forces saw Banisadr who was supported by anti-revolutionaries as the embodiment of global liberalism and refrained from recognizing him" (Rafsanjani, 1384/ 2005, 225). Indeed, the ubiquitous disagreements between the two sides did cripple the country till the removal of Banisadr in June 1981.

Internal divisions among the radical clergy allowed Banisadr to enjoy the support of some radicals in the offices of Ayatollah Khomaini and Montazeri. They threw their backing behind him during his presidential campaign against the IRP candidate, Jalaleddin

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[75] The People's Mujahidin of Iran, sazman-i mujahidin-i khalq-i iran.

[76] The Iranian parliament is currently called Majlis-i shura-yi eslami, the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran. The Majlis is the frequently used abbreviated form.

Fārsī. These radicals were apprehensive of the rapid and loose expansion of the IRP and the insatiable desire of the party's leaders to dominate the RG and other revolutionary organs. "When the [Islamic] Republic Party was established, people truly received it as a popular party. But after a while", explains Ayatollah Montazeri, "the party leaders showed an inclination for monopoly and egocentric policies, to the extent that they wanted the party to be a mere tool for their polices. Consequently many began to distance themselves from the party" (interview; Ayatollah Montazeri, Qom, 2007/07/24).

During the presidential campaign between the IRP's candidate and Banisadr, Abbās Zamānī, who was the RG commander, and also prominent clergy such as Sayyid Mehdi Hāshemī, Mohammad Montazeri and Sayyid Hādī Hāshemī took Banisadr's side (Interview; Sayyid Hādī Hāshemī, Qom, 2005/05/14). Likewise, Ayatollah Khomaini's son, Sayyid Ahmad as well as his grandson, Sayyid Husayn , supported Banisadr. However their loyalty was ephemeral and faded away as the paralyzing conflict between Banisadr and the IRP spread to all the state apparatus and revolutionary organs that had to struggle, as of September 1980, with the Iraqi invading army in the south and west of Iran.

In the wake of Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), the impact of the power struggle was significant on the RG. Banisadr sought to strangle the RG, which was under the influence of radicals, by denying it heavy weapons and support, while highlighting the wartime role of the regular military. Such favoritism complicated the RG's efforts to contribute effectively to the war effort (see: Katzman, 1993, 392). As tensions between the IRP and president over managing the war front was increasing, Banisadr gradually became closer to the LMI and MKO. He began to adopt a more moderate economic discourse by emphasizing on economic development and highlighting the role of the state and limiting

the arbitrary acts of the revolutionary organs. This was different from his previous radical economic discourse (see: Bakhash, 1984, 97-98).

This trend alienated some anti-IRP radicals from Banisadr and led to the formation of a new faction around the figure of Ayatollah Montazeri who positioned himself outside the IRP-President battle field. Consequently, the radical clergy who were mostly affiliated with the offices of Ayatollah Khomaini and Montazeri as well as Ayatollah Jalāleddīn Tāherī's office in Isfahan, organized themselves under the designation of the Third Line, Khat-i seh "which meant neither the IRP nor Banisadr" (Interview; Sayyid Hādī Hāshemī, Qom, 2005/05/14).

Khat-i seh, which was in fact a loose coalition of revolutionary ulama, attached a great deal of value to the export of revolution and practically, against the wish of moderates and later pragmatist factions inside the Islamic Republic, pursued supporting and establishing relations with freedom movements and radical groups in Lebanon and elsewhere. Internally, this faction challenged the IRP by refusing to join the self-proclaimed the "party of clergy"[77]. At the same time, Khat-i seh sympathized with radical plans of the IRP, under Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshtī, and criticized Banisadr's failure to support the RG and purge the remaining "corrupted" commanders in the army (see:

[77] In the process of the Iranian revolution, the clergy did not have any political organization. The Islamic Republic Party was considered the first political organization of clerics. Given the general popularity of the ulama among the masses, the party's leaders depicted the IRP as the party of the clergy. However, figures such as Sayyid Husayn Khomaini, a supporter of Banisadr, contended that 90 percent of the Iranian clergy rejected the IRP and were in support of the then President Banisadr (Akhavi, 1983, 215).

Bakhash, 1984, 118). However, for Banisadr this faction was a congregation of renegades; “a line of hypocrisy and conspiracy” against an elected president[78].

1. Iran’s Foreign Policy under Banisadr

Since the 1979 revolution, foreign policy had been a turf of power struggle and factionalism in Iran. The provisional government’s Ibrahim Yazdi and his successor Sādeq Qotbzādeh encountered sharp criticism over their "negative equilibrium” policy[79] and approach to the freedom movements. Strife over influence in foreign policy between moderates and radicals outlived the Bazargan government and remained a bone of contention between president Banisadr and radicals.

Abol Hassan Banisadr, first as acting foreign minister and then as the first president of revolutionary Iran, pursued a foreign policy that was close to the nationalist nonalignment policy of Yazdi and Qotbzādeh (see: Ramzani, 1989, 207). He rationalized his "equidistance" policy, in essence identical to Ibrahim Yazdi’s “negative equilibrium”, in Islamic terms (Ibid). Banisadr argued that freedom movements should be self-sufficient and not supported from outside and that the export of revolution should be essentially a non-violent popular movement (interview; Banisadr, Paris, 2010/05/22). Hence, he rejected radicals’ quest to establish relations with Lebanese and Palestinian groups through the RG

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[78] This was Sayyid Ahmad Khomaini who put forward the idea as an independent line from both the IRP and Banisadr. Later, President Banisadr blamed him for changing his position, saying that “the third line is a line of hypocrisy, Khaṭ-i nefāq” (interview; Banisadr, Paris, 2010/05/22).

[79] Negative equilibrium, movāzene-yi manfī, was originally the program of Mohammad Mosaddeq, the toppled Prime Minister of Iran from 1951 to 1953. It postulated that developing the Iranian national sovereignty would necessitate a policy of non-alliance with both the United States and Soviet Union (see: poulson, 2005, 168-169).

and other power centers that challenged the government's monopoly over the foreign policy.

On top of this paralyzing power struggle, during Banisadr's unfulfilled tenure, the revolutionary regime was immersed in extensive internal and external crises which heavily affected Iran's international relations. Banisadr took office following the capture of the US embassy in Tehran which was a critical foreign policy crisis with grave internal implications. The students' control of Iran's US policy not only excluded the government from handling this decisive issue, it also allowed radicals in the IRP to enervate moderates and take the initiative vis-à-vis the leftist groups. Barely six months after Banisadr's inauguration, in September 1980, Iraq invaded large parts of the Iranian territory and quickly captured the strategic port city of Khoramshahr. At the time, the Iranian imperial army was in complete disarray and internal struggle between the President Banisadr and the Islamic Republic Party over purging anti revolutionary elements from the army and influence in the RG stranded any effective move to check the Iraqi military machine (see: Ahmadi, 1380/2001, 303-306).

Internal conflict between the revolutionary organs and Banisadr and the Iraqi invasion entangled the Islamic Republic in a way that little margin was left for playing any significant foreign policy role during the 1980-1981 period[80]. This gap was filled with assertive radicals who challenged the official apparatus, through the revolutionary organs,

[80] The foreign policy issues did only begin to receive an official attention when the revolutionary regime felt the imminence of Saddam Hossein's military attack. In response to the Iraqi threats, foreign minister Sādeq Qotbzādeh, prodded by the ministry's advisors, went on a regional tour in April 1980. He visited Syria, Lebanon and a number of Persian Gulf Shaykhdoms to reiterate the good will of the new regime towards these countries (see: Zandfard, 1383/2004, 242).

over controlling the foreign policy and advancing their strategy of exporting revolution to countries such as Lebanon and Persian Gulf Shaykhdoms.

2. A Stranded Foreign Ministry

The fierce factional rivalry and internal friction between Banisadr and the IRP did not abate with the Iraqi threat. Disagreements ranged on various issues from appointing the prime minster and members of the cabinet to diplomats and ambassadors in other countries. Key ministries like the defense, education, finance, justice and foreign affairs were left without ministers for months. The foreign ministry paid dearly in this power struggle. Indeed, it was left without a head till the last day of Banisadr's office. Mohammad Ali Raja'ī, who assumed the premiership in August 1980,[81] nominated a number of individuals such as Mir Husayn Mūsavī, Mohammad Khatami, Behzād Nabavī, Jalāleddīn Fārsī and Sayyid Mehdi Hāshemī for the office of foreign ministry. They all had a radical lean and Banisadr did not approve any of them, instead insisting on his close aide Ahmad Salāmatīān fill the position (Rafsanjani, 1384/ 2005, 323). As a result, the foreign ministry remained under the supervision of the Prime Minister Raja'ī himself.

