

ISRAEL AND IRAN: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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Alisha Weisser, B.A.

Georgetown University  
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Alisha Weisser, B.A.

MALS Mentor: Ori Soltes, PhD.

## ABSTRACT

With the recent events of the new nuclear agreement with Iran, the issue of Iran's relationship with Israel has once again come into the spotlight. From media reports one can deduce that Israel and Iran are countries that have always been at odds with one another. Former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stated multiple times that he wanted to "wipe Israel off the map." In his recent address to the United Nations General Assembly, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated how detrimental it would be to Israel's security, and to the world community, if Iran were to acquire nuclear capability. While presently it may look like these countries may appear to be enemies they were once strategic allies.

This thesis will examine the past, present and future of the relationship between Israel and Iran. The purpose of this thesis is twofold. The first is to show that Israel and Iran were once allies in the Middle East. The second is to examine the perspective of the Millennial generation of Israel and Iran and see if this generation could potentially rebuild relations between the two countries.

The foundational sources for studying the historical relationship between Israel and Iran was Sohrab Sobhani's *The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations, 1948-1988* and The RAND Corporation's publication *Israel and Iran: a Dangerous Rivalry*. Both of these sources discuss how Israel and Iran were once strategic allies

and how over time that strategic partnership turned into a relationship of skepticism and lack of trust. The foundational source used to describe generational theory was William Strauss and Neil Howe's *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584-2069*. Morley Winograd and Michael Hais built off Strauss and Howe's definition of generational theory in *Millennial Momentum: How a New Generation is Remaking America*, which was also used as a foundational source to describe generational theory. Both theorist and practitioners assert that their theory can be applied globally to other millennial generations. Sources relating the Millennial generation of Israel and Iran included current new articles and recent publications.

From the research conducted it can be concluded that Millennials of Israel and Iran are going through different generational trends. While the Millennials of Israel are becoming more conservative than the generations before them, the Millennials of Iran are becoming more moderate and electing leaders who are moving away from previous held conservative views. This trend affects how willing each Millennial generation is attempts to rebuild relations and to re-establish the strategic partnership Israel and Iran once had sixty years ago.

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## INTRODUCTION

With the recent events of the new nuclear agreement with Iran, the topic of Iran's relationship with Israel has once again come into the spotlight. From media reports one can deduce that these two countries have always been at odds with one another. Former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stated multiple times that he had wanted to "wipe Israel off the map." In his recent address to the United Nations General Assembly Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated how detrimental it would be to Israel's security if Iran were to have nuclear capability. However, despite this harsh language, Israel and Iran were once strategic allies in the Middle East. The downfall of this strategic alliance started with the 1979 revolution and the rise of Khomeini.

This thesis will examine the past, present and future of the relationship between Israel and Iran. The purpose of this thesis is twofold. The first purpose is to show that Israel and Iran were once strategic allies in the Middle East. It will look at their relationship starting in 1948, when the modern state of Israel was created, and the dynamic of their strategic relationship. The present will analyze the current state of the relationship between these two countries and how it has changed over the years. One of the major factors that affects the current status of the relationship between Israel and Iran is who is who holds political power. Depending on who holds political power affects how much each country is willing to work with the other.

Chapter One gives an overview of the relationship between Israel and Iran from 1948 to the present. The two foundational sources for studying historical relations

between Israel and Iran are Sohrab Sobhani's *The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations, 1948-1988* and The RAND Corporation's publication *Israel and Iran: a Dangerous Rivalry*. Both of these sources discuss how these two countries were once strategic allies and how that strategic partnership turned into a relationship of skepticism and lack of trust. Israel and Iran have not always been at odds with one another. As Sohrab Sobhani states in *The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations, 1948-1988*, the relationship between these two countries began as a relationship for mutual survival. Their alliance in the early years was based mostly on security. Israel relied on Iran for help in relocating Jews from Iraq and purchasing their oil while Iran relied on Israel for selling arms.

Depending on who holds political power in Israel and Iran depends on how willing these countries are to negotiate and work together. Chapter Two details the relationship Israel and Iran had with different political leaders such as the Shah, Khomeini along with different Prime Ministers and Presidents. The RAND Corporation publication *Israel and Iran: a Dangerous Rivalry* asserts that the amount of time political leaders had in office affected the relationship between these two countries. Sohrab Sobhani's *The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations, 1948-1988* also describes in detail how the relationship between Israel and Iran changed depending on who held political power in each country. It shows the evolution of country dynamics from the early days of Israeli Prime Ministers and President's willing to work with the Shah, to the fall of the Shah and rise of Khomeini, and Israel covertly working with Iran.

Chapter Three looks at the role the United States plays in the dynamic of the relationship between Israel and Iran. Depending on who is President of the United States affects the relationship the U.S. has with both countries. This chapter begins with the Eisenhower administration and continues to the present, with the Obama administration. Multiple sources were used to understand the stance and policies the U.S. had with Israel and Iran from 1948 to the present. Besides Sohrab Sobhani's *The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations, 1948-1988*, other sources that were used include another RAND publication titled *A Surprise Out of Zion? Case Studies in Israel's Decisions on Whether to Alert the United States to Preemptive and Preventive Strikes, from Suez to the Syrian Nuclear Reactor*, Stephen McGlinchey's article in the *Middle East Journal* titled "Lyndon B. Johnson and Arms Credit Sales to Iran 1964-1968," Henry Paolucci's book *Iran, Israel, and the United States*, Roham Alvandi's book, *Nixon, Kissinger, and the Shah: The United States and Iran in the Cold War*, Behrouz Souresrafil's book *Khomeini and Israel*, Frontline's in-depth coverage of Benjamin Netanyahu, along with other journal and news articles.

The second purpose of this thesis is to examine the perspectives of the Millennial generation of both Israel and Iran. By examining the Millennial generation of Israel and Iran one can deduce if this generation is willing to try to rebuild relations with one another. Chapter Four begins with defining a generation and how generational theory will be applied to the Millennial generation of Israel and Iran. The foundational sources used to describe generational theory was William Strauss and Neil Howe's book *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584-2069* and Morley Winograd and Michael D. Hais book *Millennial Momentum: How a New Generation is Remaking*

*America*. To analyze the population breakdown of Israel and Iran the main source that was used was the CIA World Factbook.

By understanding the Millennials perspectives and analyzing their opinions on current issues affecting their country could determine if this generation is willing to bridge the gap that has divided Israel and Iran. Specifically, I will be researching whether the Millennial generation holds the same sentiments as their previous generations. Sources that were used to gather this information on Israeli Millennials included surveys that were conducted by the Rafi Smith Institute, Panels Folitiks, and the Israel Democracy Institute. Information relating to recent trends and views among Iranian Millennials included age breakdown of the most recent Presidential and Parliament elections along with recent news articles. From this research it can be concluded that Millennials of Israel and Iran are going through different generational trends. While the Millennials of Israel are becoming more conservative than the generations before them, the Millennials of Iran are becoming more moderate by electing leaders who are moving away from previous conservative views. This trend affects how willing they are to interact with each other to try to rebuild relations and to re-establish the strategic partnership Israel and Iran once had sixty years ago.

## CHAPTER ONE

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF ISRAEL AND IRAN RELATIONS: PAST AND PRESENT

Israel and Iran were not always enemies. They were strategic allies in a region of the world that is constantly changing. Relations between Israel and Iran started to become publicly hostile after the 1979 revolution when the Shah fell from power and Ayatollah Khomeini took control of the country. There are several factors that contributed to the downfall of relations between Israel and Iran including the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Iran's involvement with "proxies" such as Hezbollah, the rise to power of hardliners such as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and the threat of Iran's growing nuclear capabilities.

#### A Brief History of Israeli-Iranian Relations from 1948 to the Early 1990s

When the modern state of Israel was created in 1948 there was an influx of Jews who wanted to come to the new Jewish homeland. During this time many Jews who were living in Iraq were being persecuted and tried to escape. One of the ways in which they escaped Iraq was by using Iran as a "transit point."<sup>1</sup> This was done with the help of Iranian officials. In fact Israel paid for Jewish Iraqi refugees to transit through Iran in exchange for de facto recognition which they received two years later.<sup>2</sup>

On March 6, 1950, Iranian Prime Minister Saed gave Israel de facto recognition<sup>3</sup>. The Shah had only allowed Israel "a de facto embassy in Tehran."<sup>4</sup> One of the Shah's biggest opponents of giving any sort of formal recognition to Israel was the Shiite Fundamentalist.<sup>5</sup> When Prime Minister General Ali Razmara came to power in Iran he had a "pro-Western ideology" and was open to giving Israel de jure

recognition.<sup>6</sup> However he was assassinated on March 7, 1951 by an extremist from Fedayeen Islam. With his death died any hope of Israel receiving de jure recognition from Iran.<sup>7</sup>

There were several reasons why Iran should have given Israel de jure recognition. First, although Iran is a Muslim country, it is not Arab. Therefore it would not be going against their Arab brethren in the ongoing Arab-Israeli fighting. Second, Iran and Israel do not share a border, so there is no land dispute between the two countries. Lastly there was no true conflict between Israel and Iran. Iran had a large Jewish population in which they benefited living under the Shah.<sup>8</sup> Sohrab Sobhani, author of *The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations, 1948-1988*, describes the life of Jews living in Iran as the following:

Nowhere in the modern Islamic world had Jews enjoyed more freedom and influence than in Iran under the Pahlavi dynasty. At the height of their prosperity under the Shah, like many other religious minorities, they maintained their own schools, synagogues and social institutions. This situation changed with the Shah's departure from Iran on January 16, 1979.<sup>9</sup>

One of the reasons Israeli-Iranian relations improved starting in 1954 was due to the rising of pan-Arabism that was occurring in the Middle East, especially in Egypt.<sup>10</sup> The Shah's philosophy was that in order for Iran to be secure it had to be at peace with itself and with the surrounding countries. Having a strong relationship with Israel fulfilled two of the Shah's goals. First it would allow Israel to provide Iran expertise in the field of economic development and second, it would "serve as a balance against the menace of a Moscow-Cairo axis in the region."<sup>11</sup> Additionally, having a strong

relationship with Israel helped Iran create a security policy that had a “pro-Western orientation.”<sup>12</sup> Sohrab Sobhani states:

The history of Israeli-Iranian relations suggest that when Iran-Arab relations were tense and when Israel was viewed as the underdog in its conflict with Arab states, Iran and Israel drew closer together. However, Israeli-Iranian relations were marked by hostility when Iran’s cold war with the Arab states thawed and when Israel was perceived to be an aggressor stated.<sup>13</sup>

In 1957, the Shah asked General Bakhitar, the head of SAVAK, to reach out to Israel to see if they would be interested in forming a relationship with Iranian Intelligence.<sup>14</sup> As a result, Bakhitar met with Isser Harel, the director of Mossad. The result of this meeting was the creation of an Israeli “Trade Mission” in Tehran, which was the official cover of the “Israeli operation.”<sup>15</sup> In 1958, Israeli Intelligence, Mossad, created a formal intelligence partnership with Iran and Turkey. The partnership was code named Trident.<sup>16</sup> As a result of this cooperation intelligence information was gathered among the three services.<sup>17</sup> The objective of the Trident alliance was “to prevent Arab unity under the banner of Nasserism and to channel Arab energies into internal rivalries.”<sup>18</sup> As a result of Trident, both Israel and Iran supported the stability of Saudi Arabia as long as it did not support Arab radicalism.<sup>19</sup> In addition to Trident, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and the Shah developed “a close military and intelligence relationship” that would continue even after the 1979 Iranian Revolution.<sup>20</sup>

