

## Iranian Nationalism

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This paper examines the history of the Iranian nation and its quest for nationalism. This papers analyzes different qualities and characteristics of nationalism and three historical events. These events include the nationalization of the oil industry, the Iran-Iraq War, and the quest for nuclear power.

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What is nationalism? What characterizes Iranian nationalism? How has nationalism been demonstrated in Iran's history? Nationalism can be seen in very different ways. Iranian nationalism has been around since the 1870's. In this paper, after analyzing the defining qualities and characteristics of nationalism, namely Iranian nationalism, I examine how Iranian nationalism was demonstrated via three different historical events. The first event was the oil nationalization of 1951. Next, I will examine how nationalism unified Iran during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980's. Finally, I will consider how the nuclear enrichment program and President Ahmadinejad signify nationalism in present-day Iran.

## NATIONALISM

Nationalism is a frequently debated concept in the academic literature. In this section, I will be looking at how different authors have defined and characterized the concept of nationalism. I propose that the definition of nationalism proposed by Cottam, Moaddel (2005) and Tavakoli-Taraghi (2001), as the idea of "watan" or nation is the best fit for describing Iranian nationalism. "Watan" is a Persian concept describing nationhood and Iranian national identity. Before exploring their definition in greater detail, comparison of other conceptualizations of nationalism will be first discussed.

In his book, *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*, Fred Halliday characterizes nationalism as a set of movements, "political movements arising at particular times with specific leaderships" (Halliday, 2000). Halliday

refers to nationalism as an ideology that is embodied in a flag, a capital, a national airline, a football team, a national cuisine, a national sentiment. Nationalism is a doctrine that unifies people and it asserts a unitary view of the community termed nation and divides those who are and are not part of the nation. Furthermore, he argues that globalization promotes nationalism and national sensitivity and cultural nationalism. Nationalism can be seen as regional identity or national identity. National or regional identity is what bonds people of a geographical region, like the Middle East.

For Halliday, his vision of nationalism fits with the textbook descriptions of Iranian history. Iran, or Persia as it used to be called, had possessed a "national" identity since the time of King Cyrus, who established a dynasty in 550 BC. The characteristics of Iranian culture other than the religion of Islam have lasted for centuries. Iranian culture and the pride in Iranian history have served to define what Iranians consider to be nationalism. The Persian Empire was vast and great, enriched with its arts, culture, history and ideology. Over the centuries, although many battles were won and lost, the Persian language, traditions and culture remained intact. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the country was dominated by the British and the Russians, but the Iranians managed to keep their own heritage and culture. Dynasties rose and fell, but Persia remained independent.

Others provide a more nuanced understanding of Iran nationalism. In particular, the liberal-nationalist discourse in Iran includes the idea of "watan," or nation and homeland, or

statehood (Cottam, 1964, Moaddel, 2005, Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001). One may even say that patriotism with a tribal, city, and regional attachment is another way to describe nationalism. In Latin, "nation" and "nitus" means the place of birth. According to political scientist Carlon Hayes, a nation is an "independent political group with a common world-view and cultural heritage" (Naqavi, 1984). Nation can be thought of as the state that one belongs to. Being brought up in a certain geographical environment creates the greatest unit of tribal solidarity between individuals. Hans Kohn says, "The group which on this basis feels a joint interest to form a nation" (Kohn, p. 15). A nation is a collection of individuals who are joined together by the territory, blood, language, culture and/or history. Kohn describes nationalism as a deep of feeling loyalty and attachment to a homeland (Kohn, 2004) This description clearly embodies the concept of "watan."

In another view, man lives for the nation he belongs to and offers his life for it, in particular, nationalism often can trump one's personal ideology and religious preference (Naqavi, 1984). Thus, in Naqavi's account, nationalism is closely linked with secularism. One of his basic principles of nationalism is a rejection of religious bonds and an acceptance of a secularist order. According to this view, nationalism and religion cannot coexist. Nationalism leads to secularism because national unity is based on common land, race or language, which necessitates that religion be kept separate from politics. The main duty of citizenry is the patriotic duty, regardless of religion, which is seen as a personal belief. In contrast, it is arguable that Iranian

attachment to state is intermeshed with religion and mythology of faith. For Iranians, the debate is not whether the state is secular or not. Instead, it is about the inseparability of Shi'as symbolism and mythology of the state.