This brought the ministry to a complete impasse, because the president and his prime minister were not even able to agree on people for the ministry's posts and diplomatic missions. Meanwhile Prime Minister Raja'ī, pressed by the Majlis, sought to

[81] Mohammad Ali Raja'i was one of the leaders of the IRP. At that time, President Banisadr complained that the IRP dominant Majlis "imposed Raja'i on the elected president". During the 16 months presidency, relationship between Banisadr and his prime minister became so inimical that he called Raja'i a bullheaded, khushk-I maghz (Rafsanjani, 1384/2005, 260).

enliven the diplomatic apparatus by appointing people to diplomatic missions and issuing new decrees; however many of them did not go into effect due to Banisadr's rejection.

Raja'ī, as the caretaker foreign minister, dismissed Sādeq Qotbzādeh who was steering the ministry from November 1979 to August 1980. By removing Qotbzādeh, a sympathizer of LMI and supporter of Amal, Raja'ī stepped up the purging process in the ministry and replaced the old cadres with his men. Mahmūd Hāshemī Rafsanjani, brother of the then speaker of parliament Akbar Hāshemī Rafsanjani, was assigned to the Office of Confidentiality and Code, edāreh-yi mahramāneh va ramz and later the Eighth Office, *edāreh-yi hashtum* which was an important section in charge of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Palestine files. Raja'ī also appointed two radicals to the Iranian embassies in Beirut and Damascus.

Disagreements between Banisadr and Raja'ī over the foreign ministry came to a head in May 1981 when the president's office decided to move a number of secret and classified documents from the foreign ministry. This was in the wake of Mahmūd Hāshemī Rafsanjani's appointment to the Office of Confidentiality and Code. Rafsanjani contacted the prime minster and he subsequently ordered the security forces to prevent the relocation of documents and to arrest Banisadr's[82] advisor, who had wanted to move the papers (interview; Mahmūd Hāshemī Rafsanjani, Karaj, 2010/06/30). This agitated the president who saw himself as entitled to having full access to the classified documents, but his adversaries claimed that he was "stealing the ministry's documents" (see: Rafsanjani, 1378/1999, 114).

[82] Morteżā Fażlīnejād

The prolonged internal disagreements and inactivity of Iranian diplomatic centers around the world, in particular in the Middle Eastern countries, plunged international relations of Iran into crisis (see: Rafsanjani, 1384/ 2005, 27). In fact by this time, in less than one year, the foreign ministry had witnessed four different ministers with conflicting agendas. Since Karīm Sanjābī's resignation in April 1979, Ibrahim Yazdi for 8 months, Abol Hassan Banisadr for less than 1 month, Sādeq Qotbzādeh for 8 months and then Mohammad Ali Raja'ī as the caretaker foreign minister were in charge of the ministry which had undergone a ruthless revolutionary purge. Purging policy targeted most of the educated and experienced political cadres of the foreign ministry and, according to an Iranian former diplomat, was so extensive that "no other state organizations became as blemished and shattered as the foreign ministry" (Zandfard, 1383/2004, 253). Such instability in the structure and policies of the foreign ministry put the main diplomatic apparatus of the state on the margins of foreign policy developments throughout the critical early years of the revolution[83].

3. Banisadr's Levant Policy

Under the President Banisadr, the Iranian government did not pursue any strategic policy regarding Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian groups[84]. The president did not share

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[83] For a primary observation on the crisis in the foreign ministry see the memoirs of an Iranian former diplomat, Feridūn Zandfard, (1383/2004, 231-267), on his service in the ministry from the early 1950s till 1980 when he was purged from the ministry.

[84] According to Alī Akbar Muhtashamī the foreign ministry did not have a Palestinian agenda at the time, and later when it became more organized, the foreign ministry contacted and asked him to prepare a roadmap for the ministry on the Palestinian file (interview; Alī Akbar Muhtashamī, Tehran, 2010/07/17).

the radicals' vision of exporting the revolution and "creating a party in Lebanon to face Israel". Neither did he saw any merit in establishing a strategic alliance with Damascus (interview; Banisadr, Paris, 2010/05/22). However, while the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war prodded the revolutionary regime to initiate active diplomacy in the Arab world, it also brought Damascus to a new level of importance for Tehran. As President Banisadr describes, "before the [Iran-Iraq] war, I regarded Hafez Assad as a mere dictator like Saddam. We did not have any special relations with Syria. However, unlike Saddam he was not on bad terms with Iran" (interview; Banisadr, Paris, 2010/05/22).

For both strategic and ideological reasons, to prevent Iraq from depicting the war as an Arab-Persian struggle, Syria, from the Iranian perspective, was a key player in the Arab world. The Syrian geographic position at the heart of the Arab East and its historic role as a bastion for pan-Arabism gave the Bath regime an unparallel ideological significance for Tehran (see: Ehteshami, 1997, 58& Hirschfeld 1986: 108– 110). This importance was accentuated in the light of the Iraqi propaganda campaign to depict the war as an Arab-Persian struggle. The Syrian regime saw the Iraqi incursion against Iran as a "serious mistake" (interview; Khaddām, Paris, 2010/05/20) and President Assad firmly believed that the war was in essence against Arab interests[85].

Beyond this ideological significance, President Banisadr saw Damascus as a source for military, logistic and intelligence assistance. "The Iranian bombers needed the Syrian

[85] In fact from pan-Arab premises, Hafez Assad defended his anti-Iraqi stance and close relations with Iran. He drew contrasts between the Shah's Iran, which dwelt on its Persianism and was in league with Israel, and revolutionary Iran, which took the side of the Arabs in their struggle to recover their occupied lands. "Did it make sense", Assad argued, to "dissipate this great gain" and turn "Islamic Iran wits its human, military, and economic capabilities into another Israel on the eastern borders of the Arab homeland?" (see:Batatu,1999, 283).

air space to carry out effective missions deep inside Iraqi territory", says Banisadr (interview; Banisadr, Paris, 2010/05/22). One such mission was the aerial raid in Spring 1981, on the al-Walīd military complex, located in the westernmost part of Iraq, near the Jordanian border. The aerial attack was a spectacular achievement. In a single attack Iranian fighters destroyed most of Iraq's strategic bombers in the base which was well out of the reach of Iranian phantoms (see: Goodarzi, 2006, 45-46). The Syrian role was also significant in replenishing Iran's US made arms supplies with Soviet-made arms. This started in the very first stage of the war, as Damascus agreed to ship arms to Iran following a secret visit by a personal representative of President Banisadr in April 1981 (ibid, 30).

The absence of a strategic plan in President Banisadr's government to involve in the Levant and a foreign ministry stranded in internal conflicts, paved the way for radicals, organized within the RG and other revolutionary organs, to influence the international relations of the new regime. At this time, under the supervision of Mohammad Montazeri, the Freedom Movements Unit (FMU), in the Revolutionary Guards, launched its work with the mission of aiding freedom movements in different countries including Lebanon. However, concerned with non-state actors intervening in foreign affairs, President Banisadr was against assigning such missions to the RG and preferred that the foreign ministry took over the freedom movements file (interview; Banisadr, Paris, 2010/05/22). Nevertheless, the debate whether the FMU should be an organization independent of the government, so as not to contradict the official polices or be put under the supervision of the leader did not

meet with any consensus and after a while the FMU became formally established as a new unit in the Sepah[86].

The radicals' role in Lebanon during this period was basically organized through the FMU of the RG and the office of Grand Ayatollah Montazeri. In the pre Hizbullah years and before appointing Alī Akbar Muhtashamī to the ambassadorship in Damascus, where he became pivotal in the policy-making of Tehran in the Levant, this role was Seminal in laying the foundations of the Islamic Republic's strategic partnership with radical forces in Lebanon and the creation of Hizbullah after 1982.

B. The Freedom Movements Unit

The FMU was established originally as a unit within the RG (1979-1983) to link with and support the freedom movements in different countries and provide them with military and ideological training. Following the suspension of the unit in the RG, it resumed its activities under the aegis of Ayatollah Montazeri as an independent office. In this second phase (1983-1987), under the title of the Institution of Islam's Global Movement, muasese-yi nehzat-i jahani-i eslam, the office distanced itself from military activities and concentrated on political and ideological aspects "aiming to provide strategy for the freedom movements" (interview; Asghar Salehī, Qom, 2008/04/21).

The FMU, under the supervision of Mohammad Montazeri and then Sayyid Mehdi Hāshemī, embarked on inviting the leaders and members of freedom movements to Iran.

[86] Sepāh is the short form of sepah-i pasdaran-i enghelab-i eslami, the [Revolutionary] Guards of the Islamic Revolution.

Individuals from African countries, Afghanistan, Iraq, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Palestine and Lebanon convened in Iran to share experience and receive military training and political-ideological indoctrination.

After the death of Mohammad Montazeri in June 1981, Sayyid Mehdi Hāshemī took over the FMU. Like his brother, Sayyid Hādī Hāshemī who was Ayatollah Montazeri's son-in-law, Mehdi had been engaged in the anti-shah struggles. His political activities traced back to early 1950s, during which he constructed a close relationship with Mohammad Montazeri.