A CIA report from the 1950’s describes Israel’s foreign policy as the Periphery Doctrine. The main architect behind the Periphery Doctrine was Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. The objective of the Periphery Doctrine “was to formulate a policy that would drive a wedge among its enemies by forging alliances with non-Arab

nations.”<sup>21</sup> The Periphery policy played into Iran’s favor because Iran was a non-Arab country in which Israel could be allies.<sup>22</sup> Israel wanted to have a “pro-Israel and anti-Arab policy on the part of Iranian officials.”<sup>23</sup> The Shah also believed that having a partnership with Israel would in some way help Iran build better relations with the United States.<sup>24</sup>

Another key aspect to Israel and Iran’s strategic partnership was that they both saw Iraq as a common threat to their security. Iraq’s monarch collapsed in 1958 which led to the country turning towards the tide of Arab-nationalism.<sup>25</sup> During the 1960s the strategic way in which Israel and Iran fought the threat from Iraq threat was through supporting the Kurds.<sup>26</sup> By arming the Kurds it kept Iraq preoccupied from focusing on either Israel or Iran.<sup>27</sup> Both Israel and Iran provided training and arms to the Kurds which included Israeli Military advisors which was routed through Iran with the help of the Savak.<sup>28</sup> Israel and Iran supported the Kurds through the 1970s with both economic and military support. Iran provided more of the financial support while Israel provided more of the military support.<sup>29</sup>

From 1958-1967 the goal of Israeli-Iranian relations was not only to curb the rise of Arab nationalism but to stop the growth of Soviet influence. Also during this time Iran needed Israel’s help in strengthening their military.<sup>30</sup> This came in the form of arms packages that included combat planes, guns and ammunition. This was during the Kennedy administration who opposed military sales to Iran. “Iran looked to Israel as ‘little America,’ one whose Third World experience matched Iran’s regional military concerns.”<sup>31</sup> Another advantage to Iran’s relationship with Israel was that they were hoping that it would “further Iran’s efforts in the United States to procure more

advanced weapons during periods when the U.S. administration or Congress was not forthcoming.”<sup>32</sup>

Israel and Iran also had an economic alliance. One of the ways in which they kept their strategic partnership secret was creating Trans-Atlantic Oil, which was between Israel and the National Iranian Oil Company. This entity was created in the 1970s as a part of Trans-Atlantic Oil, the Eilat-Ashkelon Pipeline Company. It was created to provide oil from Iran to Israel.<sup>33</sup> Originally, sale of oil to Israel was based on Iran’s budget issues. Iran’s sale of oil to Israel in their eyes hoped to get them in better relationship with the U.S.<sup>34</sup> Israel reciprocated the increase in oil with helping Iran develop their military. This partnership was not liked by other Muslim countries in the region.

Israel also helped Iran in agricultural development. Iran was impressed with Israel’s “rapid pace of development” and they believed Israel’s expertise could be used to help them.<sup>35</sup> One of these agricultural projects included Tahal (Water Planning) Ltd. of Tel Aviv helping in the rebuilding of Ghazvin Plain after a devastating earthquake in 1962. This was a unique opportunity for Israeli specialists to work directly with Iranian villagers.<sup>36</sup> The project was successful in rebuilding the area.<sup>37</sup>

From 1968-1973, relations between Israel and Iran became stronger, yet Iran refused to give Israel full recognition. From a confidential memo between Ben Yohanan and Israel’s Ambassador to Iran, Meir Ezri, it stated “it is only in the ceremonial side that the Israeli Mission is treated differently from other regular Embassies in Tehran. No Israeli flag is flown at the Mission and no sign on the front of the building identifies it as the Israeli Mission.”<sup>38</sup> The Shah stated in an interview with

the *Financial Times* that formally recognizing Israel was not necessary during this time because “the UN resolution of November 1967 has not been carried out.”<sup>39</sup> Another reason why the Shah did not want to formally recognize Israel was because he wanted to keep many aspects of their relationship secret from the rest of the Muslim world as a precaution of facing retaliation.<sup>40</sup>

However, Israel wanted more than just de facto recognition. They wanted their status to be upgraded from de facto recognition to de jure recognition. Iran’s response to this came in a form of a letter from the Shah to Sheik Mahmoud Shaltout of Al-Azhar Mosque stating they “have not extended de jure recognition and this has been viewed positively by Muslim nations and we are not about to change our policy. Therefore, I see no reason for your worrying about this issue.”<sup>41</sup> Israel still attempted to take advantage of the Shah’s position in the Muslim world and tried to publicize whenever possible Israeli-Iranian relations.<sup>42</sup>

In 1973, there was a meeting between Uri Lubrani, who was Israel’s envoy to Iran and the Shah. During this meeting the Shah emphasized why Israel and Iran should continue their strategic alliance. The Shah stressed four main arguments during their meeting. First, Israel was a decoy for Iran in the sense that Iran’s Arab neighbors focused their attention on Israel and not Iran.<sup>43</sup> Second, Iran needed the technology that Israel had created, especially for their agricultural development.<sup>44</sup> Third, Iran needed to continue to sell oil to Israel. By 1976 Israel had become almost completely dependent on Iran for oil.<sup>45</sup> Lastly, Iran needed to piggy back on Israel’s good relations with the United States. Iran felt that Israel could influence Washington in leveraging policy decisions.<sup>46</sup>

In 1974, Iran signed the Algiers Accord with Iraq. According to the agreement, Iran could no longer support the Kurds and Iraq would then provide Iran with the deepest channel for shipping oil. This would provide Iran the needed stability for the shipment of their oil in the Persian Gulf.<sup>47</sup> This agreement between Iran and Iraq came as a surprise to both Israel and the United States. When Iran made the deal rapprochement with Iraq, Israel had become distrustful of the Shah and worried that their oil production totals would fall.<sup>48</sup> Israel was concerned that Iran was shifting away from their current policy and starting to get closer to its Arab neighbors.

“By the end of 1978, Iran was in turmoil, and the Shah was under pressure to leave Iran.”<sup>49</sup> Along with the turmoil came the breakdown in law. At one point General Segev, Israel’s military attaché, called General Toufanian desperately asking for help because the Palestinians were about to take over the Mission. The General responded that he could not help and at this point 30 years of strategic partnership dissolved.<sup>50</sup> The Islamic Republic was established when Ayatollah Khomeini rose to power in 1979. One of the first changes he did was he turned the Israeli Mission in Iran over to the “Palestinians who had served as Khomeini’s fifth column in the critical days leading to his return from exile.”<sup>51</sup>

Even though Khomeini outwardly expressed his hatred of Israel the two countries did not lose all contact with each other. They had covert relations. One of the reasons Israel wanted to continue ties with Khomeini was because of the 9,000 Jews who were still living in Iran at the time. Before Khomeini came back from exile he had made a statement promising that the Jewish community in Iran would not be targeted.

However this statement was broken when the President of Iran's Jewish Community was killed. As a result Iranian Jews were forced to flee their homes.<sup>52</sup>

#### The Iran-Iraq War and The Iran-Contra Affair

Even though the Algiers Accord was signed in 1974 war broke out between Iran and Iraq in the 1980s. During this war Iran's covert relationship with Israel was vital. During this time, Israel supplied Iran with weapons they desperately needed. Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin approved shipping equipment and weapons for Phantom fighter planes to the Iranian military.<sup>53</sup> One of the reasons the Iranian military was struggling against Iraq's military was because they did not have the proper equipment to maintain their military aircraft and weapons.<sup>54</sup> After Israel bombed an "atomic center" nearby Baghdad, it was apparent of the strategic relationship between Israel and Iran.<sup>55</sup> In 1984 "the value of the arms deal with Israel since 1981 was over \$500 million. Most of the arms purchased were spare parts and ammunition which were directly purchased from Israel. The arms transaction was approved by Khomeini himself."<sup>56</sup> In addition to military arms sales, information sharing was also happening between Israel and Iran in 1982. Also during this period media outlets began to pick up on the relationship.<sup>57</sup> Once it was known that Khomeini took arms directly from Israel he received backlash and had to once again make public his disapproval for Israel. One of the ways in which he tried to publicize his disapproval of Israel was by comparing "Israel to the United States as an invader and usurper."<sup>58</sup> Regardless of this rhetoric, Israel benefited supporting Iran during this war because it took attention away from the Arab-Israeli conflict and focused everyone's attention to the Persian Gulf.<sup>59</sup>

It was during the Iran-Iraq war that Iran started vocally increasing rhetoric against Israel and also increased their activity with Hezbollah after Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982.<sup>60</sup> After this war Israel and Iran's strategic relationship further deteriorated. According to Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the Iran-Iraq war resulted in "a balance of threat [that had] been created for Israel."<sup>61</sup> As a result of the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq was then no longer focused on Israel and "Iran effectively removed the threat of the Arab Eastern front against Israel."<sup>62</sup> The conclusion of the Iran-Iraq war came with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 598 which established the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) and a cease-fire agreement between Iran and Iraq.<sup>63</sup>

#### Nuclear Issues

Iran's nuclear program started as a result of the "Atoms for Peace" program which was intended to use nuclear technology for civilian uses rather than weapon or military purposes.<sup>64</sup> In 1957, "the United States and Iran signed an agreement on the civil uses of atomic energy."<sup>65</sup> It was under this agreement that Iran stated that their nuclear program would not be used for weapons or military uses. This agreement allowed United States companies to build a research reactor in Iran and allowed Iran to possess up to six "kilograms of enriched uranium to fuel this reactor."<sup>66</sup> In 1974 the Shah wanted to expand Iran's nuclear program and was already buying large quantities of conventional weapons from the United States.<sup>67</sup> According to the Shah who stated in a Nowruz (New Year's/Spring) message in March 1974 that Iran "...shall, as fast as we can, enter the age of using the atom and other sources of energy in order to save oil for

production of chemical and petro-chemical products.”<sup>68</sup> The Shah did not see a “place for nuclear weapons in Iran’s defense doctrine.”<sup>69</sup>

Daryoush Bayandor, was the “political counselor at the Iranian Mission to the UN” who was the head person of leading negotiations for Iran’s nuclear program to get through the UN General Assembly. Israel was the biggest hurdle in the negotiations because they were the only country in the Middle East that had “an (undeclared) nuclear arsenal.”<sup>70</sup> Bayandor had discussion with his Israeli counterpart to prevent Israel from voting no against the agreement and in the end Iran was able to convince Israel to abstain from voting.<sup>71</sup>

Another strategic military move between Israel and Iran in 1977 was a military project named Project Flower. Project Flower was a joint top-secret nuclear project which was to serve as a way to be prepared for contingencies and situations both countries could find themselves in at a given point.<sup>72</sup> This military project “focused on the development of advanced missile systems.”<sup>73</sup> Project Flower was one of the six “oil-for-arms contracts” between Israel and Iran during the 1970’s. In these oil-for-arms contracts “Iran paid approximately \$300 million in cash up front and another \$250 million in oil and thus became the financier for several Israeli-led research and development projects.”<sup>74</sup> The end goal of Project Flower was that Iran would begin the development of the missile assembly and facility and both Israel and Iran would “purchase the new defense system once operational.”<sup>75</sup>