Richard Cottam defines nationalistic behavior as "a set of behavioral patterns associated with an intense identification with a community that has achieved or seeks independent statehood" (Cottam, 1964). Such communities could be based on religion, race, ethnicity and language. The Persian or Farsi language is responsible for a part of the identity of the majority of Iranians (Siavoshi, 1990). Arabic is mainly the language of prayer, but all other aspects of life, including business, government, the arts and everyday use of language is in the non-Arabic language, mainly Persian, or Farsi. This sense of dual language identity, where Farsi is the everyday language and Arabic is the language of prayer, adds further proof that despite two languages serving within daily life, religion and state can still be considered unified concepts of Iranian nationalism. It is clear that nationalism can be defined as a sense of identity and a sharing of language and religious characteristics. It need not require one's attachment to a particular space.

### **NATIONALIZATION OF THE OIL INDUSTRY**

In this section, I begin by giving a short history of oil nationalization before explaining how the oil nationalization helped define Iranian nationalism. The 1951 nationalization by then-Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh served to unify the Iranian people as he tried to defend the

sovereignty and the rights of Iran to benefit from its own oil resources.

First discovered in 1901 by William Knox D'Arcy, the resource was exploited until 1951. Originally, D'Arcy received a concession from the Iranian government for exploration and exploitation of oil in the southern part of Iran. In 1909, the D'Arcy concessions were taken over by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and by 1914, the (British) Royal Navy changed from coal to oil and in response to its strategic concerns, the British government acquired a majority 51% share. In 1935, the company became known as the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). In the late 1940's nationalism was becoming a major political force in Iran because it unified the populace behind this cause. The fact that the majority of the oil company was maintained by foreign forces was a source of resentment and disapproval (Siavoshi, 1990). In 1948, the Iranian government negotiated with the AIOC and the result was the so-called "Supplementary Agreement," wherein revenues retained by Iran increased from 22 cents to 33 cents per barrel. For Iranian nationalists, this agreement was still insufficient.

By the mid-1950's, Mossadegh became the Chairman of an 18-member Oil Committee in the Majlis (Iranian parliament). This Committee rejected the Supplementary Agreement. Mossadegh, his National Front political party and the Iranian citizenry began to demand oil industry nationalization. On March 15, 1951, the parliament passed a bill nationalizing the oil industry. The following month, Mossadegh became the Prime Minister and the "moving force behind the oil nationalization movement" (School of Business Administration, 1992; Siavoshi, 1990).

At the time, the AIOC was producing about 30 million tons of oil per year. The nationalization of the oil industry was a move toward Iranian political independence in its internal affairs and its external relations. Nationalization was attached to Mossadegh's belief that democracy was best preserved through a parliament in which people could voice their ideas and shape their destiny through free elections.

Mossadegh wanted the best for his country and better working conditions for his people. However, one problem was his unwillingness to compromise or negotiate with the British. While this stance launched him to legendary status in Iran, its practical impacts were that his unwillingness to negotiate was also the *raison d'être* for his downfall. Great Britain disapproved of Mossadegh's nationalization of the oil industry. Relatedly, there was also a growing British fear that if Iran nationalized its oil industry, then it may undermine British interests in the Suez Canal. The British reacted by threatening Iran with a naval force in the Persian Gulf and then by imposing an economic embargo on Iranian oil. These reactions reinforced the nationalists' deeply rooted suspicion toward British imperialist intentions and made compromise on the oil issue unlikely (Siavoshi, 1990).

The British took their grievances to the Security Council of the United Nations in 1951. This action provided Mossadegh with a platform from which he appealed to the international community to defend the plight of his people and his country. Mossadegh said that there was "great similarity exists between the efforts and sacrifices of the Iranian people of today with what your ancestor did 200 years ago to release

their homeland from the fetters of economic and political imperialism” (Montclair State School of Business Administration, 1992). Iran’s position was also that the British government was not a party to the 1933 agreement and that the Security Council had no jurisdiction with regards to Iran vs. AIOC (Montclair State School of Business Administration, 1992). While there was an attempt by George McGhee, Assistant Secretary under Dean Acheson to renegotiate the terms of the contract to a 50-50 share, neither Mossadegh nor Great Britain accepted this proposal. Eventually, the Security Council voted that the case was in fact not in its jurisdiction and that it should be considered by the International Court of Justice in The Hague. On July 22, 1952, the Court decided in favor of Iran by a majority vote. Mossadegh was at the height of his political career and popularity.