C. Iran and the Clerical Politics in Lebanon

The clerical activities in the early 1980s, laid the foundation of the Islamic Republic policy in Lebanon. Based on their anti-Shah struggles since 1963, radical ayatollahs promulgated a similar clerical-led model of political mobilization and struggle in other Muslim countries. Lebanon, with a sizeable Shii community which was already going through a communal "awakening" and struggled against the foreign aggression and internal recognition, was a fertile ground to embrace this model. Iranian radical ayatollahs considered ulama's influence a key to mobilizing Lebanese people towards their goal. "Considering the influence of ulama among both Sunni and Shii people" says the Iranian former ambassador to Damascus who had a pivotal role in organizing this clerical network, "we decided in the Islamic Republic embassy to act through this angle" (interview; Alī Akbar Muhtashamī, Tehran, 2010/07/18). They embarked on organizing and supporting the clergy who were sympathetic to the Iranian revolution. Steadily a network of Iranian, Lebanese and Palestinian revolutionary ulama came to existence. In the pre-Hizbullah

years and in the absence of a strong Iranian diplomatic apparatus, this network had a significant role in advancing the Islamic Republic's policies in Lebanon.

In one sense, Iranian clerical involvement in Lebanon was not unprecedented at this time. In the 1960s and 70s, the Iranian born Musa Sadr was a key political player in Lebanon where, unlike Iran and Iraq, Shii ulama had historically been on the margin of political protest relinquishing the right to powerful Shias' zaīms[87](Norton, 1985, 111). By merging the spiritual and political leadership of the Shia, Imam Musa Sadr broke with this tradition. He actively engaged in the Lebanese labyrinthine politics, by which he incurred accusations from his leftist and nationalist enemies of being an agent of the Shah[88].

From a historical point of view, relations between the Lebanese Shii ulama and Iran trace back to the 16th century when the first Safavid monarch, shah Ismaīl, invited ulama of Jabal amil to disseminate the Shi'a creed in Iran. Ties between the amili ulama and Persia remained a unique feature in relations between Iran and Lebanon in modern times. Iraq was always the third angle of the Iranian and Lebanese ulama relationship which was mediated for centuries by the Iraqi shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala. The city of Najaf with its hawzas[89], seminary schools, was the principal center of religious studies for the Shii scholars and students from Lebanon and Iran.

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[87] Until the 1960s, the zaīms had few serious clerical or secular competitors. The Shii ulama lacked an independent financial base, and in many instances they were heavily dependent upon a zaīm for financial support. Much in contrast to Iran, where the ulama controlled a well-developed system of income-producing religious trusts (awqāf), in Lebanon the Shii ulama lacked autonomous financial resources (Norton, 1985, 111-112).

[88] On Musa Sadr's approach to Shah and his relationship with the Pahlavi Iran, see: (Samii, 1997, 66-91).

[89] Hawza or hawza-yi ilmiyya is a seminary for Shia theological studies.

Establishing Qom as a major centre of learning in the 1930s did not diminish the importance of the seminal connection between Lebanese Shii clergy and the Iraqi holy cities. Neither the Qom hawza nor Iranian based marāja[90] could gain a tangible influence among the Shia in Lebanon. Most of the Lebanese clergy who studied at seminaries in Najaf followed Ayatollah Mohsen Hakīm and after his death Ayatollah Abūlqāsim Khū'ī or, to a limited extent, Ayatollah Baqer Sadr who both resided in Najaf (see: Naīm Qāsīm, 2002, 24).

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomaini who was elevated to the marja[91] status in the 1960s, did not have much of a following among the Lebanese or Iraqi Shias (see: Chehabi, 2005, 38-39). Even, Musa Sadr promulgated Ayatollah Mohsen Hakīm among the Lebanese Shias and after Hakīm's demise in 1970, in contravention to the expectations of revolutionary clergy and disciples of Ayatollah Khomaini, he proposed Ayatollah Abūlqāsim Khū'ī, who was known for his abstinence from political involvement, as his marja successor (See: Muhtashamī, 1378/1999, 95& 165).

Ayatollah Khomaini differed from his peers in that his assumption of the religious leadership had come about not by the traditional religious criteria whereby Shii ulama distinguished themselves until believers accepted them as a Marja, but had been precipitated by political events, namely his opposition to the Shah's consolidation of his personal dictatorship in 1963 and 1964 (see: Chehabi, 2005, 38-39). While most of his followers were in Iran, the fact that Ayatollah Khomaini spent more than 14 years in exile

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[90] A religious leader who is a source of emulation.

[91] marja al-taqlīd in Arabic or marja-i taqlīd in Persian, is the source of emulation in Shiisim.

in Najaf (1964-78) and his political stance against the Shah and overt criticism of Israel did not translate to a religious ascendancy among the Arab and Lebanese Shias. In the 1960-70s, it was not his religious credentials but his political stance against the Shah and Israel that brought him popularity among some Arabs, like Nasserists in Lebanon (interview: Hassan ʻAtāʼī, Beirut, 2009/10/03).

Interestingly, even those who established Hizbullah in the 1980s or members of Islamist groups such as the al-Dawa party, did not follow him as a Marja.[92] He was only known by some young Lebanese clergy in Najaf, such as Shaykh Subhī al-Tufaylī, Sayyid Hānī al-Fahs or Shaykh Adīb Heydar who were acquainted with Ayatollah Khomaini's thoughts and activities by attending his speeches and saying prayer behind him from time to time (Interviews: Sayyid Hānī al-Fahs, al-Dahiyaal-Janubiya, 2010/05/01& Shaykh Subhī al-Tufaylī, Bealbak, 2009/10/24& Shaykh Adīb Heydar, Bodnayel, 2009/10/24).

D. Iran's Ascendancy to a Divine-Political Seat

Around the 1979 revolution in Iran, a chain of changes and developments relegated the supreme spiritual authority of Najaf and elevated the Iranian city of Qom and Ayatollah Khomaini's politico-religious leadership among the non-Iranian Shias. In 1975, at the time of border disputes between Iran and Iraq and again at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980, the Iraqi regime, under the pretext of purging the country of disloyal citizens,

[92] For instance, the former Hizbullah MP, Mohammad Berjāwī who was in his youthful years a member of radical al-Katiba al-Tulabia says, "Before the Islamic revolution I was following Ayatollah Khūʼī [as a source of emulation].
However, once I got to know Imam [Khomaini's] thoughts, I decided to choose him as marja. It was one year before the revolution" (Interview, Mohammad Berjāwī, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2009/07/23).

expelled large numbers of Shias and Iraqis of Persian origin. The Shii political organizations like the al-Dawa party became proscribed and its members, including the Lebanese cadres of the party, fled from Iraq[93] (see: Shanahan, 2004, 948-949).

Following the 1979 revolution, Saddam Hossein staged a full-scale suppression against the Shii religious leaders whom he believed were inspired by Khomaini to topple the Bathist regime. He forced many of them to leave Najaf and Karbala. While in the wake of erecting an Islamic regime in Iran, Qom was flourishing into a reputable centre for Shii learning, many displaced Iraqi Shias and deported clergy, took refuge in Iran and settled in Qom.

Steadily Qom's hawza began assuming the religious and educational functions that Najaf possessed for centuries. It attracted Lebanese Shias who were interested in religious studies and jurisprudence, fīqh. For many of these new comers and mostly young scholars, Iran under Khomaini was a divine and political seat alike. They were followers of Najaf based Ayatollah Khū'ī. But, for many of them who were enthralled with Khomaini's charisma, the "politico-religious status of the Ayatollah" posed a dilemma regarding their religious affiliation; that "what is the religious duty for choosing a source of emulation" (Naīm Qāsīm, 2002, 24).

In their eyes, Khomaini's political theory of Vilāyat-i faqīh[94], was a functional model of praxis which none of the Najaf based marāja could have provided for Shii

[93] The crackdown on the party in Iraq was one reason behind its expansion in other countries. In 1980, branches of the party were established in Tehran, Damascus and London. On hizb ad-Da'wa al-islamiyya, See: (Shanahan, 2004, 943-954).

political activism. Henceforth, the political loyalty to Ayatollah Khomaini translated also into a spiritual commitment. From their perspective, in Sayyid Mohammad Husayn Fadlallah's words, they eventually resolved the long-standing dichotomy of "having a religious affiliation with Islam but a political affiliation with another ideology" (Fadlallah, 1987, 8).

By the early 1980s, the flow of Lebanese and other Arab Shias to the city of Qom for seminary studies and the adopting of Ayatollah Khomaini as a Marja by many of them, demonstrated Khomaini's spiritual and political ascendancy in Lebanon. "Many Lebanese decided to go to Qom because Najaf under Saddam was no longer a safe place", says Shaykh Hassan Ibrāhīmī who was in charge of foreign students seminary schools in Qom:

Qom seminary schools were going through a flourishing period and prominent ulama [decided to] resided there. Therefore, a general trend was set into motion that many talented Lebanese from different backgrounds, who were interested in religious studies, chose Qom. Many of them were referring to me, because I had relations with Lebanese long before the revolution" (Interview: Shaykh Hassan Ibrāhīmī, Tehran, 2010/01/17).

