

# Lectures in Diplomacy

## US – Iran Relations

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American writer George Friedman asked:

*“Do you know what is the most important global event in Bidaya?”*

*The twenty-first century after the events of the eleventh from September? It is the US-Iranian alliance.”*

Iran and the United States have had no formal diplomatic relations since April 1980. Pakistan serves as Iran's protecting power in the United States, while Switzerland serves as the United States' protecting power in Iran. Contacts are carried out through the Iranian Interests Section of the Pakistani Embassy in Washington, D.C., and the US Interests Section of the Swiss Embassy in Tehran. In August 2018, Supreme Leader of Iran Ali Khamenei banned direct talks with the United States.

The American newspapers in the 1720s were uniformly pro-Iranian, especially during the Mahmud Hotak's 1722 revolt against the Iranian monarchy. Relations between the two nations began in the mid-to-late 19th century, when Iran was known to the west as Persia. Initially, while Persia was very wary of British and Russian colonial interests during the Great Game, the United States was seen as a more trustworthy foreign power, and the Americans Arthur Millspaugh and Morgan Shuster were even appointed treasurers- *general* by the Shahs of the time.

During World War II, Persia was invaded by the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, both US allies, but relations continued to be positive after the war until the later years of the government of Mohammad Mosaddegh, who was overthrown by a coup organized by the Central Intelligence Agency and aided by MI6. This was followed by an era of very close alliance and friendship between Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's regime and the US government, Persia being one of the US's closest allies, which was in turn followed by a dramatic reversal and disagreement between the two countries after the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

Opinions differ as to the cause of the cooling in relations. Iranian explanations include everything from the natural and unavoidable conflict between the Islamic Revolution on the one hand, and perceived American arrogance and desire for global hegemony on the other. Other explanations include the Iranian Government's need for an external bogeyman to furnish a pretext for domestic repression against pro-democratic forces and to bind the government to its loyal constituency.

The United States attributes the worsening of relations to the 1979–81 Iran hostage crisis, Iran's repeated human rights abuses since the Islamic Revolution, and its growing influence in the Middle East.

Since 1995, the United States has had an embargo on trade with Iran. In 2015, the United States led successful negotiations for a nuclear deal (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) intended to dismantle Iran's nuclear weapons capabilities, and when Iran complied in 2016, sanctions on Iran were lifted. The Trump administration withdrew from the nuclear deal and re-imposed the sanctions in 2018. Since this time, relations between the United States and Iran have worsened, and the two countries came close to conflict during the 2019–20 Persian Gulf crisis.

According to a 2013 BBC World Service poll, 5% of Americans view Iranian influence positively, with 87% expressing a negative view, the most unfavourable perception of Iran in the world. On the other hand, research has shown that most Iranians hold a positive attitude about the American people, though not the US government. According to a 2019 survey by Iran Poll, 13% of Iranians have a favourable view of the United States, with 86% expressing an unfavourable view, the most unfavourable perception of the United States in the world. According to a 2018 Pew poll, 39% of Americans say that limiting the power and influence of Iran should be a top foreign policy priority. Relations tend to improve when the two countries have overlapping goals, such as repelling Sunni militants during the Iraq War and the intervention against ISIS.

## KEY ISSUES

- Early Relations and Mutual Recognition, 1850
- Diplomatic Relations
- Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and the American Legation in Iran, 1883
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- Political relations
- US-Iranian relations, the other side
- US. -Iran Relations 1953 – 2021

- U.S.-Iran Conflict and Implications for U.S. Policy

### **EARLY RELATIONS AND MUTUAL RECOGNITION, 1850**

The first act of diplomatic engagement and recognition between the United States and the Kingdom of Persia (Iran), both long established states, occurred on June 28, 1850, when U.S. Secretary of State John Middleton Clayton authorized the American Minister Resident at Constantinople, George P. Marsh, to negotiate a treaty of friendship and commerce with the Persian Chargé d' Affaires there. The Persian Chargé had approached Marsh in April 1850 and offered to ask his government for authority to negotiate such a treaty. The treaty, finalized in November 1851, failed to go into effect when the Persian government took no action on a "most-favoured-nation" commercial clause added to the treaty by the U.S. Senate in its ratification resolution.