#### Iran-Contra Affair

The Iran-Contra affair fed off Israel and Iran’s covert relationship. As part of the Iran-Contra affair, Israel became the middle man as the one who delivered U.S.

weapons to Iran in exchange for the release of U.S. hostages held by Hezbollah.<sup>76</sup> As a result of the U.S. embargo against Iran in November 1979, Iran had to look for spare parts they desperately needed for their U.S. made weapons. Israel thought that if they could sell Iran the spares that they needed they could use it as a bargaining chip in exchange for Iranian Jews to safely leave the country. As a result an agreement was made.<sup>77</sup> “It is estimated that since the government of Israel started providing the Khomeini regime with arms in 1980, 55,000 Iranian Jews have been permitted to leave Iran.”<sup>78</sup>

Israel’s sale of arms to Iran played a significant factor in Israel’s economy.<sup>79</sup> It has been estimated that from 1979 to October 1982, Israel had “supplied Iran with \$150 million worth of weapons.”<sup>80</sup> Another reason why Israel wanted to continue to sell Khomeini weapons was that it was a way to keep channels open between the countries until one day the regime changes and is replaced by moderates.<sup>81</sup> By Israel continuing to sell arms to Iran it established that Israel had some place in the regime. Other than these covert actions there was no official relations between Israel and Iran, other than each other’s representative at the United Nations.<sup>82</sup>

During the mid-1980s Iran began focusing more on their terrorist group proxies, such as Hezbollah.<sup>83</sup> It was during this time period the relationship between Iran and Syria grew. There was an increase in the amount of arms deals in which the Iranian Embassy in Syria helped get to Lebanon.<sup>84</sup> Even with the increase in the use of proxies, the exchange of military and intelligence between Israel and Iran continued through the mid-1980s.<sup>85</sup> It was reported by the “Danish Seaman’s Union” that Israel was Iran’s

main supplier of arms.<sup>86</sup> One of the reasons Israel continued to have a relationship with Iran was to continue their “periphery policy.”<sup>87</sup>

#### Israel Views Iran as a Threat

Once Israel and Iran no longer had a common enemy of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Israel began seeing Iran as a regional threat as it strengthened its relationship with Hezbollah and Hamas who were security threats to Israel. In addition to increased threats and conflicts from Hezbollah and Hamas, Israel also became threatened by the rise of Iranian President Ahmadinejad in 2005 along with the rise of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards and their anti-Israeli ideology. Israel also feared that Iran could take advantage of the unrest in the Middle East that resulted from the Arab Spring in 2011.<sup>88</sup>

Iran’s nuclear program started to become a concern for some in Israel Intelligence in the 1990s. At this time Israel Prime Minister Rabin believed that it would take Iran 10-15 years for Iran to acquire a nuclear bomb. Iran’s nuclear program at this time was not on Israel’s immediate radar. However there was a division among Israeli security officials on how to handle relations with Iran. There were some Israeli security officials who believed that Israel could benefit from a “limited rapprochement with Iran.”<sup>89</sup> However Israeli policy rejected any notion from moderate conservative leaders from Iran, such as President Khatami.<sup>90</sup>

It was not until Saddam Hussein was removed from power in Iraq in 2003 that Iran became an immediate concern for Israel. It was during the 2000s that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon took Iran’s nuclear program as a threat.<sup>91</sup> Iran was also becoming more of a threat to the Arab-Israel peace negotiations because of their

involvement with proxy groups.<sup>92</sup> An Israeli Foreign Ministry strategic assessment stated the following:

The strategy of regional hegemony pursued by Iran is the primary strategic influence in this region. The Iranian threat with its four components- the nuclear project, the support for terrorism, the attempts to undermine pragmatic Arab regimes, and the ideological-theological threat-remains at the core of Israel's foreign policy agenda.<sup>93</sup>

Israel fears that if Iran acquired nuclear capabilities, Iran would find a way to use it against Israel. One of the ways in which Israel fears Iran would use its new nuclear capabilities would be through Hezbollah.<sup>94</sup> Israel also believes that it could lead to nuclear proliferation within the Middle East.<sup>95</sup> Israel's fear of Iran obtaining a nuclear bomb also aligns with their alarm of Iran's ideological threats that are made towards Israel. This includes President Ahmadinejad's numerous claims of threatening to "wipe Israel off the face of the map."

#### Iran Views Israel as a Threat

In 1989, Ayatollah Khomeini died which resulted in different policy changes within Iran that affected its position within the Middle East. After the defeat of Hussein in 1991 by the United States, Iraq was no longer a regional threat to Iran. Iran, through the use of Hezbollah, tried to undermine the peace process of the Oslo Peace Accords between Israel and the Palestinians.<sup>96</sup> After the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005 Iranian rhetoric and anti-Israel ideology increased.<sup>97</sup> Iran views Israel as a military and regional rival through its connection with the United States.<sup>98</sup> As a result, Iran has been able to use its anti-Israel ideology against pro-Western leaders and

against Israel.<sup>99</sup> The way in which Iran views Israel as a threat is affected by three factors:

. . . regime perception of the United States as its most significant adversary and a belief in the near symmetry of Israeli and U.S. interests as they relate to Iran; deep-seated ideological hostility towards Israel; and the geopolitical benefits of overt hostility towards Israel, especially vis-à-vis Iran's neighbors.<sup>100</sup>

The rise of the Revolutionary Guards in Iran and the rise of Iran's nuclear program has brought the potential for dangerous conflict.<sup>101</sup>

Iran's "ideological hostility towards Israel" was brought out in speeches made by Ayatollah Khamenei in which he stated the United States and Israel are against the "essence" of the Islamic Republic as a potential system" and "claimed that 'Zionist think-tanks' control U.S. policy towards Iran."<sup>102</sup> In addition to the anti-Israeli claims by Khamenei, "the Iranian regime blames Israel and the United States for fomenting internal instability in Iran."<sup>103</sup> There is some evidence that Israel has been involved in the assassination of different Iranian nuclear scientists.<sup>104</sup>

Iran's dependence on its Revolutionary Guards and its militant proxies such as Hezbollah has changed the way in which Iran views Israel. Iran has used Hezbollah as a deterrent against the United States and Israel to prevent them from taking military action against Iran.<sup>105</sup> Additionally, Iran's development of long range missiles have the potential to reach Israel. Under President Ahmadinejad, the Guards are the ones who "control Iran's missile forces."<sup>106</sup>

## Current Relations

The late Israeli President Peres understood the history of Israel and Iran's strategic partnership. He stated that it is not the Iranian people in general who are a

threat to Israel but the small amount of people in power in Iran who control the country.<sup>107</sup> Presently, Israel and Iran have no direct communications with each other.<sup>108</sup> When Israel and Iran had covert relations it was a way in which the two countries remained in contact with the other and discussed issues relating to security and other concerns. With the election of President Rhouani, and Iran being able to interact more with the international community, it could be a potential opportunity to reopen communications with Israel in either a direct or indirect way.

Until recently Iran has viewed the United States “as the primary threat to the regime’s existence.”<sup>109</sup> However with the recent nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA),<sup>110</sup> the relationship between Iran and the United States has changed. As a result of the nuclear agreement Iranian and U.S. relations may have improved. However, that also affects how Israel views Iran as now having the potential to build a nuclear weapon within the next 15 years along with the potential to use it against Israel.<sup>111</sup> How Iran interacts with the international community could impact future relations with Israel. As will be explored in more detail in Chapter Four, the millennial generation of both Israel and Iran could change the course of relations between these two countries.

## CHAPTER TWO

### COUNTRY LEADERSHIP

Political leaders of both Israel and Iran play a significant factor in the relationship between these two countries. Even though Iran did not formally recognize Israel, both countries had discrete ways in which they communicated with each other regarding foreign and military policy. After the fall of the Shah and the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini, the relationship between Israel and Iran deteriorated. The amount of power and control conservative hardliners have in either Israel or Iran affects the relationship between these two countries and ultimately results in how much each country is willing to communicate with each other. According to Sohrab Sobhani, author of *The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations, 1948-1988*, one of the most important factors in the beginning of the relationship between Israel and Iran was that Iran's secular government was able to control the hardline Shiite fundamentalist.<sup>1</sup> Today, however, it is not just the hardline Shiite fundamentalist who affects the relationship between these two countries. In the last decade there has been a rise in conservative hardliners in Israel who have played a significant factor in the progress, or lack of progress, of bettering relations between these two countries.

As mentioned in Chapter One, Israel and Iran had a strategic and viable relationship from the beginning of the state of Israel up to the fall of the Shah. "Iran informally recognized Israel in 1950."<sup>2</sup> However, when Ayatollah Khomeini came into power in 1980, the dynamic between Israel and Iran changed. Khomeini had a stern anti-Zionist view and perspective and made it known to the people of Iran. In spite of Khomeini's hardline stance, there have been moderate Presidents in Iran such as

Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mohammad Khatami. “The two aimed to reform Iran’s moribund economic, social, and political system by lessening its international isolation, leading to hints of easing of tensions with Israel.”<sup>3</sup> However the efforts and progress Rafsanjani and Khatami tried to make were essentially null and void by the rise of Ahmadinejad and the Revolutionary Guards.<sup>4</sup> When the Shah fell to Khomeini, Israel still used their backchannel connections to communicate with Iran, as a way of not fully cutting of relations.

#### Israeli Leadership

Israeli Prime Ministers and other political leaders have taken different approaches towards dealing with Iran. According to a 1950’s CIA report, Israel’s foreign policy was known as the Periphery Doctrine. Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion was the prime architect of this Doctrine. The main objective of the Periphery Doctrine was that “Israel would have to establish close relations with the region’s non-Arab countries to protect itself from hostile Arab neighbors.”<sup>5</sup> “The main purpose of the Israeli relationship with Iran was the development of a pro-Israel and anti-Arab policy on the part of Iranian officials.”<sup>6</sup> As a result of the Periphery Doctrine, Israel was able to “drive a wedge among its enemies by forging alliances with non-Arab nations.”<sup>7</sup> This is one of the reasons Israel was able to have a successful relationship with Iran. Prime Minister Ben-Gurion had a close working relationship with the Shah that by 1959 Israel and Iran “developed a close military and intelligence relationship that would continue to expand until the Islamic revolution.”<sup>8</sup>

In 1972 there was a meeting between the Shah and Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir. During this meeting it was agreed that continuing relations would be in favor for

both countries. It would benefit Iran in the areas of clandestine operations, arms deals, and the sale of oil to Israel. These relations continued in a secretive fashion in order to prevent backlash from Iran's Arab neighbors.<sup>9</sup>

Menachem Begin became Prime Minister in 1977. He was a member of the conservative Likud party.<sup>10</sup> During this time Iran was exercising its "Arab Option"<sup>11</sup> in which they tried to make allies with other Arab countries in the region such as Egypt and had encouraged "Israel toward reconciliation with the Arabs."<sup>12</sup> Israel, however, did not have the same type of relationship with Egypt and making allies with Egypt would go against Israel's Periphery Doctrine. "The Shah saw Begin as a hardliner who would jeopardize Sadat's peace plans. He threatened to curtail Iran's military cooperation with Israel if Begin did not show more 'flexibility'."<sup>13</sup> Better relations with Egypt was the main discussion between Begin and the Shah when Begin visited the Shah in Iran in February 1978.<sup>14</sup> The Shah had in a way turned into an intermediary in which he explained to Begin the vulnerability Sadat had placed himself with the peace talks, which in the end resulted in bringing Israel and Egypt together.<sup>15</sup> The Shah, during this time was also pressuring the United States in compelling "Israel to make peace with its Arab neighbors."<sup>16</sup> A U.S. State Department briefing on the topic stated the following:

The Shah feels the U.S. should make every effort to bring about an early resolution of the Arab-Israeli situation. He is on the record as opposing the Judaization of Jerusalem and supporting Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and restoring the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.<sup>17</sup>

After the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, Israel and Iran had a limited relationship. In 1980, "Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin approved the shipment

of tires for Phantom fighter planes, as well as weapons for the Iranian Army.”<sup>18</sup> One of the strategic advantages of this arms deal for Israel is that it allowed them to still be in some contact with the regime in Iran. It was a way for Israel to “keep channels to moderates in the Khomeini regime open, with the ultimate aim of overthrowing Khomeini.”<sup>19</sup> It was the idea that once Khomeini was out of power he was going to be replaced by moderates.<sup>20</sup> In October 1987 Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin summarized Israel’s policy toward Iran as the following:

Iran today is a bitter enemy of Israel in its philosophy. I believe that as long as Khomeini is in power there is no hope for any change. But at the same time, allow me to say that for 28 of 37 years Iran was a friend of Israel. If it could work for 28 years...why couldn't it once this crazy idea of Shiite fundamentalism is gone?<sup>21</sup>

However, as long as hardliners are in power the more difficult it is for moderates to come to power.<sup>22</sup>

It was not until the 1990s that Israel began to see Iran as a threat and not as a strategic partner. This was due to the rise of the Iran’s nuclear program. Iran’s nuclear “program had been started by the Shah but was largely suspended after the 1979 Islamic revolution.”<sup>23</sup> At this time, Prime Minister Rabin stated that Israel had at least another 10-15 years until Iran acquired a nuclear bomb.<sup>24</sup> Even as late as 1997, the “Israeli military viewed Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon as more serious threats than Iran.”<sup>25</sup> This approach continued through the end of Ehud Barak’s term as Prime Minister and before Benjamin Netanyahu became Prime Minister.<sup>26</sup> One of the contributing factors to this policy approach was that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and President Shimon

Peres believed that if Israel had a successful peace process with the Palestinians then it would allow Israel to be in a better position to negotiate with Iran.<sup>27</sup>

In the mid 1990's Rabin changed his stance towards Iran. In a 1995 American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) speech, Prime Minister Rabin stated that Iran undermined the peace process with the Palestinians. He called Iran "the enemies of peace."<sup>28</sup> He stated that Iran uses its power to undermine other Muslim countries who support a moderate regime. Additionally he brought up the issue that Iran is developing "military conventional and nonconventional capability," referring to Iran's nuclear program.<sup>29</sup> He stated that by Iran having these capabilities, Iran could bring terrible results not only to the Middle East but also to the international community.<sup>30</sup>

According to Rabin, Iran, with Khamenei as its leader, is the greatest danger to stability in the Middle East.<sup>31</sup>

This same type of rhetoric towards Iran has been used by current Prime Minister Netanyahu. In his 2015 speech to the United Nations General Assembly, he stated that after the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)<sup>32</sup> was signed the Ayatollah came out with his book stating a "400 page screed detailing his plan to destroy the state of Israel."<sup>33</sup> According to Netanyahu, the Ayatollah also stated that "there will be no Israel in 25 years."<sup>34</sup>

It is important to note that Netanyahu has a very pessimistic view of the world especially about the future of Israel. He believes that Israel "has a minuscule margin for error."<sup>35</sup> In terms of dealing with Iran, there are few Israeli policy makers who see that there cannot be substantiated change without "organic, homegrown regime change."<sup>36</sup> As a result of this approach, Netanyahu's strategy has been "conflict

management, the postponement of decisions and deterrence.”<sup>37</sup> The downside of this approach is that it has left Israel with little room for negotiating.

According to Netanyahu “the greatest danger facing our world is the marriage of militant Islam with nuclear weapons.”<sup>38</sup> There are other Israeli political leaders who believe that it is ideology, not geopolitical strategy, shaping Iran’s foreign policy.<sup>39</sup> This is what Netanyahu said at his speech to the United States Congress. He went on to say “Iran’s founding document pledges death, tyranny and the pursuit of jihad.”<sup>40</sup> On the issue of making a deal with Iran, Israel had very specific conditions that made any deal practically non-existent.<sup>41</sup> In the end Netanyahu has projected “himself as a rejectionist.”<sup>42</sup>

It is important to understand Benjamin Netanyahu’s background and how it shapes his policy, especially regarding Iran. His father, Benzion Netanyahu, was a major influence on how he developed his world view especially concerning the future of Israel. According to Aaron David Miller, who worked at the State Department from 1978-2003, Netanyahu’s father saw the world as “fundamentally hostile, a world that is afflicted by an internal anti-Semitism, that the Nazi Holocaust was part of a long series of acts against Jews.”<sup>43</sup> This view was also shared among Netanyahu’s brothers. The death of Benjamin’s brother Yoni Netanyahu impacted how Netanyahu viewed the Palestinian issue. As a result of his brother’s death he started becoming the public face of Israel’s defender of national security.<sup>44</sup>

In 1980, Benjamin Netanyahu was appointed the official spokesman at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, DC and at age 34, was appointed Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations. In 1988, Netanyahu resigned from his position as Ambassador of

the United Nations and returned to Israel to begin his political career in building his own “right-wing political base” that focused on security related issues.<sup>45</sup> Netanyahu then became the head of the Likud party in Israel. The Likud party did not support the Oslo Accords that were signed in 1993. According to Netanyahu, the Likud “party is committed to keeping Israel a Jewish and democratic state . . . it represents the mainstream current in the country and as such it is committed to the country’s security and peace.”<sup>46</sup> The Likud party’s “Central Committee” is described as the following:

Made up of highly disciplined religious-nationalists who vote in Likud primaries to influence the makeup of the country’s ruling party, and then in general elections turn around and vote for other pro-settler parties.<sup>47</sup>

There were some members of his party who became violent and outwardly angry with Prime Minister Rabin. Netanyahu’s conservative approach to foreign policy, especially with the Palestinians, did not have the full support of the Israeli people at first. After a while, Netanyahu began to lose support from his base as well. As a result he lost the in the 1999 elections to Ehud Barak. In 2008, Netanyahu ran again for Prime Minister as head of the Likud party and won. It was the same political climate as it was in 1999. There was a rise in terror attacks occurring not only in Israel but also in the United States.<sup>48</sup> Netanyahu’s foreign policy approach was more conservative than that of Prime Minister Rabin.<sup>49</sup>

It was during this time that the issue of Iran was escalating, especially the issue of their nuclear program. According to Marvin Kalb, author, *The Road to War*, Netanyahu stated:

Iran is not only an enemy of Israel but would literally use those nuclear weapons against us. Never again are we going to put

ourselves in a position of allowing an outside force to use overwhelming power to kill us, to try to wipe us out. It's not going to happen.<sup>50</sup>

Netanyahu has even compared Iran to Hitler; "The year is 1938 and Iran is Germany."<sup>51</sup>

Additionally, Netanyahu stated that Iran's policy is based on an ideology and is not always rational. He stated "they're driven by a militant ideology that is based on an entirely different set of values."<sup>52</sup> President Peres even stated "as Jews, after being subjected to the Holocaust, we cannot close our eyes in light of the grave danger emerging from Iran."<sup>53</sup> In 2008 Ehud Barak, who he had lost to in 1999, was selected as Netanyahu's Defense Minister. Even Barak said Iran "was entering 'the zone of immunity'," which is the time where Iran's nuclear sites are no longer going to be susceptible to Israeli defenses.<sup>54</sup>

In terms of the recent nuclear deal, Netanyahu mentioned to the press several times that it was a very bad deal that was being made and stated:

I understand the Iranians are walking around very satisfied, as well they should be, because they got everything and paid nothing. This is a very bad deal, and Israel utterly rejects it! This is a bad deal, a very, very bad deal. It's the deal of a century for Iran. It's a very dangerous and bad deal for peace and the international community.<sup>55</sup>

Netanyahu believed that the only way to respond to Iran was with the use of force.

With President Obama engaging in dialogue, to Netanyahu, it looked like he was surrendering to Iran.<sup>56</sup> Netanyahu would rather have military action taken against Iran to avoid the threat of a bomb being built.<sup>57</sup> In fact Netanyahu was planning on taking military action by striking Iran's nuclear sites. However this plan was stopped by President Peres.<sup>58</sup> He told Netanyahu the dire consequences that would happen if he

went through with this plan.<sup>59</sup> In a 2012 interview with Charlie Rose, Israeli President Peres stated he believed the following:

Better to start with political and economic sanctions. Nobody wants to start this fire and not with anybody. But all the people whether they are for attack or against attack say all options are on the table. Why? Because if Iran will think it's just an economic pressure they say we should overcome it. So you must understand it's more serious than that.<sup>60</sup>

President Peres also stated that “I think they're rather close and I think the decision should be taken by the world community, not only by Israel. It's not the -- Iran is not just a danger or a problem for Israel.”<sup>61</sup> In regards to Iran, Peres stated that Iran kills their own citizens and supports terror, which is dangerous not only for Israel but also for the world.<sup>62</sup>

During May 2016 Israeli Defense Minister Moshe “Bogie” Yaalon resigned. One of the reasons he resigned was because “he had lost confidence in the premier and that dangerous extremists had taken over both the country and his Likud party.”<sup>63</sup>

When Yaalon was the Defense Minister the following is noted:

Israel's relations with both the Palestinians and Iran are likely to remain unresolved until the distant future; they will remain managed stalemates that persist until there is some sort of fundamental shift in the landscape, such as a generational change in attitudes or a regional upheaval.<sup>64</sup>

When it came time to select a new Defense Minister the rumors of “a national unity government between the center-left Zionist Union opposition party and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ruling Likud ended with an abrupt *volte-face* by Netanyahu.”<sup>65</sup> As a result of this fall out, Avigdor Lieberman, who is an ultranationalist, became the new Defense Minister as opposed to selecting someone from the Zionist Union. With

Lieberman being selected as the new Defense Minister, the Israeli government is “described as ‘the most right-wing’ in Israeli history has now become even more extreme, a development sure to cause unease internationally.”<sup>66</sup> President Obama stated that the appointment of Lieberman as the new Defense Minister “‘raises legitimate questions’ about Israel’s policies moving forward.”<sup>67</sup>

Israel’s political leadership is a significant factor in Israel’s approach in dealing with Iran. There are some leaders who use an “existential threat” approach and make it sound like Iran is a threat to the rest of the world and not just to Israel.<sup>68</sup> This is the approach Netanyahu made when he addressed the United Nations and the United States Congress. Netanyahu believes his strength is security, but with war continuously breaking out it is uncertain if that will be his legacy.<sup>69</sup> In a forum held at the Brookings Institution in 2012 President Peres stated “the Iranians are not our enemies. In history, we have many very friendly relations, and now very dangerous.”<sup>70</sup> President Peres understood that Israel and Iran shared a strategic partnership in the past and recognized that it is not Iranians in general who are a threat to the world community, but rather the small leadership who is holding onto power in the country. Ever since Khomeini took control of Iran, Israel’s stance has been waiting for regime change in order for there to be any chance of a change in relationship status with Iran.