Whereas before 1979, there had been fewer than ten Lebanese students at the Iranian hawzas of Qom and Mashhad, their number jumped to 450 following the 1979 revolution (see: Abisaab, 2005, 242-243). Among these Lebanese, many future Hizbullah leaders such as Shaykh Subhī al-Tufaylī, Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, Shaykh Mohammad Yazbek or Shaykh Nabīl Qāoūq resided in Qom to pursue religious studies.

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[94] The guardianship of the jurisprudent.

E. A New Political Weight

The impact of the Iranian revolution was strongly felt by Shia across the Arab world; in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Lebanon. However, nowhere did the 1979 revolution leave as deep and long lasting effect, as it did in Lebanon. The Lebanese Shia community at the threshold of the 1980s suffered from sectarian discrimination, internal disunity and external aggression. The leadership crisis, following Musa Sadr's disappearance, put the community in a difficult situation vis-à-vis social and political issues surrounding it. "The most threatened and vulnerable community in the civil war", as the Lebanese historian Ahmad Baydūn depicts, had to fight on its own the problem of southern Lebanon versus the Palestinian Fidā'iyīn and the Israeli increasing aggression, especially following Operation Litani of 1978 (see: Gendzier, 1989, 22).

Upon Musa Sadr's disappearance in August 1978, the community split in different directions: the Independent Islamists close to Sayyid Mohammad Husayn Fadlallah and al-Dawa party elements who did not recognize Musa Sadr's hegemony; the traditional political elites, headed by Kāmel al-Asad; the religious trend which was headed by Mohammad Mehdi Shamseddīn; and the secular trend which embodied in the Amal movement's Husayn al-Husaynī and Nabih Berri (see: Azani, 2009, 57-58& Norton, 1985, 117-118). In the absence of a unifying religious-political leadership, many young Shii elites regarded the community's leaders incompetent and their political organizations "behind their ambitions and goals" (Naīm Qāsīm, 2002, 25). This prevailing mood is well reflected in the words of Sayyid Abbās al-Mūsawī, the former Secretary General of Hizbullah, talking to a reporter following the arrival of Pasdaran corps to Bekaa: "there is no longer

any hope to find a competent and righteous leadership among the Lebanese and Palestinians" (Umid-i inqilab, 1361/06/09- 1982/08/31, 18-19).

Against this backdrop, the Lebanese Shia faced a fundamental question concerning their identity and loyalty: that of if they should be defined as part of a universal Islamic mantle or recognize the Lebanese state and seek to solve their problems within the sectarian system. In the days leading up to the February 1979 revolution, the Shii elites closely watched the spectacular developments in Iran. "Before the Islamic Revolution", says Abū Hishām, "Imam Musa Sadr was telling us about the Iranian revolution and we were waiting for a change in Iran" (interview; Husayn al-Mūsawī, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2009/09/30). They all emotionally and enthusiastically identified themselves with the revolution in Iran and believed that they had been naturally part of it through support to either the pro-Palestinian or pro-Amal Iranians who had been in Lebanon. But they differed over how to associate their own predicament to the Iranian revolution. This "how", of course, went through contradictory interpretations.

The radical elements wanted to embrace Ayatollah Khomaini's political Islam as a model of political-religious praxis and advocated overthrowing the sectarian system in Lebanon in a revolutionary model like Iran. They dismissed the localist view of Amal and the Shia Higher Council, arguing that "the Lebanese issue is not independent from Iran or Iraq and other countries in the Islamic world"[95]. In contrast, Shaykh Shamseddīn, who was an establishment clergy, believed that the theory of the guardianship of jurisprudence, Vilāyat-i faqīh is neither comprehensive nor obligatory (al-Madini, 1999, 16). He disputed

[95] See Sayyid Mohammad Husayn Fadlallah's Speech at Freedom Movements Conference in Tehran, (Vahed-i nehzatha-yi azadi baksh, 1361/1982, 56-59).

the radicals by asserting that any solution to the social and economic disadvantages of the community should be sought within the Lebanese system, hence, the Islamic Republic could not be a proper model for Lebanon (see: Ibid, 117). As Shaykh Subhī al-Tufaylī who was a member of al-Dawa and critic of Musa Sadr, recounts:

After the creation of the Islamic Republic, there were long debates between us and Shaykh Shamseddīn about many issues. We did not see eye to eye over many points such as the relationship with the Islamic Republic. Shaykh Shamseddīn had points of view different from ours. Our disagreements were political. When Iran started its presence in Lebanon, the Shia Higher Council was in a position far from the Iranian stance and for this reason we believed that the Shia Higher Council and its clerical branches were not able to play the role we believed they had to. As a result, we decided to establish clerical and political bodies that concurred with our stances and direction (interview; Shaykh Subhī al-Tufaylī, Baalbek, 2009/11/11).

Following the 1982 Israeli invasion, as it was coming to a climax, radical clergy who put their "last and only hope" on the "bona fide leader" Ayatollah Khomaini expanded their activities and network in cities and villages to a instill the spirit of resistance (Umid-i inqilab, 1361/06/09- 1982/08/31, 19). Radical ayatollahs in Iran threw their full backing behind this "new political force" in Lebanon where, as a member of Ayatollah Khomaini's office says, "Up until that time, ulama and the clergy did not carry any political weight":

> Individuals such as Shaykh Rāgheb Harb, Shaykh Abdulmunm Mehanā in the south or Shaykh [Mohammad] Yazbek took a stance against Israel and we opened a popular front against Israel through them. Little by little, theses clergy made their presence felt as a new political weight in Lebanon (interview; anonymous, Tehran, 2007/08/31).

F. The Role of Ayatollah Montazeri

Among the prominent leaders of the Iranian revolution, the Grand Ayatollah Husayn Ali Montazeri held the highest jurisprudential status and at the same time a high revolutionary profile. Unlike other radical clergy and disciples of Ayatollah Khomaini who generally lacked high religious credentials, Montazeri was a distinguished Marja and jurist in hawza. He was a proponent of the Islamist International, beynol mellal-i eslāmī, and a supporter of freedom movements and revolutionary clerical currents in different Islamic countries.

In the context of post-revolution factionalism, Ayatollah Montazeri was regarded as the spiritual leader of the Third Line, Khat-i seh, which comprised the radical elements inside the Islamic Republic. No sooner had power struggle over economic and foreign policy issues divided the political elites in Iran, than cracks began to surface inside the clerical establishment. Gradually two discernable camps of radical and conservative ulama, the latter known as anjuman-i Hujjatiyah sympathizers, came into sight (see: Abrahamian, 1986, 85& Keddie& Hooglund, 1968, 13). The distinguished leader of the radical wing was Ayatollah Montazeri[96]. His advocacy for radical foreign policy and economic measures, such as the Band-i Jīm of land reforms, aroused the angry objection from the Bāzārī elements and conservative ulama in Qom and Mashhad (see: Bashiriyeh, 1984, 180-181 & Moslem, 2002, 59 & Akhavi, 1986, 66-68).

[96] Another prominent figure in this wing was the IRP secretary general, Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammad Beheshtī. He defined the line of revolution "anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and anti-feudalist" (see: Jumhuri-yi Isami, 1359/03/11- 1980/06/01). Under his leadership, the IRP was generally persuading a radical economic and foreign policy approach. After his death in the huge blast, June 1981, that razed to the ground the headquarters of the party, the right wing of the IRP dominated the party. On the IRP polices under Beheshtī, see: (Moslem, 2002, 60-61).

In the realm of foreign policy, Montazeri sought to establish ties with revolutionary regimes and movements and pushed Ayatollah Khomaini, who had a far more cautious and reserved stance on this issue, to forge strong ties between the Islamic Republic and freedom movements (interview; Ayatollah Montazeri, Qom, 2007/08/09). To highlight the international aspect of the revolution and relations with ulama from other countries, he introduced a number of initiatives such as the International Day of the Downtrodden, rūz-i jahāni-yi Mustażafīn, the International Jerusalem Day, rūz-i jahāni-yi Qods and the Week of Unity between the Shia and the Sunna, hafte-yi vahdat as well as the Assembly of ulama and Friday Prayer Leaders of Islamic Countries.

For instance, the Week of Unity was an occasion to reach to Sunni ulama and confer with them to bridge differences and create unity through the common principles. During this week, Ayatollah Montazeri dispatched his representatives to Lebanon and other countries to invite Sunni scholars to attend clerical conferences and seminars in Iran (interview; Hassan Ibrāhīmī, Tehran, 2008/04/06). As for the Friday prayer sermons, a collective religious event on which Montazeri placed emphasis since the beginning of his anti-Shah struggles[97], he delivered part of his speech in Arabic to draw the attention of Arabs to the revolution in Iran and the Islamic Republic's perspective on issues such as Lebanon and Palestine.

[97] The Ayatollah, according to his political diaries, initially began holding the Friday prayer in his natal town, Najafabad, in Isfahan. He suggested to Ayatollah Khomaini that he encourages other ulama to hold Friday prayer services in different cities of Iran as well as Najaf where Khomaini was in exile, in order to convey their message to people (see: Montazeri, 1379/2000, 283-284& 440-442). Under the Islamic Republic, Friday prayers have had an important political function as the Imams deliver speeches on public and political issues along with religious sermons.