In early 1953, Mossadegh proceeded to kick out all the British from Iran and closed the British Embassy. Without an Embassy, Great Britain turned to the United States for assistance in planning a coup d’etat. During the 1979 revolution, Iranians referred to the American embassy as a “den of spies” due to its role in planning the 1953 coup d’etat (Kinzer, 2003). Initially, Great Britain’s Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden appealed to President Truman for an overthrow of Mossadegh, but Truman would not hear of it. Truman believed that the direct or indirect interference of the U.S. in Iranian internal affairs would have grave consequences.

By January 1953, the administration of President Eisenhower took office and Eden once again appealed for the overthrow of

Mossadegh. This time his proposition was couched in terms of the threat of the spread of communism, and the power of Iran’s communist Tudeh party, to take over the government of Mossadegh. President Eisenhower, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, CIA Director Allen Dulles, along with Kermit Roosevelt, head of Central Intelligence Agency operations in the Middle East were approached by Monty Woodhouse, a British official, with the proposal of a covert operation named “Operation Boot.” The plan was to overthrow Mossadegh and replace him with General Fazlullah Zahedi and claim it to be a revolution of the people to bring back the Shah of the country. The U.S. leaders, along with Loy Henderson, Ambassador to Iran and General Norman Schwarzkopf, Sr. (the father of U.S. Gulf War General Norman Schwarzkopf) made the final decisions to go ahead with “Operation Ajax,” as it was known in the U.S. Kermit Roosevelt hired bullymen and popular wrestlers, such as the Rashidi brothers to stage street riots and mobs. Roosevelt would have secret midnight meetings with the Shah in preparation for the coup. The Shah was to leave the country and wait in Rome until he was told to return in triumph. The first attempt at the coup was with a “firman,” or an order fabricated as from the Shah to Mossadegh relieving him of his duties. However, General Nasiri, an Iranian military official, who issued the firman to Mossadegh was arrested by General Rihadi, also an Iranian military official. The second attempt at the coup was successful on August 19, 1953. Mossadegh’s home was seized and ruined as he fled through the back garden. After a few days of hiding, Mossadegh turned himself in. He was

tried by a military tribunal and sentenced to three years in solitary confinement. However, the trial was unconstitutional because according to the Iranian constitution, members of the cabinet can only be tried by the Supreme Court. Mossadegh died at his home, on March 5, 1967.

The nationalist uprisings over oil, the British and American-engineered coup d'état response to oil nationalization and the ICJ ruling would bring down the democratically elected Prime Minister and set into motion events that continued to resonate for decades thereafter. (Kinzer, p. 150, 2003) After the 1953 coup, the U.S. replaced Britain as the outside power in Iran's domestic affairs. The Shah's autocratic style rule evolved into a constitutional monarchy. U.S. intervention in Iran stifled the nationalist forces for the next 25 years and assured the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi's dynasty. It enabled the international oil industry to export on favorable terms 24 billion barrels of oil per year. These interventions only furthered the alienation of Iranians from the United States and were a fundamental step in the break in the Iranian-American relations after 1979. Mohamed Mossadegh remains a legendary figure of courage and lasting influence in the modern history of his country.

Iranian nationalists view the 1953 coup as an illegitimate seizure of power. The royalists conspired with foreign forces to overthrow the government of Mossadegh and they collaborated with international oil companies to compromise Iran's national interests. For the nationalists, the opposition to the Shah's regime in the 60's and 70's was rooted in its lack of legitimacy. In his book, *All the*

*Shah's Men*, Steven Kinzer argues that the coup had an effect on the emergence of revolutionary Islamic movement. In contrast, in his book *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism and Fundamentalism*, Mansoor Moaddel asserts that major nationalists and religious figures were willing to support the Shah if he was willing to abide by the constitution. (Moaddel, 2005) Moaddel states that the coup contributed to the rise of militant Islamic fundamentalism as it led to changes in the structures and policies of the state, the economy and class relations. It marked the beginning of a new international alignment with the Western states and the state's major economic development initiatives. Moaddel believes that the state's "exclusionary policies and the imposition of secularist monolithic discourse on society from above," explain the formulation of Islamic fundamentalism (Moaddel, 2005).

In evaluating these views on the impact of oil nationalization and the resulting coup d'état, I think Kinzer's explanation is a more accurate description of Iranian nationalism and its causes. The nationalization of oil unified the Iranian people and there was a lot of popular support for Prime Minister Mossadegh. On the other hand, I do not agree with Moaddel that the Shah would have had more support if he abided by the constitution. The Shah had a lot of support from the people because Iranians were generally economically well off and there was freedom in the country, as opposed to the lack of freedom in the present-day Islamic Republic.