### Iranian Leadership

When it comes to who holds ultimate decision making power in Iran, it is the Supreme Leader, not the President. The Supreme Leader’s power comes from the “principle of the Guardianship of the Jurist (*velayat-e faqih*), meaning Islam gives a faqih, or Islamic jurist, custodianship over the people.”<sup>71</sup> The President is determined

by elections by the people and serves a four year term for a maximum of two terms, who in turns answers to the Supreme Leader.<sup>72</sup> As a result of this dual leadership it can lead “to massive corruption, mismanagement, and political inefficiency” which makes Iran’s government unpredictable in their policy making.<sup>73</sup>

According to a 2011 RAND report *Israel and Iran: A Dangerous Rivalry*, “Israel is now viewed by the Iranian regime as a major regional rival.”<sup>74</sup> This shift in Iranian policy started after Ayatollah Khomeini’s death in 1989 and continued through the 1990s and early 2000’s. There were two factors that contributed to the shift in policy towards Israel. The first was when the United States defeated Saddam Hussein after the first Gulf War. As a result of that war Iraq was no longer a threat to Iran. The second factor was the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords. Iran started to support the use of proxy groups, such as Hezbollah, with the use of financial and military resources to destabilize the peace process.<sup>75</sup> In the most recent State Department Report on Terrorism, released June 2, 2016, Iran was listed as the top country of state sponsored terrorism for their support of terror groups in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq.<sup>76</sup>

In the early 1940’s the Shiite clergy began a propaganda movement against Israel and also targeted Jews who were living in Iran. This movement was led by Seyyed Abol-Ghassem Kashani.<sup>77</sup> In a communique issued by Kashani on January 8, 1948 he advocated “war with the Jewish government and supplying arms to the Palestinian Moslems.”<sup>78</sup> According to Behrouz Souresrafil, author of *Khomeini and Israel*, “this communique can be considered the first declaration of Jihad to which Ayatollah Khomeini was to appeal some thirty years later.”<sup>79</sup> A year later in 1949, Kashani was then exiled from Iran.<sup>80</sup> The issues that Ayatollah Kashani used in his

propaganda movement were the same issues that Ayatollah Khomeini used during his rise against the Shah.<sup>81</sup>

Ayatollah Borujerdi became the Shiite leader after the death of Ayatollah Hadj Agaha Bhomei in the late 1940s. Ayatollah Borujerdi was different in the fact that he was moderate and wanted “to avoid conflict between the Shiite clergy and the political system.”<sup>82</sup> He even banned activity conducted by Kashani and other terrorist organizations. He went as far as to call Khomeini a “trouble maker” and stopped him from teaching in the Iranian city Qum.<sup>83</sup>

After the death of Prime Minister Razmara, Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq became the next Prime Minister of Iran. He was different from Razmara in the sense that he had “strong nationalist sentiments and a firm determination to make parliamentary democracy work in Iran.”<sup>84</sup> In the beginning, Mossadeq partnered with Ayatollah Abol-Qaeem Hussein Kashani, who was originally exiled by the British to Palestine in 1941 because of his “pro-Nazi activities.”<sup>85</sup> During his time as Prime Minister he withdrew Iran’s Mission from Israel along with Israel’s de facto recognition.<sup>86</sup> The Mullahs used Mossadeq to make sure that no other “Shah” would rise to power.<sup>87</sup> However in 1952, Kashani broke ties with Mossadeq and began to partner with the Shah who had earlier left the country. In June 1953, Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq was overthrown from power in a coup d’état led by General Fazlollah Zahedi backed by the CIA and MI-6. This coup d’état resulted in the Shah being “restored” to power and he consolidated power within Iran. By consolidating power it made internal opposition less of a threat and he was able to re-establish ties with Israel.<sup>88</sup> When Kashani died in 1961 and Borujerdi died in 1962, Khomeini did not have much opposition in his rise to

power.<sup>89</sup> On June 5, 1962, there was a demonstration by Khomeini supporters called the “second Ashura.” This marked the beginning of Khomeini’s plan to remove the Shah from power.<sup>90</sup> Two years later in 1964, Khomeini was exiled from Iran.<sup>91</sup>

One of the most important foreign policy decisions the Shah made during 1974-1978 was the rapprochement with Iraq, which came as a surprise to both Israel and the United States.<sup>92</sup> Another factor that contributed to this was that Iran needed stability in the region for the shipment of their oil in the Persian Gulf. This resulted in the Shah signing an agreement at an OPEC summit with Saddam Hussein.<sup>93</sup> This was Iran exercising their “Arab Option.”<sup>94</sup> The provisions of this deal was that Iran would no longer support the Kurdish rebellion and that Iraq would provide Iran with the deepest channel for shipping oil. This was known as the Algiers Accord.<sup>95</sup> Israel saw this as Iran wanting to get closer to its Arab neighbors. Israel began to question where they saw themselves in their strategic policy with Iran.

In 1978 the Shah made public statements against Khomeini calling him “a reactionary fanatic preaching such things as ‘sexual apartheid’ against the ignominy of which the nation had to be protected.”<sup>96</sup> The Shah reached his maximum support on January 26, 1978. However after that time, public enthusiasm began to decline.<sup>97</sup> The Shah did not see Khomeini as a threat while there were those inside the SAVAK who had written to the Shah pressing him to allow the assassination of Khomeini. The Shah’s response was “leave Khomeini alone, he is a British agent.”<sup>98</sup>

Shahpour Bakhitar became Prime Minister in December 1978.<sup>99</sup> He was chosen because he could continue the policy of the monarch and he had the support of some opposition groups. He accepted the position on the grounds that the Shah would

temporarily leave Iran.<sup>100</sup> It was under Bakhitar that relations between Israel and Iran began to change.<sup>101</sup> There were two main policy changes Bakhitar made. One was to grow Iran's relations with other Islamic countries and the other was to cancel the sale of oil to Israel. Bakhitar brought up the issues of canceling the sale of oil to Israel as a way to please Khomeini as well as to get the support of the Majles behind him.<sup>102</sup> However, Bakhitar did not have enough time to put his policy into practice because on February 11, 1979 the Iranian army was no longer cooperating with the government.<sup>103</sup> According to *Military Balance*, an English magazine, it was estimated that 60 percent of Iranians quit the military around the time of the 1979 revolution.<sup>104</sup>

During the hostage crisis Khomeini's son made a message to the Iranian people relaying his father's intention for the Iranian people as follows:

. . . Iran must pursue its decisive struggles until the end of all its political, military economic and cultural dependence on America.  
. . . Later, provided that our alert and noble nation grants permission, we will establish our very ordinary relations with America just as with other countries.<sup>105</sup>

Ayatollah Khomeini came to power in Iran when he returned from exile in France in February 1979. When he returned he gained the support of millions of people in Iran. The ten years Khomeini was in power was a difficult period within Iran.<sup>106</sup> One of the key points Khomeini made during the fall of the Shah was the Shah's secret connections with Israel.<sup>107</sup> One of the major contentions between the Shah and Ayatollah Khomeini in the 1960s was Iran's relationship with Israel. Since 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini "called fighting with Israel and Zionism one of the major principles of Islamic ideology."<sup>108</sup> When Ayatollah Khomeini came to power and Bazargan was the Prime Minister, one of the first things they did was cut off relations

with Israel. One of their intentions by making this move was to try and make a “wedge between Israeli and U.S. interests in Iran.”<sup>109</sup> When Khomeini took power, Arafat “was the first foreign dignitary to visit.”<sup>110</sup> However, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) did not receive as much support from Khomeini as they thought they would.<sup>111</sup> However, there were some trade deals that still occurred between Israel and Iran.<sup>112</sup> Military cooperation between Israel and Iran after the fall of the Shah continued, but in a more secretive and discrete fashion.<sup>113</sup>

When Khomeini took power he canceled several military and trade agreements Iran had with the United States. One of these canceled plans was the “agreement for military hardware amounting to 9 billion dollars.”<sup>114</sup> Khomeini had even refused to receive Walter Cutler as the new U.S. Ambassador to Iran. Even though there was the rejection of the Ambassador and past military agreements, in October 1979 there was a shipment of spare military plane equipment to Iran. Shortly after that, President Carter halted the shipment of spare parts to Iran. In April the following year, diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Iran were severed and economic sanctions against Iran came shortly after.<sup>115</sup>

The year 1981 was a critical year in Israeli-Iranian relations. During the Iran-Iraq war the Iraqi military was severely weakened, which favored Israel.<sup>116</sup> During this war, Israel supported Iran, despite the public anti-Jewish rhetoric from Khomeini.<sup>117</sup> After the start of the war, “General Mordecai Zippori, the vice Minister of the Israeli defense ministry said that Israel might deliver arms, Gabriel missiles and other U.S.-made weapons to Iran.”<sup>118</sup> During this time Ayatollah “Khomeini personally agreed to the arms purchases, and to political and military discussion with Israel.”<sup>119</sup> During

1981, the U.S. Secretary of State, Alexander Haig had meetings with the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including Robert MacFarlane and David Kimche, regarding the approval for the Israeli government to send U.S. made parts to Iran.<sup>120</sup>

In 1982 Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon visited the United States. During this trip an arms deal between Israel and Iran became known and the United States denied ever knowing about the deal. Sharon clarified this by saying that the deal was the idea of the U.S.<sup>121</sup> The value of this deal in 1984 to send U.S. military parts to Iran was over \$500 million.<sup>122</sup> “Most of the arms purchased were spare parts and ammunition which were directly purchased from Israel. The arms transaction was approved by Khomeini himself.”<sup>123</sup> Most of the weapons that Israel sent to Iran to be used during the war were sent through Holland, according to a 1980s Newsweek article.<sup>124</sup> Israel and Iran negotiated via third party, the Iranian Embassy in Paris, for an arms transfer.<sup>125</sup> In addition to military aid, Israel also provided personnel as advisors and military technicians to Iran to train and support their military equipment.<sup>126</sup>

Once it was known that Khomeini took arms directly from Israel he received backlash. As a result he had to once again make his disapproval for Israel public. One of the ways in which he did this was by comparing “Israel to the United States as an invader and usurper.”<sup>127</sup> This campaign of going against what he did behind closed doors with Israel did not help with his public image.<sup>128</sup>

During the mid-1980s Iran began focusing on their terrorist group proxies, especially those in Lebanon.<sup>129</sup> According to Khomeini, he believed “the only effective means against the industrial and military power of the West is terrorism and that

Western democracy is defenseless. Thus terrorism became the major foreign policy of the Khomeini regime.”<sup>130</sup>

Khomeini passed away in June 1989.<sup>131</sup> After his death Ayatollah Khamenei became the supreme leader of Iran. Similar to Khomeini, there are four aspects that Ayatollah Khamenei uses to undermine political leaders. They include the radio and television, judiciary, intelligence and military.<sup>132</sup> This helps Khamenei control the election process from getting too far out of his control.<sup>133</sup>