G. The Islamic Republic and Sunni Groups in Lebanon

Presenting itself as the heart of Muslim revolutionary struggles, the Islamic Republic has always sought to influence Sunni movements in the Arab world. This has been critical to the Islamic regime, since Iran's identification with the Shia has been an obstacle to claiming a Muslim universalist mantle while giving a pretext to its Arab enemies to depict Iran as heretic Persians (see: Hunter, 1988, 742).

The Iranian leaders and primarily Ayatollah Khomaini himself emphasized on the unity between different Islamic sects and issued fatwa, banning the fomenting disagreements between Sunna and Shi'a which harm the brotherhood of Muslims[98]. Furthermore, through support for the Palestinian cause and taking symbolic initiatives, such as the declaration of the Week of Unity, the Islamic Republic sought to create a united Islamic front against the common enemies of the umma.

To this end, the Islamic Republic did not spare any effort to incorporate Sunni movements in its regional plans. Lebanon which hosted many Sunni and Palestinian groups, was seminal to this strategy. A considerable achievement in this regard was establishing the Shi'i-Sunni clerical Association of Muslim ulama in Lebanon (AMUL), Tajammu al-ulama al-muslimin fi lubnan.

In parallel, to reinforce ties with Sunni clergy and movements and establish joint missionary groups, the Assembly of ulama and Friday Prayer Leaders of Islamic countries was established. Also, sponsored by Montazeri's office and the Iranian government, a

[98] On Ayatollah Khomaini's thoughts on religious unity and his approach to the Sunni jurisprudents, see: (Sivan, 1989, 1-30).

series of conferences and seminars under the title of Islamic thoughts, andīsheha-yi eslamī, were held which were attended by Sunni ulama from Iran and other Islamic countries (see: Jumhuri-yi Eslami, 1361/03/13 – 1982/06/03 &Keyhan, 1364/11/09- 1986/01/29).

The Islamic Republic's strategy concerning the Sunni clergy and factions in Lebanon was based on two general themes that Ayatollah Montazeri described in an open letter to the Lebanese and Palestinian ulama. First, "exaggerating and intensifying differences between Shii and Sunni and Lebanese and Palestinian groups" is religiously forbidden; and second, the "paramount duty" of the Lebanese and Palestinian ulama "is unifying the Shii and Sunni groups and factions against the international usurper Zionism" (al-Ahd, 1986/10/02& as-Safir, 1985/10/15).

Among the Sunni figures in Lebanon, Shaykh Saīd Shabān who led the Unification Movement, harkat al-tawhid, in Tripoli was of particular importance for Iran. He was a revered clergy in Tripoli and northern Lebanon and headed several Sunni factions in the north under the Unification Movement seal. Shaykh Saīd Shabān believed that the Islamic Republic was the only system that was founded on the authentic Islamic ideas and sources and hence was responsible for the propagation of the principles of Islam in the world (see: Etelaat, 1366/07/23- 1987/10/15). Declaring that Sunna and Shi'a needed to unite in order to guarantee the Islamic character of Lebanon, he embraced the Iranian involvement in Lebanon from the very first days of the 1979 revolution and joined ranks with Shii groups affiliated with Iran.

The charismatic influence of Shaykh Saīd Shabān and his hegemony over Sunni movements lent a very credible Sunni dimension to the Islamic Republic's policies. The

value that Iran gave to him and his Unification Movement is apparent in Muhtashamī's words:

> His independent, intrepid and courageous character made him popular in political and religious centers inside and outside Lebanon, among the Palestinian and in al-Azhar. Even the Saudi Arabian government regarded him with high esteem. [They] tried many times to buy him with their petro dollars; however the Shaykh resisted and never stooped to their tempting offers (interview: Alī Akbar Muhtashamī, Tehran, 2010/07/17).

1. The Association of Muslim ulama in Lebanon

The Islamic Republic's strategy to create a unified clerical Sunni-Shii front in Lebanon culminated in establishment of the Association of Muslim ulama in Lebanon[99] (AMUL). In terms of the goals and membership, the association aimed to bridge the typical Shi'i-Sunni and Lebanese-Palestinian rifts in Lebanon.

The AMUL was greatly instrumental in advancing the Iranian policies in Lebanon and played a significant role in propagating Khomaini's brand of Islam and invoking popular resistance prior to Hizbullah's official début in 1984 and the party's consolidation in Lebanon.

In fact, ever since the revolution in Iran, Lebanese clerics, inspired by Khomaini's revolution, had been discussing the idea of setting up a joint platform of Shii and Sunni ulama based on common ideological content to act against Israel. However, the decisive moment came with the Israeli invasion which concurred with the presence of Lebanese religious leaders in Tehran. The agonizing ordeal of invasion precipitated the birth of the

[99] Tajamu al-ulama al-muslemin al-sunna va al-shiaa fi Lubnan

radical clerical front. “The dearth of resistance against Israel”, says Shaykh Ali al-Khāzem, a young clergy at the time who was present at the conference, “made it clear to the clergy who came from different corners of Lebanon that they can and should have a significant role in mobilizing people” (interview; Ali al-Khāzem, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2009/07/23).

Ayatollah Montazeri, who advocated the idea of unifying the Sunni and Shii ulama, threw his backing behind the initiative. He exhorted the Lebanese and Palestinian clergy to go beyond differences and argued “that the United States and Israel target the unity between the Lebanese Muslims as they know very well that perpetuating this unity between combatant Shii and Sunni Lebanese and Palestinian Muslims would jeopardize their colonial plans” (see: an-Nahar, 1985/06/02& al-Ahd, 1987/01/31).

Indeed, the radical clergy in Lebanon implemented Ayatollah Khomaini’s credo that mosques "should not only be places of prayer but, as in the Prophet Mohammed's time, should be centers of political, cultural and military activities” (Khomaini, 1371/1992, 388). Deprived of any established organization, clergy like Shaykh Rāgheb Harb in the southern village of Jibshit or Shaykh Māher Hamūd in Beirut, turned the mosques and husaynīyas, the Shia’s social and religious centers, into pulpits of fiery speeches against the occupying army.

If, during the revolution in Iran, religious sermons played a key role in conveying the words of the ayatollahs to mobilize people against the imperial regime, the Lebanese clerics employed the same method to incite people against the occupation. Given the lack of resources and organizational tools at the time, this traditional and at the same time

powerful means of communication was crucial in mobilizing people and spreading the word of resistance.

As the newly arrived RG forces took the Imam Ali mosque and a seminary school in Baalbek for recruiting, training and public relationship[100], the amorphous and localized clerical efforts concentrated on attracting young men to be trained and organized for resistance. To lift the general morale and revive the self confidence of daunted people, the AMUL members announced, in their sermons, the arrival of "the army of Imam Khomaini" and exhorted the youth to rush to the training camps of Pasdarans to prepare themselves for battle against the occupation. Their ultimate goal was to create "a combatant society against the occupation" (see: Fadlallah, 1994, 14-15). According to Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah:

> There were no institutions like now, no large organization or specialized departments. There was only a group effort concentrating on […] banding together of young men, training and organizing them into small groups and then dispatching them to the occupied areas from where they were instructed to carry out attacks (Jaber, 1997, 49-50).

Rāgheb Harb who proclaimed that "unifying all Muslims" is the "path of resistance and continuity of the Islamic Revolution" in Lebanon, emerged, from 1982 till his assassination in 1984, as one of the pillars of resistance in the south (Keyhan, 1362/10/20-1984/01/10). An implacable enemy of Israel, his strong advocacy for the Islamic Republic and relentless excoriation of the occupation forces made him an instrumental link between

[100] The orientation meetings between the youth who came for military training and the RG commander were held at a seminary school in Baalbek where Sayyid Abbās Al-Mūsawī was teaching (interview; Mansūr Kūchak Mohsenī, Tehran, 2010/07/19).

the South and the RG base in the Bekaa [101]. Jibshit, consequently, transformed into a center of recruitment for military training, a stronghold of resistance and later Hizbullah in the south (see: Jaber, 1997, 21).

The mosques, husaynīyas and seminary schools assumed a new function and emerged as places for indoctrinating and instigating desperate people against the occupation and recruiting the youth for military training (see: al-Khāzem, 1997, 51).

In the absence of any Lebanese organized resistance, a network of clergy, mosques, husaynīyas and seminary schools managed to fill the gap which was left by an embattled PLO, unassertive Amal and phlegmatic Shia Higher Council. The Israelis were quick to perceive the potence of this emerging phenomenon that a top Iranian official described as "a new political weight". Some clergy like Shaykh Rāgheb Harb in Jibshit, Shaykh Husayn Surūr and Shaykh Muharram Ārefī in Sidon were arrested and some others deported and even assassinated by Israeli troops[102] (See: Jumhuri-yi Isami, 1362/01/07& 08-1983/03/27&28). In February 1984, Shaykh Rāgheb Harb, the implacable instigator against the occupation army, was assassinated in Jibshit. This plunged the South into an increasing anti IDF insurgency.