The nationalization of the oil industry in Iran was a case of strong nationalism because it showed how Mossadegh was determined to stand up

for Iranian nationalism. He believed in a strong Iranian state and wanted to reap the benefits of the oil industry for Iran itself, after years of having the financial benefits of the oil industry siphoned off by foreigners.

### IRAN-IRAQ WAR

In this section, I will give a brief history of the Shatt-al Arab, the Arab river. I will discuss how it was the point of contention that led to the Iran-Iraq war, which is another case of nationalism in Iran's history. The Iran-Iraq war mobilized the entire Iranian nation. It originated with the historical roots of Arab-Persian conflict. A historical schism where ethnic hostility, religious differences and frontiers are in constant dispute. Ethnic hostility stems from the Battle of Qadisiya, in the Euphrates Valley, in 637 AD, in which the Persians were routed by Arabs carrying the message of Islam. The defeat of the Persian Sassanian Empire made Arabs and Persians traditional enemies. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century most of the people in present day Iran and Iraq were forcibly converted by Arabs spreading a new religion. Persia was indeed one of the first ancient civilizations to fall to Islam (O'Ballance, 1988).

The war began with Iraqi desire to dominate the region as a pan-Arab leader. The east bank of the Shatt al-Arab (or the "Arab River" or Arabistan) had rule by Arab dynasties for centuries. This area became an Emirate in 1690, under Emir Ali Bin Nasir al Kabi during the Kabide Period. Successive Emirs were able to offset the Ottoman Empire against the Persians. For many years the Arabistan Emirate occupied an important trade route between the two rival Empires. It was also the half-way point between India and East African coast.

The Second Treaty of Erzerum of 1847 confirmed the boundary agreements and declared the commercial port of Muhammarah to be Persian. This treaty provided for freedom of navigation for Persian vessels. The Treaty of Sevres signed by the Allies and the Turkish Government in August 1920, created three new Arab states, Syria, the Hejaz and Iran. In October 1923, the National Assembly declared Turkey to be a Republic and elected Kamal Ataturk as the President. Iraqis blame the British for not claiming the east bank of the Shatt al-Arab to be part of Iraq.

The conflict in the Iran-Iraq war stemmed from the thorny dispute over the boundary lines of the Shatt al-Arab. On September 21 and 22, 1980, the Iraqi army crossed the Iranian territory and began to shell urban centers. Iraqi warplanes bombed airfields in Tehran and other cities, and Iraqi forces advanced in several directions towards Dizful, Khurramshahr and Susangrid. In response, Iranian planes bombed the Iraqi oil installations at Faw and Port Bakr in the Basra Province, which resulted in a complete stop of oil shipments from those areas (Khadduri, 1988). Saddam Hussein attacked Iran at a politically weak point for the nation as it was still badly disorganized by the effects of the revolution (Sterner, 1984). The Iraqis had lost confidence that the revolution would be sufficiently stable internally or flexible externally to contemplate renegotiating the 1975 border agreement (Wright, 1980). Saddam Hussein portrayed the war as being one of Arabs against the Ajam or non-Arab Iranians by comparing it to a war centuries ago in which the Muslim Arab army defeated the non-Muslim Iranian empire (Siavoshi, 1990). The newly established regime in Iran by the

Islamic Republic would have nothing to do with Iraq and the Ba'th regime. They ignored initial gestures of friendship and they made unfavorable statements about Iraq and its leaders. Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the 1979 Iranian revolution, was unwilling to accept and implement the provisions of the Algiers Agreement of 1975, or to recognize the Ba'th government.

The Algiers Agreement, otherwise known as the Algiers Accord, was a 1975 treaty between Iran and Iraq that was meant to settle disputes over the Shatt-al Arab. The new Islamic regime declared the treaty signed by the dethroned Shah, as unbinding on Iran despite international law declaring that a treaty is still valid and binding if it is denounced by one party without the approval of the other parties signatories to it. Moreover, the Treaty of 1975 stated that its provisions, including the protocols, "shall not be infringed under any circumstances," and "a breach of any of the components of this overall settlement shall clearly be incompatible with the spirit of the Algiers Agreement" (Khadduri, p. 95, 1988). Iran had failed to observe the provisions relating to the land frontier. Iraq declared the treaty null and void as a formal step to relieve itself of its obligations. Iraq then sought to restore its jurisdiction over the three land sectors that Iran failed to surrender in accordance with the treaty. The Treaty of 1975 that outlined the borders of the Shatt-al Arab, put an end to rivalry and conflict between Iraq and Iran, itself became the cause of tension and revival of conflict. In addition to all this, the political structure in Iraq had changed as well with the Presidency of Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr passing onto Saddam Hussein.