From 1989 to 2005, pragmatics were in control of Iranian politics which resulted in a “tempered regime hostility toward Israel.”<sup>134</sup> Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani was President of Iran from 1989 to 1997 and held a “pragmatic” policy towards Israel.<sup>135</sup> In the early years of President Rafsanjani’s presidency, it could almost be said that he held more power than Khamenei. President Rafsanjani “favored a more privatized and globally integrated economy and better relations with Iran’s neighboring states.”<sup>136</sup> Additionally he also had less of an ideological view of Israel than other Iranian hardliners. Rafsanjani stated that Iran would not be opposed to an Israeli-Palestinian resolution. He stated “if the content of the peace plan [between Israel and the Palestinians] is just, the substance is just, we shall go along with it.”<sup>137</sup> That is not to say that during this time proxy groups such as Hezbollah received support while Rafsanjani was in power. During Rafsanjani’s Presidency, Khamenei slowly attained more power and began to view “Israel in ideological terms.” As a result of this Rafsanjani had to change his approach towards Israel.<sup>138</sup>

Mohammad Khatami was President of Iran from 1997 to 2005.<sup>139</sup> Khatami “shared many of the pragmatic conservatives’ political and economic objectives” such

as building better relations with Iran's neighbors.<sup>140</sup> During Khatami's presidency Iran improved some of its relations with its Arab neighbors such as Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries. Additionally, Iran's relationship with Europe significantly improved. Khatami stated that Iran would support a peace agreement between Israel and Palestine, saying "any step for the realization of a real and just peace in the Middle East is positive and we will honor what the Palestinian people accept."<sup>141</sup> Also during this presidency, Khatami shook the hand of Israeli President Moshe Katsav.<sup>142</sup> Although Khatami did support a peace agreement between Israel and Palestine, Hamas and Hezbollah were still receiving funding from Iran, which "Khatami did not necessarily authorize."<sup>143</sup>

From 2000 to 2004 Iran had both a moderate President, Khatami, and a moderate Parliament. Both the President and Parliament challenged the Supreme Leader along with "some of the fundamental tenets of the Islamic Republic."<sup>144</sup> In 2005, the conservatives and hardliners used all of their power during the election to win control of the Presidency and Parliament.<sup>145</sup> President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad reversed much of the progress Khatami made during his presidency.<sup>146</sup> Also during this time was the rise of the Revolutionary Guards.<sup>147</sup>

Ayatollah Khamenei strategically uses the Revolutionary Guards for "shaping Iran's national security strategy."<sup>148</sup> They played a significant role in the 2005 and 2009 elections. He used the Revolutionary Guards against those who went against his policies. President Ahmadinejad represented both the good and the bad of the Revolutionary Guards. However, Khamenei used the Revolutionary Guards against Ahmadinejad when Ahmadinejad tried to over step his boundaries. Between Ayatollah

Khamenei and the Guards Corps, which is a group within the Revolutionary Guards, there is much expressed hostility against Israel. The Guards Corps “is more hostile toward Israel than other government institutions.”<sup>149</sup> Additionally Ayatollah Khamenei has expressed “his vociferous opposition to Israel’s existence numerous times.”<sup>150</sup>

When Ahmadinejad was elected he wanted “to raise his domestic and international profile through direct talks with the United States, but Khamenei was firmly opposed to these talks.”<sup>151</sup> This shows the power the Supreme Leader has in deciding the final say regarding policy. During his second term as President, Ahmadinejad started to go against Ayatollah Khamenei’s orders, “beyond his statements about talks with the Americans.”<sup>152</sup> Ahmadinejad’s original supporters in his first term as President consisted of hardliners. However after the 2009 Green Movement protests, Ahmadinejad went a different course towards “a nationalist discourse glorifying pre-Islamic tradition against pan-Islamism.”<sup>153</sup> He “also started to undermine Khamenei’s authority, especially regarding the intelligence apparatus of the country, as well as to defy the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps economic interests.”<sup>154</sup>

The Iranian regime accused Israel of supporting the 2009 Green Movement.<sup>155</sup> The Green Movement was the protest movement resulting from President Ahmadinejad being elected to a second term. One of the results of the Green Movement was that it shook the political ground of the legitimacy of Ayatollah Khamenei’s power. As a response Khamenei “labeled the Green Movement a seditious group sponsored by Israel and the United States.”<sup>156</sup> In 2011, Rafsanjani “resigned” from the Assembly of Experts as a way of showing that he did not support Ahmadinejad.<sup>157</sup>

The change in nuclear policy started in 2011 with Ayatollah Khamenei. At the time, President Ahmadinejad did not have full knowledge of all that was going on inside Iran's decision making.<sup>158</sup> Senator John Kerry and Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi were those behind the initial talks and Williams Burns, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, and Ali Asghar Khaji were the key negotiators.<sup>159</sup> The talks became public when Ayatollah Khamenei made a speech to government workers around the time the nuclear talks were going on in Vienna. His speech stated:

I would like to present a short history of these negotiations...Our negotiations with the Americans are, in fact, different from our negotiations with the P5+1. The Americans themselves asked for these negotiations, and their proposals date back to the time of the [Ahmadinejad] administration.<sup>160</sup>

The election of Hassan Rouhani as the President of Iran offered a new opportunity for the U.S. and Iran to resume a new round of nuclear talks.<sup>161</sup> When Rouhani was elected he was seen in many ways as a reformer. However, the still-present "suppression and restriction of activists, political parties, organizations, and NGOs continue to frustrate and disillusion many citizens about Rouhani's ability to bring domestic reform."<sup>162</sup> Rouhani won the 2013 election with 50.71 percent of the vote which was the smallest margin of victory compared to other Presidents in the past.<sup>163</sup> Rouhani's strength was that he was considered an "insider" to Khamenei. In 1989 he helped establish the National Security Council and led the council from its beginning to 2005 and represented Khamenei until 2013.<sup>164</sup> There are philosophical differences between Khamenei and Rouhani. Khamenei and his group of hardliners want to keep Islam as the focal point of Iran's domestic and international policy.

Rouhani, on the other hand, does not believe that the domestic and foreign policies Iran has adopted after the 1979 revolution are in the country's best interest.<sup>165</sup>

When it came time to decide which branch of the Iranian government would approve of the nuclear deal, Khamenei told parliament to have the final approval and not the Supreme Council for National Security (SCNS).<sup>166</sup> “The main reason behind such decision is that the parliament's bill would not require the Supreme Leader's endorsement, while SCNS decisions do need his signature.”<sup>167</sup> By doing this it allowed Khamenei the option of not tying himself to the deal and putting the blame on him if the deal went awry. To Khamenei, a policy change is not considered a defeat, which was a way in which he was different from the Ahmadinejad administration.<sup>168</sup>

In February 2016, Iran had their Parliamentary elections. The results from this election were important because not only were people voting for Parliament seats, they were also voting for members to fill the seats of the Assembly of Experts who are responsible for selecting the next Supreme Ruler. “The Assembly meets twice a year [and] candidates must pass tests and be approved by a 12-member Guardian Council led by the Supreme Leader.”<sup>169</sup> There was a high turnout of voters in the 2016 election, but Khamenei “made no direct comment on the results.”<sup>170</sup> Of Iran's population of 80 million citizens, nearly 60 percent of the population is under 30 years old and they are “eager to engage with the world following the lifting of most sanctions.”<sup>171</sup>

The results from the 2016 parliamentary elections are as follows:

Reformists, centrists, and independent conservatives won all 30 parliamentary seats in Tehran, and several hardline opponents of the deal also lost their seats in the Assembly of Experts, which is tasked with selecting the next supreme leader if 76-year-old Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dies or resigns.<sup>172</sup>

During the elections there were “6,200 candidates, including 586 women” who were all competing for Parliament which only has 290 seats. “In the capital Tehran, over 1000 candidates are competing for just 30 seats.”<sup>173</sup> During the vetting process many candidates were denied by the Guardian Council and more than half of those who registered for the elections were disqualified.<sup>174</sup>

As far as the results for the selection of the Assembly of Experts, former President Rafsanjani was the top candidate who received the most votes in the election. “People are hoping that he may be able to steer the country in a more moderate direction after Khamenei dies, although at age 81 he is five years older than Khamenei.”<sup>175</sup> According to “Ali Akbar Dareini of the Associated Press, ‘the next supreme leader will favor the expansion of democratic freedoms and greater openness toward the West’.”<sup>176</sup> Because there are no political parties in Iran it leads to “political currents,” where there is the moderate side and the hardline conservative side.<sup>177</sup> As a result of this, political leaders have to lean one way or the other.

It is important to understand that the Ayatollah does not have the sole power within Iran. Instead there are about twenty “Grand Ayatollahs” who are involved in the “decision making process.”<sup>178</sup> Also, “Grand Ayatollahs” have followings that are not limited to a specific country.<sup>179</sup> The “Grand Ayatollahs” of “Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Lebanon, and Iraq, play an important role in the leadership of the Iran.”<sup>180</sup>

The nuclear negotiations have made recent progress so far but in order for them to have lasting effect, it depends on “political will.”<sup>181</sup> Khamenei showed that he was

open to changing the political will in Iran starting in 2011. However it will be up to the next Supreme Leader if he is also open to similar change.<sup>182</sup> The question remains whether this recent nuclear deal will open the door for more moderates to join the Iranian government as the country rejoins the international community. “While such long-term potential exists for a relatively youthful Iranian society, no one can really know whether it will happen-nor would one be wise to bet on such an outcome.”<sup>183</sup> President Obama has expressed hope in this potential shift however Israel is less optimistic and sees it as an opportunity for a rise of more hardliners.<sup>184</sup>

#### The Future of Political Leadership in Iran and Israel

It could be said that there has been a change in country hardliners. After the fall of the Shah, Ayatollah Khomeini was the hardliner in Iran creating anti-Zionist rhetoric. Now it seems that the roles have reversed. President Rouhani of Iran is seen as a moderate wanting Iran to become more involved in the international community. Prime Minister Netanyahu on the other hand, has a hardline approach and views Iran with skepticism and is apprehensive moving forward with any negotiations with Iran.

Israel has been waiting for a regime change in Iran ever since the fall of the Shah in 1979. The problem with the “regime change” in Iran is that the “clerics view it as a threat to the very existence of Islam.”<sup>185</sup> Since the revolution, the way the clerical establishment has been able to influence the people of Iran is through the many networks of mosques throughout the country.<sup>186</sup> If Israel truly wants regime change within Iran, they have to understand the role Islam plays within Iran.<sup>187</sup>

While regime change would be a long term solution, a short term solution would be a change in policy in how Israel and Iran deal with each other. A change in policy

ultimately comes from a change in the perspective of the political leadership of each country. One of the changes in policy could be the change in the lack of communication between Israel and Iran. “The lack of direct communication between Iran and Israel could potentially lead to misinterpreted signals and confusion regarding each actor’s intentions and red lines.”<sup>188</sup> It was shown that Israel and Iran could work covertly while they were both publicly at odds with each other.

Another way in which a change in policy could come about is with the process of elections. From the results of the 2016 elections in Iran it appears the country is moving towards electing officials who are more moderate and pragmatic. Netanyahu on the other hand, has become more conservative and hardline since he has become Prime Minister. What influences leaders is the pressure they receive from its citizens. One of the most influential groups that could change the way in which these countries interact with one another is the Millennial generation. They are becoming an important group in shaping their country’s future and how their country is viewed by the international community. This topic will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

## CHAPTER THREE

### AMERICA'S ROLE AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND IRAN

Political leadership in the United States plays a significant role in the relationship between Israel and Iran. At one point, Iran was a strategic ally of the United States; important or even more important as the relationship between the U.S. and Israel. However, relations with Iran changed after the U.S. Embassy in Tehran was over taken in 1979. Since then, the United States has not had official communications with Iran. During his Presidential campaign, candidate Barack Obama ran on the premise that he would communicate with Iran without any preconditions. He carried out that approach and in 2015 the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was implemented. With this new deal, there are those within Israel who feel that the United States is shifting their attention away from them and focusing on building better relations with other countries in the region, such as Iran.