[101] Harb was well known as the brain behind the attacks made against Israeli soldiers. Under his supervision, Jibshit was transformed into one of the fiercest Resistance strongholds facing the Israelis. (see: Jaber, 1997, 21)

[102] During his detention, Shaykh Rāgheb Harb was interrogated extensively by the Israeli officers who were eager to discover the extent of affinity and relationship between him and Ayatollah Khomaini.
After his release, he said about the interrogations, "most of the questions were about our ties with the Islamic revolution […]. The interrogator asked me if [Ayatollah Khomaini] orders you to fight, would you follow his order. And I retorted, undoubtedly yes" (see: Rāgheb Harb's interview, Keyhan, 1362/01/23- 1983/04/12).

2. The AMUL and the Iranian Policy

When in June 1982, the operation Peace in Galilee was launched, the Israeli commanders never predicted that the Shia whom they believed to be the readiest to welcome their operation to uproot the PLO from their homeland, would arise soon as their primary enemy. In fact, initially when the Zioinist army invaded the Lebanese territory, the Israeli soldiers were received by rice and flowers in some southern villages (see: Hirst, 2010, 197-198). However, the tables soon turned. It did not take long before the general insurgency against the Israeli army prevailed in the Shia areas. Sporadic attacks and amorphous operations began to take casualties from Israeli soldiers.

One such an operation was the huge suicide attack on the Israeli military headquarters in Tyre in November 1982. The young Ahmad Qasīr from the southern city of Tyre, detonated a car packed with explosives in front of the eight-floor IDF headquarters and killed dozens of Israeli soldiers, including a number of top IDF commanders. For Israel, this was an entirely new kind of resistance. Originating from mosques and husaynīyas, it was much more lethal than what Israel had faced from the Palestinian operations. While the mounting number of casualties among the soldiers increased pressures on Israeli leaders to pull the army back into Israel, a joint US-Israeli effort was launched to extract political gains from the military achievements on the ground. This was what Iran and Syria sought to deny Israel.

On the 17th of May 1983, an agreement was signed between the newly elected president Amin Gemayel and the Israeli government to terminate the state of war between Lebanon and Israel. The US backed agreement aimed to bring Lebanon into the sphere of

Arab countries that had made peace treaties with Israel. This met with vehement condemnation from both Tehran and Damascus. The Islamic and nationalist forces in Lebanon objected the pact as a “total surrender vis-à-vis the occupation”. In Lebanon, objections came foremost from the AMUL which launched a popular campaign, coordinated with the Iranian embassy in Damascus, against the agreement and president Gemayel’s government.

The protests staged by AMUL against the May 17 Agreement and the ensuing street demonstrations were a watershed in the activities of the association. The association’s ulama embarked on giving stirring speeches to invite Lebanese to rise against the Lebanese government and the agreement. The vociferous campaign against the agreement, staged by the ulama from mosques and Friday prayers’ pulpits, culminated in a sit-in strike at the al-Imam al-Redā mosque in the southern suburb of Beirut. Sayyid Mohammad Husayn Fadlallah, a spiritual leader in the future Hizbullah, was the imam of the mosque.

No sooner had the fiery speeches by Fadlallah and other members of AMUL against president Gemayel and negotiations with Israel finished, than the sizeable protesters, who had gathered inside and around the mosque took to the streets of the southern suburbs. In the ensuing clashes which occurred between the demonstrators and the Lebanese army, one person was killed and several others wounded (See: al-Khāzem, 1997, 23). Similar demonstrations were also held in the Bekaa to show how unpopular talks with Israel and the agreement were among the people. In the coming days, the wave of protests became so strong that eventually the taciturn Shaykh Shamseddīn had to join the clerical opposition calls.

The Islamic Republic was clearly a main beneficiary of the ulama-led movement in Lebanon. The alliance of Iranian-Lebanese and Palestinian radical ulama emerged gradually as a strong clerical arm for the Islamic Republic. Unlike the Shia Higher Council, the AMUL was loyal to the Valī-yi faqīh. It credited Iran with a multi-sectarian legitimacy and a ground, in that early stage, to circumvent the Shia Higher Council, Amal and the Lebanese government to consolidate its influence in Lebanon. Neither the Amal movement, which was in constant friction with Palestinian groups, nor the Shia Higher Council which confined its principle mission to "improving and regulating the affairs of the Shia sect", fit into the Iranian grand strategy.

In response, the Islamic Republic proceed to back the assertive radical religious leaders. Ironically, as much as the 1982 invasion and its aftermath marked the rise of radicals in Lebanon, it accentuated the waning influence of the Shia Higher council and Amal. Particularly, the belated and moderate "civil resistance" response Shaykh Mohammad Mehdi Shamseddīn announced against the Israeli invasion, made him even more isolated. Shaykh Subhī al-Tufaylī, who was one of the founders of AMUL, put this as a basic motive behind establishing the association: "the Shia Higher Council was against opening any front against Israel and after the 1982 invasion they only called for civil resistance" (interview; Shaykh Subhī al-Tufaylī, Baalbek, 2009/11/11).

Much to Iranian-Syrian delight the "new weight", the ulama-led current, proved its potency by mobilizing the streets to disrupt the American efforts to consolidate the client regime of Gemayel and implement the May 17 agreement. By March 1984, the Lebanese Government finally abrogated the agreement and the US Marines left Lebanon a few weeks later.

Similarly, on the diplomatic front, AMUL played a significant role for Tehran's policy in Lebanon. In late 1982, following the entrance of RG forces to the Bekaa, the Gemayel government expelled the Iranian charge d'affaires and severed its relationship with Tehran, which had failed to coordinate posting the RG corps with the Lebanese government. AMUL reacted swiftly by staging strikes and demonstrations to put pressure on the government to revoke its decision and resume ties with Tehran. Consequently after a short period, charge d'affaires Mahmūd Nūrānī, returned triumphantly to Beirut where he was received by the AMUL members and hundreds of people who gathered in front of the Beirut airport (see: an-Nahar, 1982/11/28, 1982/12/22, 1982/12/24, Etelaat, 1362/09/06-1983/11/27& 1362/10/04-1983/12/25).

H. Dispatching the RG Forces to Lebanon

In June 1982 the first contingent of the Pasdaran corps landed in Damascus. The RG forces were to go to the battle fronts in Lebanon and engage the Israeli invading forces. The Islamic Republic's military and political leaders had put much hope in the mission. However, they soon discovered that political and operational obstacles were larger than what they had anticipated. As a result, the Iranian strategy essentially changed from dispatching a large number of forces to directly confront Israel into a limited presence of the elite RG forces for training Lebanese combatants.

Prior to dispatching the Pasdaran to Syria, a top Iranian delegation rushed to Damascus to meet with President Assad and present to him a plan of support. Deeply shocked by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the Iranian military and political leaders had prepared a plan to send several brigades to Lebanon to fight alongside the Lebanese and

Syrians against Israel. The delegation was composed of the Foreign Minister Vellāyatī, Ambassador Muhtashamī, Defense Minister Mohammad Salīmī as well as a number of the army commanders. The delegation met with President Assad and also held several meetings with Syrian army commanders to explain the details of their plan.

The delegation presented Syrians with a detailed military plan which had been prepared in the Higher Council of Defense, Shūrā-yi Ālī-yi difā, in Tehran. Following several meetings with Syrian army commanders, the Iranian delegation met Hafez al-Assad and informed him of the political and military arrangements that had been made. They continued their intensive negotiations in Damascus for another three days and eventually left for Tehran on June 10th, 1982.

Two days later, on June 12th, the Iranian embassy in Damascus was informed that the first corps of Iranian forces was to arrive in the evening. But on the very same day that the Iranian forces landed at the Damascus airport, Israel and Syria agreed to a ceasefire in Lebanon. This decision, which Assad made without consulting with Tehran, practically rendered the whole plan unpractical. Had the Syrians been serious in launching joint operations with Iran, they would not have agreed to the ceasefire that Israel accepted in an advanced stage of its Peace for the Galilee operation. Regardless, however, Iranians were determined to go to the war front in Lebanon. They saw the ceasefire as only benefiting Israel which kept breaching it by bombing Beirut and Lebanese and Palestinian forces. Therefore, Iranians did not see any merit in reconsidering their plan of sending troops to Lebanon.

1. The Path to Jerusalem Goes through Karbala

When the Iraq-Iran war was at its peak, Iranian planes had to fly over Turkey in order to transfer forces to Syria. As the third plane flew over Turkey, the Iranian officials received warnings from Ankara that they could not use the Turkish airspace for such purpose. At the same time, the Iranian military commanders who had conferred with Syrians about the joint military operations informed the officials in Iran and Ayatollah Khomaini of the lack of interest in Damascus to cooperate. These issues raised concern with the logistical support for thousands of forces who were to be stationed in the Levant.

These issues had already been obvious to the Iranian political and military officials. Also the plan to dispatch forcs was carried out without consulting Ayatollah Khomaini. This was indeed the major reason behind stopping the plan and the subsequent return of Iranian forces to Iran. No sooner had the third contingent of Iranian forces departed for Damascus, than Khomaini ordered halting the plan.