The Algiers Agreement of March 6, 1975, over the boundaries of the Shatt al-Arab, was based on the principles of territorial integrity, the inviolability of borders and noninterference in internal affairs, provided that the two countries would make a definitive demarcation of their land frontier in accordance with the Constantinople Protocol of 1913 and the minutes of the Delimitation of Frontiers Commission of 1914. It also stipulated to define their maritime frontier in accordance with the thalweg, or the border, restore security and mutual trust along their common frontier, to consider these arrangements as integral parts of the comprehensive settlement and to reestablish traditional good neighborly ties and relations (Khadduri, 1988).

Khomeini used the war of Iraq vs. Iran as a rallying point and as a national issue. Khomeini used the war as an element of imagery and public relations to unify the people of Iran. In this context, martyrdom and self-sacrifice took on a new meaning. He assured the people of Iran that they were fighting for their nation because it was the victim of aggression and hostile actions. In the case of Iran, Khomeini unified the people of Iran and made it a mandatory requirement for all male teens and adults to sign up for military duty. At the time, Iran's population was 40 million, nearly three times that of Iraq's 14 million (Sterner, 1984). Khomeini appealed for national unity saying the superpowers had hatched "devilish" plots to divide Iran as it battled Iraq (Chicago Tribune, 1980). Khomeini blamed the U.S. and the Soviet Union for causing Iran's internal divisions that surfaced at the start of the war. "The superpowers who lost hope in the war, or military attacks, are now beginning their devilish activities trying



to separate you from each other and cause dissent among you," said Khomeini, "Our people must wake up and understand those who want to create dissent...want to invade your country and take away everything" (Chicago Tribune, 1980).

It was Khomeini's "immense prestige, power, influence and political acumen that held the Islamic Republic together during 1979, and until September 1980, after which was with Iraq engendered the essential cement of nationalism" (O'Ballance, 1988). By mid-October in Tehran about 1000 men were being accepted daily by the Iranian military. The Mullahs were active recruiting sergeants for the Pasdaran, or the military generals, which had reached a strength of about 70,000, urging young men to volunteer (O'Ballance, 1988). A wave of national euphoria swept through Iran, causing hesitant regulars of all ranks, technicians and reluctant conscripts to return to their units and yet others to rush to volunteer for military service. Imam Khomeini called for an end to the political rivalries at the time and emphasized that the people should concentrate on the war with Iraq. Saddam Hussein assumed that by attacking Iran, he would bring about the fall of Khomeini under the impact of the invasion. However, the war provided a national cause that rallied support behind Khomeini's Islamic regime and postponed the day that the regime would have to moderate its policies to accommodate other internal economic and political pressures (Stern, 1984). Iranian casualties were high and despite a "patriotic and religious fervor," such a casualty rate would not go on indefinitely without a political cost. In sum, the Iran-Iraq war served to unify

Iranians and is an example of nationalism in Iran.

### IRAN'S NUCLEAR AMBITIONS

In this section, I will consider the nuclear enrichment program in Iran and how it demonstrates nationalism. The current President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has used its nuclear program to unite and rally the people of Iran. Ahmadinejad has argued that the nuclear program is an issue of national strength, security, defense and national pride. "All our national activities are transparent, peaceful and under the watchful eye of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," he said in 2006, "Why then are there objections to our legally recognized rights?" (Haider, 2006). In a 2006 speech to the United Nations General Assembly, U.S. President George W. Bush reiterated the charge that Iran was trying to build nuclear weapons and warned that it must abandon its nuclear ambitions. Bush did not say that he wanted a "regime change" in Tehran, but accused the Islamic Shia government of denying "liberty" to its citizens and using national resources to "fund terrorism, fuel extremism and pursue nuclear weapons." "We look to the day when you can live in freedom," said the U.S. president, addressing the Iranian people directly. "America and Iran can be good friends then and close partners in the cause of peace" (Rizvi, 2006). In his 2002 State of the Union speech, President Bush, referred to Iran as being part of the "axis of evil," and described Iran's failure to meet the Security Council deadline as an act of "defiance" and warned Tehran of its consequences. In 2005, when Iran failed to abide by a U.N. Security Council resolution calling for suspension of uranium enrichment-

related activities, Washington tried hard to gather support for possible sanctions against Tehran, but failed. Though critical of Iran's refusal to stop uranium-related activities, the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has so far been unable to substantiate U.S. and European suspicions about the military nature of Iran's nuclear weapons. Unlike India, Pakistan and Israel, Iran has ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and thus is bound to abide by its rule. Iran justifies its nuclear program because the treaty allows non-nuclear weapons states to pursue nuclear technology for peaceful purposes (Rizvi, 2006).