United States Relations with Israel from 1948 to the Present.

The United States recognized Israel with de facto recognition when it became an independent state on May 15, 1948.<sup>1</sup> In January of the next year, the United States extended de jure recognition to Israel.<sup>2</sup> During the early stages of Israel's relations with the U.S. it was treated as "a client-state."<sup>3</sup> It was not until the Nixon Doctrine that client states were treated more like allies.<sup>4</sup> The time period from 1948 to 1953 can be described as "Israel's nonidentification" period in which it turned to both the West and to the Soviet Union for assistance.<sup>5</sup> Beginning in 1954, Israel turned away from the Soviet Union and towards the United States. By doing this Israel benefitted in terms of

economic and political alignment in which the United States “allowed the issuance of a \$500 million State of Israel Bonds obligation.”<sup>6</sup>

Israel invaded Egypt in the 1956 Suez war without notifying the United States of their intentions. The Eisenhower administration was angry that Israel invaded Egypt without their knowledge. As a response to learning about this, the U.S wanted Israel to give back the territory they gained from the war.<sup>7</sup> During the war, Israel captured the Gaza Strip and the Sinai, along with gaining access to the Tiran Straights and destroying Egypt’s military bases.<sup>8</sup> According to a report published by the RAND Corporation titled *A Surprise Out of Zion? Case Studies in Israel’s Decisions on Whether to Alert the United States to Preemptive and Preventive Strikes, from Suez to the Syrian Nuclear Reactor*, “No other administration in U.S. history has so clearly and consistently regarded Israel with suspicion and driven it so determinedly to give up territory it acquired during wartime.”<sup>9</sup> The Eisenhower administration threatened Israel to give up the land they gained or consequences would be “UN condemnations, attack by Soviet ‘volunteers,’ [and] termination of all U.S. governmental and private aid.”<sup>10</sup> Reluctantly, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion agreed that Israel would begin to remove their troops out of the territories without any certainty that the United States would provide Israel with anything in return.<sup>11</sup> It was not until 1979 that the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty was signed in which Israel removed its troops from the Sinai and Egypt had officially recognized Israel as a country.<sup>12</sup>

There was a different reaction from the United States after Israel’s 1967 war. During this war Israel captured the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Unlike in 1956, Israel did not give up the land they gained. The United States offered

that if Israel were to withdraw from territories occupied as result of the war, the U.S. “would be willing to guarantee Israel’s security.” The Likud party, the conservative party of Israel, took a hardline approach in which they refused to give up the territories. They did not see a formal alliance with the United States or making a step towards peace with the Palestinians as an incentive to give up the land they gained.<sup>13</sup> In 2005 Israel withdrew their soldiers from the Gaza Strip. The following year Hamas won elections that were held in Gaza and took control of the territory. Both Israel and the United States consider Hamas a terrorist organization.<sup>14</sup>

The United States provided Israel much needed military and economic aid during the 1967 war. This aid furthered the strong alliance between the United States and Israel. However their alliance might have resulted from one of dependence. Relations between Israel and the United States improved from 1974 to 1978. During this time the United States contributed to Israel’s “deterrence strategy without a formal alliance.”<sup>15</sup> However, Israel was looking for something more concrete from the United States, such as a binding agreement. The Middle East was becoming unstable. Due to their lack of allies in the region, Israel has had to rely on their own military for their own protection. As a result, this contributed to Israel’s “need to develop a nuclear option.”<sup>16</sup>

It is important to note that while Israel had turned to the West and was a strong ally to the United States, Israel had engaged in covert arms deals with Iran. One of the covert deals occurred during 1979 to 1980. During this time President Carter had put an arms embargo on Iran.

President Carter's National Security Council, Zbigniew Brezinski, stated:

In the beginning of the war, Iran needed the US-made parts very badly. We tried to use their needs as a means of forcing Iran to release the hostages as soon as possible. In the middle of October, we had even thought of transferring some parts to Germany, Algeria, and Pakistan so that the Iranians could bring them with their own planes to Iran. It was exactly at this stage that we received news that the Israelis had secretly provided parts to Iran and had not paid any attention to the negative impact of this action for our influence on Iran for the sake of the hostages' release. Ed Muskie and I discussed this problem in detail and decided to recommend that the Secretary of State protest harshly to the Israelis because it was obvious that their action had damaged our very delicate process. To my knowledge, what we did was to deprive Israel for a short period of time by not giving them US-made weapons parts.<sup>17</sup>

Another Israeli-Iranian arms deal occurred in 1982. During this time Menachem Begin was Prime Minister of Israel and Ariel Sharon was Minister of Defense. The purpose behind this covert arms deal was to strengthen Iran during the Iran-Iraq war.<sup>18</sup> Both Israel and Iran saw Iraq as a common enemy. One of the reasons Israel sold arms to Iran was that it established Israel having some place in the Khomeini regime.<sup>19</sup> As stated in Chapter One, the only way Israel and Iran had any form of official recognition of each other was through their representative at the United Nations.<sup>20</sup>

Relations between the United States and Israel improved during President Ronald Reagan's administration. At this time Benjamin Netanyahu was the official spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C.<sup>21</sup> In November 1983, President Reagan and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Shamir signed a "strategic cooperation agreement" in which "Israel gained official recognition as having earned a status of complete equality as a military partner of the United States."<sup>22</sup> As a result of this agreement, it led to "a formal U.S.-Israeli alliance for mutual security." As part of

this agreement, the United States would continue to supply material support and in return Israel would supply the U.S. with intelligence.<sup>23</sup> It was through this “strategic cooperative agreement” that the United States consented to covert Israeli actions that could open up lines of communication with Iran. Part of these covert actions were arms deals.<sup>24</sup> Covert arms deals occurred from 1985 to 1986 and the main actors included Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Shimar, and Yitzhak Rabin and they coordinated with David Kimche, who was the general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry along with Amiram Nir, the Israeli Prime Minister’s advisor on terrorism. By participating in these covert arms deals, it allowed Israel to remain in contact with the Khomeini regime.<sup>25</sup>

There was a different type of relationship between Israel and the Clinton administration than there was with the Reagan administration. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and President Clinton had a close relationship. As a result of this close relationship, it led to a breakthrough in relations between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). According to Dennis Ross, Middle East Envoy from 1993 to 2001, for the first time in history Israel and the PLO were about to recognize each other. In 1993 the Oslo Accords were signed. The goal of the Oslo Accords was to bring about peace between Israel and the Palestinians that would give the Palestinians their own state from land that was captured in the 1967 war. To the rest of the world this was a sense of optimism, but Israel viewed it with skepticism.<sup>26</sup>

The assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin changed the relationship between Israel and the United States. Martin Indyk, U.S. Ambassador to Israel from 1995 to 1997 and Middle East Envoy from 2013 to 2014, stated that Clinton saw the Oslo Accords as part of Rabin’s legacy. During the election period after Rabin’s death,

President Clinton wanted to make sure that Rabin's successor, Shimon Peres, could defeat Benjamin Netanyahu. President "Clinton's political operatives opened a back channel with the Peres campaign." As a way to show the United States was still a strong ally of Israel, President Clinton "authorized hundreds of millions in additional military aid and returned to Israel to personally campaign for Shimon Peres."<sup>27</sup> However, even with the "back channel" communications and personal campaigning, Benjamin Netanyahu defeated Peres to become Prime Minister. The dynamic of the relationship between the United States and Israel changed when Netanyahu was elected. Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Clinton differed on views and policy approaches. Chemi Shalev, a reporter for Ha'aretz, stated that President Clinton believed that Netanyahu would "bring down Oslo" if he had the opportunity. Clinton believed that Netanyahu would undo all of the progress Rabin and Clinton had done together to bring peace in the region.<sup>28</sup>

Netanyahu came to the United States in July 1996 for the first time as Israel's Prime Minister. President Clinton and Netanyahu had different agendas. "Clinton would demand Netanyahu continue the Oslo peace process and personally meet with Yasser Arafat." In speeches Netanyahu made, he had called Yasser Arafat a terrorist.<sup>29</sup> Netanyahu saw this as an American telling him how to deal with the Arab people. Netanyahu told Clinton concerns he had regarding the Oslo Accords. According to Jeffrey Goldberg, a writer for *The Atlantic*, Netanyahu found this difficult because he "didn't want to work within the context Rabin had created." However, Clinton persisted on Netanyahu continuing Rabin's work. Although Netanyahu was hesitant, he was reminded that the U.S. is Israel's biggest supporter. In the end President Clinton

was able to get the handshake he wanted from both Arafat and Netanyahu. According to Ari Shavit, an Israeli columnist, Netanyahu had made life very difficult for both Americans and Israelis who wanted to have peace with the Palestinians.

After a while, Netanyahu began to lose support from his base. As a result, he lost the next election in 1999 to Ehud Barak.<sup>30</sup> After Netanyahu lost the election, the Clinton Administration had one last attempt at peace negotiations at Camp David where he brought together the new Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak and Arafat. Barak had a very different approach to the negotiations than Netanyahu. He offered Arafat more territory than what was offered in previous negotiations. However negotiations failed because they could not agree on the future of Jerusalem.<sup>31</sup>

Where U.S. and Israel relations would change again is with President Bush and the language he used after the September 11th terror attacks. The language President Bush used was the same type of language Netanyahu was used to giving.<sup>32</sup> President Bush did not put the same pressure on Israel to make peace with the Palestinians as former President Clinton and President Obama.<sup>33</sup>

In the summer of 2008, Presidential candidate Barack Obama met with Prime Minister Netanyahu for the first time in Jerusalem. From this meeting Dore Gold, an advisor to Netanyahu, stated that Obama and Netanyahu “were two individuals who come from different parts of the political spectrum, one very liberal in his foreign policy assumptions, the other conservative, national-security oriented.”<sup>34</sup>

In his 2009 Inauguration Address, President Obama reached out directly to the Muslim world by saying:

To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect. To those leaders around the globe who seek to sow conflict, or blame their society's ills on the West, know that your people will judge you on what you can build, not what you destroy.<sup>35</sup>

Sandy Berger, former National Security Advisor to President Obama, stated that President Obama “wanted to recast the United States as a friend of the Islamic world. Part of that narrative is that we’ve been associated with Israel too closely.”<sup>36</sup> He also stated that President Obama wanted to set a different policy tone with the Middle East. President Obama believed that the United States could rebuild its image with this region of the world. President Obama’s first international phone call was to Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian President and his first television interview was with an Arab TV network. President Obama also wanted to restart the peace process. To help with the peace process he enlisted the help of George Mitchell as the Middle East Peace Envoy.<sup>37</sup>

In May 2009 the first meeting occurred between President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu. It did not go well for Netanyahu. According to Chemi Shalev, “I think Netanyahu recognized in Obama suddenly a person who was hell-bent on setting up a Palestinian state.” Netanyahu came back to Israel feeling that he did not have the same support from the American President as he had under President Bush.<sup>38</sup>