As a result of the Iranian takeover of the American Embassy on November 4, 1979, the United States and Iran severed diplomatic relations in April 1980. The United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran have had no formal diplomatic relationship since that date. Switzerland is the U.S. protecting power and provides limited consular services to U.S. citizens in Iran.

### **DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS**

Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and the American Legation in Iran, 1883.

Diplomatic relations and the American Legation at Tehran were established on June 11, 1883, when Chargé d'Affaires S.G.W. Benjamin presented his credentials to the Shah of Persia.

### **DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS SEVERED, 1980**

The United States severed diplomatic relations with Iran on April 7, 1980. This action was taken following the seizure by student militants of the American Embassy in Tehran and its staff on November 4, 1979, and the subsequent failure of the Iranian government to secure their release. The hostages eventually were released on January 20, 1981; however, diplomatic relations remain severed, and Switzerland currently serves as the protecting power for U.S. interests in Iran.

### **POLITICAL RELATIONS**

Political relations between Iran (Persia) and the United States began when the Shah of Iran, Nassereddin Shah Qajar, officially dispatched Iran's first ambassador, Mirza Abolhasan to Washington, D.C., in 1856. In 1883, Samuel G. W. Benjamin was appointed by the United States as the first official diplomatic envoy to Iran; however, ambassadorial relations were not established until 1944.[24] The first Iranian Ambassador to the United States of America was Mirza Albohassan Khan Ilchi Kabir. Justin Perkins and Asahel Grant were the first missionaries dispatched to Iran in 1834 via the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

The US had little interest in Persian affairs, while US as a trustworthy outsider did not suffer. The Persians again sought the US for help in straightening out its finances after World War I. This mission unlike the last was opposed by powerful vested interests and eventually it was withdrawn with its task incomplete. Following this there was no special US concern with Iran or any interaction until World War II.

Amir Kabir, Prime Minister under Nasereddin Shah, also initiated direct contacts with the American government in Washington. By the end of the 19th century, negotiations were underway for an American company to establish a railway system from the Persian Gulf to Tehran.

Until World War II, relations between Iran and the United States remained cordial. As a result, many Iranians sympathetic to the Persian Constitutional Revolution came to view the US as a "third force" in their struggle to break free of British and Russian dominance in Persian affairs. American industrial and business leaders were supportive of Iran's drive to modernize its economy and free itself from British and Russian influence.

During the Persian Constitutional Revolution in 1909, an American named Howard Baskerville died in Tabriz while fighting with a militia in a battle against royalist forces. After the Iranian parliament appointed United States financier Morgan Shuster as Treasurer General of Iran in 1911, an American was killed in Tehran by henchmen thought to be affiliated with Russian or British interests.

Shuster became even more active in supporting the Constitutional revolution of Iran financially. When Iran's government ordered Shu'a al-Saltaneh (A: A<sup>2~2'</sup> ç<sup>1/η</sup>), the Shah's brother who was aligned with the goals of Imperial Russia in Iran, to surrender his assets, Shuster moved to execute the seizure. Imperial Russia immediately landed troops in Bandar Anzali, demanding a recourse and apology from the Persian government. Russia's General Liakhov subsequently shelled Iran's parliament in Tehran as part of actions to protect Russia's interests during the chain of events, and Morgan Shuster was forced to resign under British and Russian pressure. Shuster's book *The Strangling of Persia* is a recount of the details of these events and is critical of Britain and Imperial Russia,

The American Embassy first reported to the Iran desk at the Foreign Office in London about the popular view of Britain's involvement in the 1921 coup that brought Reza Shah to power. A British Embassy report from 1932 admits that the British put Reza Shah "on the throne". At that time, Iran did not view the United States as an ally of Britain.