Iran may have nuclear ambitions for its regional security and defense. Despite Iran's argument that it wants nuclear enrichment for civilian and energy purposes, it can also be argued that it wants to develop nuclear capabilities because it is surrounded on all its borders by hostile powers, with U.S. forces to the west, Russia to the north and Israel to the east, as well as other Arab nations. Iran has legitimate concerns for its security due to these external threats and it seeks a nuclear deterrent.

The nuclear program is an issue of national pride because Iran long has suffered at the hands of other national powers and for many Iranians, they feel is about time that Iran defends itself both within the region and on a broader international stage. Iran demands respect from the international community and having nuclear energy or nuclear capabilities provides an opportunity whereby Iran can elicit this respect worldwide, or at least this is the perception. Iran wants to be a regional power and given its size, history and cultural aspects, it believes it warrants

regional hegemon status. Now that its long time rival, Iraq and Saddam Hussein, have been destabilized, Iran sees an opportunity to claim its power in the region and views its attainment of nuclear power as essential to establishing that power and status. Other Middle Eastern countries may have a hard time accepting a nuclearized Iran and they may seek to proliferate themselves just to balance and check the nuclear power of Iran.

While the nuclear ambitions of Iran go back further beyond Ahmadinejad's presidency, the issue has intensified since the U.S. invasion of Iraq. For Iranian nationalists, the nuclear issue is viewed as just another example of the international community's mistreatment of Iran and its sovereignty. Just like any other country, Iran does not want to have restrictions imposed on it regarding its ability to develop nuclear energy and hence become a regional power. The nuclear issue has become an example of great power aspiration that seems to resonate to some extent with the Iranians' sense of their own uniqueness in the region. The Iranian population views its nuclear ambitions with a sort of entitlement because Pakistan, India and Israel, countries close in proximity to Iran are already nuclear powers. For many nationalists, they see the development of nuclear power in these countries as developments occurring with minimal protest from the United States and the international community. When the international community and the U.S. in particular want to stop Iran from becoming a nuclear power, then this reinforces the traditional Iranian characteristic of victimization and increases their nationalist rhetoric.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, nationalism can be defined as a political movement and as an ideology embodied in a national "identity." Identity could be seen as patriotism and tribal attachment and is demonstrable by symbols such as language, a flag, a national cuisine, a national sentiment or a national airline. Nationalism is a doctrine that unifies and brings the people of a nation together in how they view nation, state and in the Iranian case, the watan. For Iranian nationalists, globalization appears only to strengthen their nationalism. They see foreign and Western interjection and cultural hegemony and want to create a counter-perspective on Iranian life and purpose as a nation-state. In Iran, the people unify and come together when there are issues of national concern. We looked at three cases of strong Iranian nationalism: the nationalization of the oil industry of Iran by Mohammed Mossadegh, the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980's, which brought the Iranian people together to fight for their nation against invasion and victimization. Finally, we considered the nuclear energy ambitions of Iran, which has taken front stage in recent international relations. The nuclear issue is another case of Iranian nationalism because it represents a national issue of state strength, sovereignty and independence. Overall, we see that nationalism is strong and well in Iran.

However, it is not certain how the Iranian people will stand in case of threats of war and invasion when it comes to the nuclear issue, but it can be surmised that they will pressure the government *not* to go to war. This may seem surprising given our discussion of nationalism in Iran, however, as an Iranian, I believe our citizens wants to

stand up for their country, in that they want the best for their country, but that they would not want to go to war and be bombed and killed. So, it is probably the case that they will only want to go so far with the nuclear issue, but stop short of war. They will have to take a stand and have their voices heard either way, but they do not want another war with bloodshed and death of their citizens. Other Middle Eastern countries will probably see a nuclearized Iran as a regional hegemon and subsequently a regional threat. Thus, rival countries such as, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey will probably not support a nuclearized Iran. This also has to do with the long standing Shia-Sunni rivalry. It seems that present-day nationalism is mostly about posturing and not the will to take it to the levels of war.

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