It is interesting that Ayatollah Khomaini, contrary to predominant belief, was the only person who approached this sensitive issue in a realistic and pragmatic way. Considering his reluctance a few years earlier to support Mohammad Montazeri's quest to dispatch volunteers to Lebanon, however, this should not have been unexpected. Khomaini's concern regarding dispatching the forces also stemmed from the ongoing Iraq-Iran war. Khomaini saw posting troops to Lebanon a dangerous diversion from war efforts to pin down Saddam. Later in a public speech, Ayatollah Khomaini confessed that "we were misled in the issue of [sending forces to] Lebanon[103]".

[103] *mā dar qazīye-yi lubnan bāzī kūrdīm.*

When Israel lunched the Peace for Galilee operation and invaded Beirut, Iranian officials saw that as a reaction to a series of victories Iran had made against Iraq. The Israeli invasion occurred barely 12 days after Iranians recaptured Khoramshar which turned the tide of the war in favor of the Islamic Republic. Such victories against Iraq changed the logic of the war for Tehran, from defending the country to invading Iraq and bringing down Saddam Hossein's regime.

Ayatollah Khomaini felt that Israel by invading Lebanon, sought to pin down Syria, Iran's war ally and a nemesis of Saddam, in order to give Baghdad more freedom on its western flank. Consequently, evacuating forces from the Iran-Iraq war front and dispatching them to Lebanon was nothing more than falling in the very trap that Israel devised to save Saddam Hossein. Henceforth the Iranian strategy for the war became "the path to Jerusalem goes through Karbala".

2. Changing the Strategy

Ayatollah Khomaini's objection stopped the plan which meant that the Iranian RG forces had to return to the front line in the south west of Iran. As a result, Tehran decided to modify the original strategy by setting practical and realistic goals for the plan. It was decided that part of the elite forces of the RG in Syria move to the Bekaa and the rest of the troops fly back to Iran. This meant that the mission's goal changed from military confrontation on the battle front to empowering the Lebanese and preparing them for resistance against Israel.

In light of Syrian unwillingness to support Iranian troops, implementing the plan in Lebanon was more realistic. The acceptance of a ceasefire by Syria on the day the Iranian forces arrived and their hesitant logistical support had disillusioned Iranian officials about the Syrians' intentions.

A few months later, several radical Lebanese clergy, among them some future leaders of Hizbullah like Sayyid Abbās Al-Mūsawī and Husayn al-Mūsawī, came to Tehran and visited Ayatollah Khomaini. The Ayatollah told them: "you have to start from zero" (interview; Mohammad Khātūn, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2009/09/10). As the founder of the Islamic Amal, Abū Hishām, explains Khomaini's stance:

Imam Khomeini from the very first day said that the Iranian presence in Lebanon was not intended for the battlefield and the [Lebanese] nation could do this duty and we would support you. […] After posting a considerable number of Revolutionary Guard forces to Lebanon, Imam corrected their [Iranian officials] move and said your duty was training and providing support for Lebanese who would shoulder the responsibility for fighting (interview; Husayn Al-Mūsawī, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2009/09/30).

The remaining RG forces moved to the Bekaa which undertook a training plan based on the model of Basīj. This plan originated from mosques and religious centers where youth were recruited for resistance. It was, according to the Pasdaran commander in Lebanon, "a step by step plan from mosque to battalion-making, *gordān,* and then staff, *setād,* and finally operation" (interview; Mansūr Kūchak Mohsenī, Tehran, 2010/07/19). In fact, the RG's military training was interwoven with the Lebanese clergy's activities in inciting people against the Israeli army. Parallel to guerilla training, the RG also held

ideological classes for the trainees who were mostly young people from different regions of Lebanon. These young people met in seminary schools and mosques in Baalbek with the Pasdarans and their commander who gave speeches before the prayer or religious sermons. "What they did", says a clergy member of Hizbullah, "was preparing and training the combatants based on the culture of trust in Allah and this left a lasting effect here on us" (interview; Mohammad Khātūn, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2009/09/10).

I. Conclusion

Anarchy and chaos reigned during the early years of post revolutionary Iran. In the absence of a strong centralized state apparatus, radical clergy managed to influence the foreign policy through a clerical network sponsored by radicals in Iran. During the Bazargan and Banisadr governments, radical factions used their mass-mobilizing political capacities and their dominance over the newly established revolutionary organs, such as the RG and Basīj, to challenge moderates and advance their strategy of exporting revolution. In the course of power struggle, war with Iraq and the hostility towards the US and Israel (the international context which Skocpol considers facilitating for the revolutionary elites), helped radicals to mobilize popular support behind consolidating the rule of Valī-yi faqīh. In this context, the radical clergy's bid to dispatch forces to Lebanon to fight against Israel were instrumental in undermining the moderate and "anti-revolutionary" factions.

The clerical efforts to organize sympathetic foreign Shii and Sunni ulama and their missionary work were two major tools for exporting the revolution. The Iranian radical clergy invited foreign ulama to adopt a clerical-led model of struggle that had been instrumental in the 1979 revolution. Clerical activities and religious sermons were a

powerful organizational tool in the process of the revolution against the shah. This traditional form of communication, which had been highly effective in linking the leaders of the revolution and the masses in Iran, was adopted by Lebanese religious leaders to mobilize people in the face of the Israeli invasion.

During the formative years of the Islamic Republic's involvement in Lebanon, a network of Iranian, Lebanese and Palestinian clergy laid the foundation of a the Iranian stratagem in Lebanon. This network was not constructed and created through precise strategic calculations and, unlike many tend to say, intelligence activities. Rather, it was based on clerical connections, personal ties and a traditional network that originated from mosques and religious centers. An exceptional revolutionary fervency, something that Montazeri calls "sort of an audacity as if we were to concur the world", was the engine behind it (interview; Ayatollah Montazeri, Qom, 2008/07/23). In Lebanon, AMUL represented this line. By turning the mosques and Friday prayer pulpits into political centers to mobilized people and recruit the youth against the occupation, the AMUL's ulama translated Ayatollah Khomaini's tenet that "religion and politics are indivisible" and that mosques are "centers of political, cultural and military activities" (Khomaini, 1371/1992, 388).

The Revolutionary Guards' military training, which originated from mosques and religious centers, was interwoven with the Lebanese clergy's activities in inciting people against the Israeli army. Parallel to guerilla training, the RG held ideological classes for the trainees in mosques and other religious centers to train the combatants "based on the culture of trust in Allah" (interview; Mohammad Khātūn, al-Dahiya al-Janubiya, 2009/09/10).

Given the Iranian tense relations with Amal and the Shia Higher Council, AMUL provided Tehran with a cross-religious legitimacy to reach the Sunna and Palestinian and "raise the flag of authentic Islam" in Lebanon. However, with Hizbullah's consolidation and internal changes in Iran, AMUL lost its original political weight.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Since the advent of the Islamic Republic, radicals had sought to post forces and create a base in Lebanon. Their endeavors, both in 1979 and 1982, failed. This led to changing their strategy from a direct military presence in Lebanon to stationing a limited number of elite forces in order to train and empower radical Lebanese groups.

In both occasions the Syrian reservation over an Iranian military presence in Lebanon was a major factor in derailing the radicals' plan to send combatants to Lebanon. In late 1979, there was essentially no official coordination between the Syrian and Iranian governments to dispatch the volunteers. Mohammad Montazeri had mostly relied on al-Fatah and some radical elements in Lebanon to carry out the mission. Concerned with emerging an Iranian-Palestinian axis and the repercussions of an Iranian military presence in Lebanon, Hafez al-Assad tried to circumscribe and thwart the mission.

The invasion of Lebanon in June 1982 did not change Assad's stance regarding posting Iranian forces to Lebanon. Once the Iranian delegation met with Assad and informed him of the plan for sending thousands of Iranian forces to Syria and Lebanon, he made every attempt to dissuade them. On the very same day when the first contingent of the Iranian forces arrived to Damascus, he accepted a ceasefire with Israel. This practically rendered the mission meaningless. Syrians had never accepted a joint military operation with Iran and when the Iranian corps was stationed in Syria, they failed to provide them

with even basic facilities. They were indirect pressures to make Tehran pull out its troops from Syria.

Iranian radicals were too perseverant to take such factors into consideration. They put pressure on Assad to back their plan. However, Ayatollah Khomaini who was suspicious of the issue eventually stepped in and stopped the plan. The Ayatollah avoided backing Mohammad Montazeri's efforts to send volunteers to Lebanon. When in 1982, radicals like Muhtashamī took the opportunity of the Israeli invasion and tried to station Iranian corps in Lebanon, Khomaini again prevented them and described the effort as "misled".

The failure to station military forces in Lebanon came as a disappointment to radicals of the Islamic Republic. Since the advent of the revolutionary regime, they fought with moderates over exporting the revolution and advancing their foreign policy view. But, by this time after eliminating Bazargan and Banisadr, they were the sole ruler of the state. In 1979, pro-Palestinian radicals had to struggle with moderate provisional government and exploit their influence in the newly established revolutionary organs to advance their foreign policy goals. Similarly, after the fall of Bazargan government, Banisadr who pursued a "nationalist nonalignment" foreign policy confronted the radicals' international approach.