In 1936, Iran withdrew its ambassador in Washington after the publication of an article criticizing Reza Shah in the *New York Daily Herald*. The withdrawal lasted for nearly one year.

Morgan Shuster was soon followed by Arthur Millspaugh, who was appointed Treasurer General by Reza Shah, and Arthur Pope, who was a main driving force behind

the Persian Empire revivalist policies of Reza Shah. The friendly relations between the United States and Iran lasted until the 1950s.

In 1941 the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran deposed Reza Shah believed to be Axis-leaning and established a supply route of war material to the Soviet Union. From 1942 US troops were involved in the operation of this Persian Corridor one of the routes through which the US delivered Lend-Lease supplies to the USSR. The last Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, maintained close ties with the United States during most of his reign, which lasted from 1941 until he was overthrown by the Islamic Revolution in 1979. He pursued a modernizing economic policy, and a strongly pro-American foreign policy; he also made a number of visits to America, where he was regarded as a friend.

Iran's long border with America's Cold War rival, the Soviet Union, and its position as the largest, most powerful country in the oil-rich Persian Gulf, made Iran a "pillar" of US foreign policy in the Middle East. Prior to the Iranian Revolution of 1979, many Iranian students and other citizens resided in the United States and had a positive and welcoming attitude towards America and Americans.[8] In the 1970s, approximately 25,000 American technicians were deployed to Iran in order to maintain military equipment (such as F-14s) that had been sold to the Shah's government. Additionally, from 1950 to 1979, an estimated 800,000 to 850,000 Americans had visited or lived in Iran and had often expressed their admiration for the Iranian people.

## US-IRANIAN RELATIONS, THE OTHER SIDE

American writer George Friedman asks:

*“Do you know what is the most important global event in the beginning of my life? The twenty-first century after the events of the eleventh from September? It is the US-Iranian alliance. There has recently been a lot of talk about a war between the United States and Iran. In my view, it's unlikely because the risks are too high for both countries. Iran can't take the chance that its military would be destroyed, and the U.S. can't accept the costs a real victory would entail. Since Korea, the United States has performed poorly in war, with the exception of Desert Storm, when the destruction of Iraqi forces allowed U.S. entry into Kuwait and no Kuwaiti resistance to American occupation emerged. But in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States faced the problem of what I would call occupation warfare, a type of combat that carries a substantial price even after the initial war has been won”.*

The observer feels the media war between the states all-round military the United States and Iran that war is about to erupt between the two countries, but he will realize that behind the hill is behind it if it is known that such clashes speech was occurring over a period of more than a quarter a century is the age of the Iranian revolution.

It hides behind a long history of understandings and cooperation, and sometimes even alliance, between (the Great Satan) the Khomeini (Islamic) Republic. And before going

into the details of the hidden and apparent relations between the two countries, it is worth noting the following points:

**First:** The United States of America begins in on its strategic interests, Its international relations are building And service to the ambitions of domination and control that accompanied its rise as a major international power after the end of the war the second world, and then as the only global power after the collapse of Eastern camp.the United States of America violates the principles.

**Second:** Democracy, human rights, and other slogans which you raise and call to, and throw them away from the wall if contrasted or conflicted with its colonial interests.

**Third:** After the end of the Cold War with the fall of the camp Al Sharqi, America devoted itself to the war of Islam and considered its number one enemy, especially after the dominance of the Christian right extremist on the US administration.

**Fourth:** Despite America's repeated mistakes and failures, however, it is about its relationship with Iran - and with the Rafidah in general - I read history well, and I knew those who betrayed the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad and empowered the Tatars, led by Hulagu, caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Sunni Muslims; to satisfy their sectarian lusts, they can repeat the experience in every battle to be people year is a party to it.

**Fifthly:** Khomeini's Iran is also launching its alliances its international relations are among its national and sectarian interests. it does not provide free services to America or others; it is not the whims of its rulers, or their personal interests considered in making these relationships. Just as Iran is taking off in its far-reaching policies and plans, it is part of the conspiracy doctrine the Rafidah, which is based on the myth that the Sunnis raped the ruling is from the Ahl Al-Bayt, and that the religious duty of the Shiites is to deter the usurper and his suppression, and the restoration of rule and caliphate to the family of the House the Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, and his followers.

**Sixth:** Iran seeks to be a military and economic power great regional, and is also working hard to spread its culture and its rejected faith in the Islamic world, and the religion of the Shiites

They allied themselves with the Great Satan in order to weaken the worlds, while they are waiting for their absent Imam.

The meeting obliges one of us to enter in the knees of the sultans, here must refrain from doing so even if you do refrain from killing him, unless in his formal entry, a real victory for Islam and Muslims.

**Seventh:** Since the outbreak of the Khomeini revolution, Iran has been trading with issues the Islamic world, especially the Palestinian issue, which you know that it is a pivotal issue among the Muslim masses, it spends a lot of money on its propaganda, to show in front of the Islamic peoples - with their media attacks on the Jews and

America - as the first defender of the Muslim sanctities. Recent statements are included to Iranian President Ahmadinejad on Israel this framework. Despite the fanfare of Iran's rulers and their verses regarding "Israel" since Khomeini until Ahmadinejad, but the government Iran has not taken any significant practical measures to support the Palestinian cause.

### **U.S.-IRAN CONFLICT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY**

Since May 2019, U.S.-Iran tensions have heightened significantly, and evolved into conflict after U.S. military forces killed Qasem Soleimani, the commander of the Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force (IRGC-QF) and one of Iran's most important military commanders, in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020. The United States and Iran have appeared to be on the brink of additional hostilities since, as attacks by Iran-backed groups on bases in Iraq inhabited by U.S. forces have continued.

The background to the U.S.-Iran tensions is the 2018 Trump Administration withdrawal from the 2015 multilateral nuclear agreement with Iran (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA), and Iran's responses to the U.S. policy of applying "maximum pressure" on Iran. Since mid2019, Iran and Iran-linked forces have attacked and seized commercial ships, destroyed some critical infrastructure in the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, conducted rocket and missile attacks on facilities used by U.S. military personnel in Iraq, downed U.S. unmanned aerial vehicle, and harassed U.S. warships in the Gulf.

As part of an effort, it terms "maximum resistance," Iran has also reduced its compliance with the provisions of the JCPOA. The Administration has deployed additional military assets to the region to try to deter future Iranian actions. The U.S.-Iran tensions still have the potential to escalate into all-out conflict. Iran's materiel support for armed factions throughout the region, including its provision of short-range ballistic missiles to these factions, and Iran's network of agents in Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere, give Iran the potential to expand confrontation into areas where U.S. response options might be limited. Iran has continued all its operations in the region despite wrestling with the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected Iran significantly. United States military has the capability to undertake a range of options against Iran, both against Iran directly and against its regional allies and proxies. A September 14, 2019, attack on critical energy infrastructure in Saudi Arabia demonstrated that Iran and/or its allies have the capability to cause significant damage to U.S. allies and to

U.S. regional and global economic and strategic interests, and raised questions about the effectiveness of

U.S. defense relations with the Gulf states. Despite the tensions and some hostilities with Iran since 2020 began, President Donald Trump continued to state that his policy goal is to negotiate a revised JCPOA that encompasses not only nuclear issues but also Iran's ballistic missile program and Iran's support for regional armed factions. High-

ranking officials from several countries have sought to mediate to try to de-escalate U.S.-Iran tensions by encouraging direct talks between Iranian and U.S. leaders. President Trump has stated that he welcomes talks with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani without preconditions, but Iran insists that the United States lift sanctions as a precondition for talks, and no U.S.-Iran talks have been known to take place to date. Members of Congress have received additional information from the Administration about the causes of the U.S.-Iran tensions and Administration responses. They have responded in several ways; some Members have sought to pass legislation requiring congressional approval for any decision by the President to take military action against Iran.