In contrast, by 1982, radicals were in a much improved internal and external position which paved the way for a more ambitious and confrontational foreign policy by Tehran. Following infighting in the summer of 1981, the new regime overcame the armed opposition, in particular the militant leftist groups, and consolidated itself internally. The

spectacular victories on the war front, especially the recapturing of the cities of Abadan in September 1981 and Khorramshahr in May 1982, gave the regime self-confidence and stability to undertake an active foreign policy. The Iraqi threat, which was backed by the US and conservative Arab regimes, also gave the radical clergy an opportunity to mass-mobilize people and direct the popular zeal against internal rivals.

Against this backdrop, when Israel entered a massive force to Lebanon in June 1982, radicals did not see any better opportunity to seize and dispatch forces to Lebanon. This was the moment, as Muhtashamī told Ayatollah Khomaini, "we had been waiting for years". Nevertheless, Assad's suspicions and Khomaini's deep reservations thwarted the plan which was aimed, according to the original plan, at stationing at least ten thousand soldiers in Lebanon and fighting with Israel on Lebanese territory. This resulted in changing the strategy of radicals in Lebanon. By stationing a limited number of the RG forces in Bekaa, the plan changed to empowering the Lebanese radicals and preparing the youth for resistance against Israel.

The military and ideological training in the Bekaa converged with the clerical activities of the AMUL ulama in the South, Beirut and Bekaa. Clerical activities in Lebanon were a peaceful method of exporting the revolution. Missionary works and religious sermons were an effective tool in creating a popular mobilization against the Israeli army and at the same time a less-sensitive method in the eyes of Syrians. As a result, this strategy also allowed the Islamic Republic to reach a modus vivendi with Damascus over its policy in Lebanon. The Israeli withdrawal under the painful attacks of the Islamic resistance in Lebanon, the departure of the Multinational Forces and the abrogation of the

May 17 agreement were the fruits of this strategy from which both Syria and Iran benefited greatly.

The evolution of the Islamic Republic's policy regarding Syria and Lebanon cannot be understood without investigating the factionalism in post revolutionary Iran. This is even more critical for understanding the formative years of Syrian-Iranian relationship in the 1980s. The first decade of the 1979 revolution witnessed the confluence of many different political forces and deep changes in the Iranian political sphere. Factionalism in this period, both during the reign of moderates from 1979 to 1981 and the reign of radicals between 1981-1989, had a direct bearing on the foreign policy of the revolutionary regime.

In this research, factionalism and the developments of post revolutionary politics in Iran are analyzed based on the pattern of uniformities and similarities which Crane Brinton identified in four classic revolutions. By applying Brinton's model, the post revolutionary stages in Iran are: the 1979-81 rule of moderates, the 1981-89 reign of terror and then the beginning of Thermidor in the wake of Khamenehi's leadership in June 1989.

Radicals in Iran had the organizational advantage, that Crane Brinton defines in the Anatomy of Revolution (1956, 155-160), to conquer their rivals in June 1981. The internal and external factors that determined the accession of radical clergy, are analyzed in this research based on Theda Skocpol's structuralist theory of revolutionary state outcomes.

Radical clerics exploited their organizational advantage (in the IRP, the RG, Basīj and the Revolutionary Committees) as well as political and ideological resources to win the power struggle against their rivals to create a more centralized and mass-mobilizing regime. While they had an efficient network of clergy all over the country, they used

mosques and religious centers to propagate their cause and mobilize the masses. The concept of Vilāyat-i faqīh was central to the organizational advantage of the clergy.

Externally, the Iraqi invasion and the confrontational mood with the US greatly facilitated their efforts to mobilize the masses. Radicals linked international developments to the internal power struggle to undermine the influence of the moderate Bazargan and Banisadr governments and discredit leftist groups. This was the case when Mohammad Montazeri dispatched the volunteers to Syria and when students occupied the U.S. embassy in Tehran, a move which sealed the fate of the provisional government. In the same vein, backing the Palestinian resistance and radical groups in Lebanon at the expense of Amal, as well as advocating the export of revolution were instrumental in discrediting the moderate factions and mobilizing popular zeal to consolidate the rule of Vilāyat-i faqīh.

Investigating the power struggle between moderates and radicals in the 1979-82 period allows a deeper and accurate understanding of the background of friction with Amal, the creation of Hizbullah in Lebanon and the evolution of Tehran-Damascus partnership. Periodic tensions in two countries relations were related to factional rivalries in post revolutionary Iran.

This research covers the seminal years of 1979-82 of post revolutionary Iran. It also deals with certain trends beyond this period to shed light on some aspects of the research subject, such as the role of the Freedom Movement Unit of the RG. The 1981-89 stage of post revolutionary Iran is the reign of terror and the dominance of radicals in Iran. This period concurs with the eight year long Iraq-Iran war, while the Damascus-Tehran relationship evolves into a strategic partnership.

In the beginning of this stage, with the expulsion of Iraqi forces from most of the areas they held in Iran by mid-1982 and the concurrent Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Syria required Iranian assistance to keep Iraq in check and mobilize Lebanon's Shia to expel Israeli and Western forces from its backyard. By mid 1985, as the Israeli threat receded with the withdrawal of Tel Aviv's troops to the self-declared security zone, and as Arab disenchantment grew as Iran continued the Gulf War, Iran became dependent on Syrian cooperation and goodwill to maintain a foothold in the Levant and avoid total regional isolation. This situation continued until the cessation of hostilities with Iraq in 1988. In general, the bilateral relationship went through many tensions in Lebanon before Damascus and Tehran reached a modus vivendi in Lebanon when the Iranian revolution turned to moderation by 1989.

This research which covers an early stage of the 1979 revolution needs to be complemented by other works that are based on primary sources to study the 1982-1989 period. Investigating the effects of the radicalization of the revolution in Iran on developments in Syrian-Iranian-Hizbullah relations and then the effect of Thermidorian convalescence from the radical era on Iran’s ties with Syria and its policy in Lebanon should be the subject of future works on the formative years of Damascus-Tehran relationship and the creation of Hizbullah in Lebanon.

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al-Khāzem, Shaykh 'Ali, the secretary of the Association of Muslim ulama in Lebanon (AMUL), al-Dāhiya al-Janūbiyya, 2009/07/23& 2010/06/19.

Kūchak Mohsenī, Mansūr, the first commander of the Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon, Tehran, 2010/07/19.

al-Labābīdī, Shaykh Salīm, Palestinian member of the Association of Muslim ulama in Lebanon (AMUL), Shatila Camp, al-Dāhiya al-Janūbiyya, 2009/07/16 & 2009/07/14.

Mahdavī, Husayn, associate of Mohammad Montazeri and member of SATJA, Najafabad-Isfahan, 2008/08/09.

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Movahedī, Ahmad, associate of Mohammad Montazeri and former chargé d'affaires in the Iranian embassy in Lebanon, Tehran, 2010/07/04.

Muhtashamī, Alī Akbar, former ambassador to Damascus and former interior minister, Tehran, 2010/07/17& 2010/07/18.

al-Mūsawī, Husayn (Abū Hishām), founder of the Islamic Amal and member of Hizbullah's Central Council, al-Dāhiya al-Janūbiyya, 2009/09/30.

Nāblusī, Shaykh 'Afīf, member of Hizbullah's Central Council, Sidon, 2009/07/22.

al-Naqqāsh, Inīs, former member of al-Fatah, Tehran, 2008/04/08& Beirut, 2010/05/05.

Qayūmī, Husayn, member of SATJA and the Freedom Movements Unit (FMU), Tehran, 2010/07/17.

Sadr, Rubāb, Musa Sadr's sister and the former leader of Amal, al-Dāhiya al-Janūbiyya, 2010/03/12& 2009/10/22.

Safavī, Salmān, the field commander of the Iranian volunteers posted in Syria and member of the RG's Freedom Movements Unit (FMU), Tehran, 2010/7/17.

Salāmatian, Ahmad, Informal discussion, Iranian foreign minister's deputy in the Banisadr's government, Paris, 2010/05/22.

Salavātī, Shaykh Mahmūd, former manager of Ayatollah Montazeri's theological schools, Qom, 2008/04/21.

Salehī, Asghar, associate of Mohammad Montazeri, member of SATJA and the Freedom Movements Unit (FMU), Qom, 2008/04/21.

Salmān, Talāl, Owner of as-Safir newspaper, Beirut, 2009/08/19.

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Vāhed, Shaykh Mahmūd, associate of Mohammad Montazeri and member of SATJA, Najafabad- Isfahan, 2008/08/09.

Zam,Abbās (Abū-Sharf), founder and former chief commander of the RG, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, 2008/11/05 & 2008/11/13.

Zeyn, Shaykh Ahmad, member of AMUL and go-between during the Camp Wars, Sidon, 2009/07/22.