## **LECTURE PLANNING**

### ***Lecture 1***

***1969-1974: Richard Milhous Nixon Administration***

### ***Lecture 2***

***1974-1977: Gerald Ford Administration***

### ***Lecture 3***

***1977 – 1979: Carter Administration***

- ***The 1979 revolution; the hostage crisis; Economic consequences of the Iran***
- ***Hostage crisis***

### ***Lecture 4***

***1981–1989: Reagan Administration***

- ***Iran–Iraq War; 1983: Hezbollah bombings ;1983: Anti-communist purge***
- ***Iran-Contra Affair; United States attack of 1988 ; 1988: Iran Air Flight 655***

### ***Lecture 5***

- ***1989-1993: George H. W. Bush, as Administration***

### ***Lecture 6***

***1993–2001: Clinton Administration***

- ***Khatami and Iranian reformers o Inter-Parliamentary(Congress-to-Majlis) informal talks***

### ***Lecture 7***

***2001–2005: Bush Administration, First Term***



- *September 11 attacks o "Axis of evil" speech o Alleged "Grand Bargain" proposal*
- *2003: Border incursions begin*

#### **Lecture 8**

##### **2005–2009: Bush Administration, Second Term**

- *Iran's nuclear program; Iran fears of attack by the US; US covert operations inside Iran o Iraqi insurgency; 2006 sanctions against Iranian institutions ; 2007 US raids Iran Consulate General; 2008 naval dispute; Covert action against Iran; 2008 US veto of Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities*

#### **Lecture 9**

##### **2009–2017: Obama Administration**

- *Roxana Saberi and detained diplomats; Iranian presidential elections 2009*
- *Detention of US hikers over Iraqi border; Disappearance of Shahram Amiri; Drone incidents*
- *Threats to close Persian Gulf o Attempts at rapprochement; Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA)*
- *US Supreme Court decision about frozen Iranian assets*

#### **Lecture 10**

##### **2017–2021: Trump Administration**

- *IRGC and U.S. Armed Forces terrorist designations*
- *2019–20 escalation in tension*
- *May 2019 Gulf of Oman incident and further rise in tensions; June 2019 Gulf of Oman incident; June 2019 Iranian shoot-down of U.S. drone; July 2019 alleged American jamming of Iranian drone*
- *November 2019 Iran gasoline price protests; December 2019 Kata'ib Hezbollah–U.S. attacks in Iran; Targeted killing of Qasem Soleimani; Iranian retaliation and Ukraine International Airlines flight 752 shoot-down; 8 March 11 attacks and retaliation; New exchange of words after days of protest in Iran; COVID-19 pandemic; Military satellite; Iranian bounty program; 2020 United States presidential election and US President- elect Joe Biden; Assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh; Assassination of Abu Muhammad Al – Masri*

#### **Lecture 11**

##### **2021–Present: Biden Administration**

- *Biden seeks return to Iran deal*

- *US and Iran hail 'constructive' indirect nuclear talks in Vienna*
- *Briefing with Senior State Department Official on Recent U.S. Engagement in Vienna Regarding the JCPOA*

### KEY ACTIONS

There are many axes that we must address through research and strategic analysis to extrapolate the future of U.S. – Iran diplomatic relations.

To explore the future, the past of US-Iranian relations through many axes must be brought up.

## About the BIC

The BIC is an independent, non-profit, think-and-do tank based in the capital of Europe that is committed to developing solutions to address the cyclical drivers of insecurity, economic fragility, and conflict the Middle East and North Africa. Our goal is to bring added value to the highest levels of political discourse by bringing systemic issues to the forefront of the conversation.



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