President Obama gave one of his most powerful speeches in Cairo, Egypt. The speech included some controversial issues regarding Israel such as the issue of settlements. He addressed the Palestinian issue not in terms of policy but in terms of

justice. At the end of the speech President Obama sent another direct message to Israel by not stopping in the country after his visit to Egypt. According to Dennis Ross, National Security Council from 2009 to 2011, stopping over in Israel after the speech “would have looked like business as usual.” Netanyahu criticized Obama’s decision. Israeli “right-wing newspapers fanned the flames, increasingly portraying the president as an enemy of Israel.”<sup>39</sup>

The 2011 Arab Spring gave President Obama the opportunity to “reset” his Middle East policy. In his “reset” policy, Obama stated that “the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps.” Never before had this demand been endorsed so “publicly by the president of the United States.” This statement angered Netanyahu. According to Martin Indyk, Netanyahu saw this announcement as follows:

...an attempt to ambush him, embarrass him, put him in a situation where, you know, the president was, from Netanyahu’s point of view, weakening Israel’s negotiation position by declaring a stance on the ‘67 lines. And so he was furious about it.<sup>40</sup>

In 2011 Mitchell handed President Obama his letter of resignation. The reason he gave his letter of resignation was because “the level of mistrust between both societies made it highly unlikely that they would be able to overcome that level of mistrust and reach agreement.”<sup>41</sup>

President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu met again, but it was very different than the first meeting in 2009. Netanyahu said in the Oval office that the peace deal was not going to happen. He also stated that Israel could not go back to the 1967 lines and that they also could not negotiate with the Palestinian government

supported by Hamas. President Obama had a choice to make at this point; either push Netanyahu further or walk away entirely from the peace process. Even with turmoil between Netanyahu and the Obama administration, “the United States has continued to provide Israel with as much as \$3 billion a year in military aid.”<sup>42</sup>

In early 2012, Prime Minister Netanyahu and Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak “ordered the Israeli military to plan for a direct strike on Iran’s nuclear program.” The United States had no indication of when this strike would occur. There was a breakdown in communication between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Obama. According to Ben Rhodes, Deputy National Security Advisor, an attack from Israel would set off a domino effect in the Middle East which would have resulted in attacks from proxy groups such as Hezbollah and would put the United States at war with Iran. The Israeli military was wary of attacking Iran alone and Netanyahu asked Obama if Israel would have the support of the United States if they were to strike. Netanyahu never got a definitive answer from the White House.<sup>43</sup>

Just as President Clinton intervened in Israeli politics, Netanyahu also intervened in the 2012 U.S. Presidential elections trying to get the support of the American people. Netanyahu openly supported Mitt Romney, the Republican Presidential Candidate. Relations between Netanyahu and Obama reached a low point in 2012 where they did not even sit in the same room as each other at the United Nations. When President Obama won the 2012 election it was decided that they were going to approach the Iran nuclear issue without telling Israel.<sup>44</sup>

In 2013 President Obama ordered his staff to start engaging in secret negotiations with Iran. He specifically told them not to notify Netanyahu. According

to Aaron David Miller, who worked at the State Department from 1978 to 2003, there was “a degree of dysfunction on both sides. This, in some respects, was a train wreck waiting to happen even from the beginning,” referring to the U.S. - Israeli relationship in regards to the new nuclear deal. However Israel found out about the secret talks and Netanyahu was angry. In the words of Michael Oren, Israeli Ambassador to the U.S., from 2009 to 2013, the secret talks were “an implosion” to Israel in which Israel just realized that their “principal ally has negotiated behind our backs for seven months with our worst enemy.”<sup>45</sup> That was hard for Israel to swallow.

President Obama addressed the American public regarding the Iranian nuclear deal saying that the deal “would impose limits on Iran’s nuclear program and allow international inspections in exchange for lifting sanctions.” He also went on to say that this is “a comprehensive agreement that prevents a nuclear-armed Iran, secures America and our allies, including Israel, while avoiding yet another Middle East conflict.” According to Peter Beinart, Author, *The Crisis of Zionism*, Iran is important to President Obama’s Middle East legacy. Peter Baker of the *New York Times*, stated that President Obama’s approach to Iran is the following:

Obama comes to office on the theory that we should talk to our enemies, right? And Iran is among them. Yes, Iran is a hostile country. Yes, Iran is sponsoring terrorism. But if we don’t find ways to connect with them, there’s no way to counter them. And sitting down to talk, to him, is a rational, reasonable thing to do.<sup>46</sup>

The United States and Israel differ on how they view the current regional status of the Middle East. The United States believes that the Iranian nuclear issue should be separate from regional assessment. However Israel, along with other Middle Eastern countries, views the two issues tied together.<sup>47</sup> Israel views U.S. policy toward Iran as

one from prevention to one of containment and has not fully evaluated the consequences.<sup>48</sup> There are some within Israel who believe if the current policy continues, it would eventually harm the special relationship they have with the United States and its military advantage.<sup>49</sup> Benjamin Netanyahu tried to express that the United States and Israel have more in common than they differ. In his 2015 United Nations General Assembly speech Netanyahu stated the following:

President Obama and I agree on the need to keep arms out of the hands of Iran's terror proxies. We agree on the need to stop Iran from destabilizing countries throughout the Middle East... Israel deeply appreciates President Obama's willingness to bolster our security, help Israel maintain its qualitative military edge and help Israel confront the enormous challenges we face.<sup>50</sup>

However, according to Chemi Shalev, a reporter for Ha'aretz, Netanyahu is "definitely willing to sacrifice Israeli-U.S. relations in order to do what he thinks is proper to fight off the Iranian challenge."<sup>51</sup>

Although the Iran nuclear deal is important to Obama's legacy, he also recognizes Israel's concerns. In an interview President Obama stated the following regarding the security of Israel in relation to the Iranian nuclear deal:

I have to respect the fears that the Israeli people have and I understand that Prime Minister Netanyahu is expressing the deep-rooted concerns that a lot of the Israeli population feel about this, but what I can say to them is this: Number one, this is our best bet by far to make sure Iran doesn't get a nuclear weapon, and number two, what we will be doing even as we enter into this deal is sending a very clear message to the Iranians and to the entire region that if anybody messes with Israel, America will be there.<sup>52</sup>

President Obama went on to discuss Israel's security as follows:

But what I would say to them is that not only am I absolutely committed to making sure that they maintain their qualitative military edge, and that they can deter any potential future attacks, but what I'm willing to do is to make the kinds of commitments that would give everybody in the neighborhood, including Iran, a clarity that if Israel were to be attacked by any state, that we would stand by them. And that, I think, should be . . . sufficient to take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see whether or not we can at least take the nuclear issue off the table....<sup>53</sup>

There are those who believe that instead of the JCPOA, what should have occurred was "a joint U.S.-Israeli strategy that deters Iran from violating the terms of the deal and sets the stage for a successful nonproliferation plan for after the deal's elements expire."<sup>54</sup>

Currently the United States and Israel are close on reaching a significant ten year arms deal. This new arms package is to replace the one that is scheduled to expire in 2018. The new deal that was recently negotiated will give Israel \$3.9 billion in military aid over the next ten years.<sup>55</sup> If this new deal is signed it would mean Israel will receive the largest amount of U.S. military assistance in America's history. However this arms deal is different from those in the past. In this new deal, Israel will not be able to use money from this deal and invest in Israeli defense contractors. What that means for the U.S. is that the money that would have been spent on Israeli defense contractors would instead be invested in U.S. military contractors. This is a change in policy. Since the 1980s the United States has allowed Israel to use a certain amount of money from arms deals towards their defense contractors in order to help boost Israel's defense. Another caveat of the new arms package is that it has set aside a certain

amount of money that is specifically assigned for the Iron Dome and other “critical missile defense programs.” Usually money for these “critical missile defense programs” have to be approved by the U.S. Congress annually. However with this new arms deal, money set aside for these “critical missile defense programs” is good for 10 years and Israel cannot lobby Congress for additional funds and materials.<sup>56</sup>

Even though there are differences over the new arms package, this shows that the United States is still committed to Israel’s defense despite the rocky relationship between President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu. A “Senior Administration Official” stated:

We believe these arrangements, which are unique to Israel, no longer serve U.S. or Israeli interests...Israel’s economy has grown dramatically, and Israel is one of the top 10 arms exporters in the world, so the objective has been achieved.<sup>57</sup>

Jon Alterman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies stated that the difference between this new arms deal and the current arms deal is that “ten years ago, the White House was advertising its closeness to Israel, and now the White House has to remind people of its closeness to Israel.” What this shows is that even though there is tension between these two countries, the dependence each country has for sharing of information from “counterterrorism and intelligence programs” is still critically important.<sup>58</sup>

United States Relations with Iran from 1948 to the Present.

Since the 1979 revolution, the United States has not formally recognized the Islamic Republic of Iran. “Iran continues to relate to the United States as it political and cultural rival, if not its enemy.”<sup>59</sup> This was not always the case. Iranian and U.S.

relations were closest under President Nixon. When Iran had de facto recognitions of Israel it was seen as an important step in “winning Washington’s approval for Iran’s political, military, and economic agenda.”<sup>60</sup> Iran saw that if Israel remained close to Washington and that they were in good standing with Israel that they too would be viewed favorably by the United States.<sup>61</sup> With the current Iranian leadership and President Obama’s openness for discussions, Iran and the United States have slowly started to amend their relationship.

After Iranian Prime Minister Haj Ali Razmara was murdered the Majlis successfully passed legislation to nationalize the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). They also elected Mohammad Mosaddeq as the new Prime Minister of Iran.<sup>62</sup> One of the first actions Mosaddeq took as Prime Minister was he carried out legislation to nationalize the AIOC which resulted in disagreements with Britain who refused to give up their control of the oil. The only way Britain believed they could keep control of the oil was to overthrow Mosaddeq in a coup. Although President Truman “was sympathetic to Mosaddeq’s brand of liberal nationalism, which it hoped would serve as a bulwark against the spread of communism in Iran,”<sup>63</sup> the United States ultimately sided with Britain. The U.S. was primarily concerned with making sure that communism did not spread in Iran and to continue to have Iran come to the West for support and not turn towards the Soviet Union. However as Mosaddeq gained more power he began to gain more enemies, especially from inside his own party. As a result of this growing unrest the United States partnered with Britain to remove Mosaddeq from power and to replace him with the Shah via a political coup.<sup>64</sup>

This plan to overthrow Mosaddeq was not put into place until President Eisenhower became President. This plan took two coup attempts. The first coup attempt on August 15, 1953 failed. A second attempt occurred on August 19, 1953 in which the CIA used mob and pro-Shah supporters from the Army and police. The coup resulted in Mosaddeq fleeing his home and the Shah coming back to power on August 22, 1953.<sup>65</sup> As a result of the 1953 coup the Shah signed “the farmans (royal decrees) on August 12, 1953” which ultimately removed Mosaddeq from his position as Prime Minister and replaced him with General Fazlollah Zahedi.<sup>66</sup> As a result of the coup, many Iranians believed that the Shah was United States’ puppet. Both military and economic aid to Iran increased under President Eisenhower.<sup>67</sup> In addition to military aid, the CIA helped train the Iran’s intelligence division, known as the SAVAK.<sup>68</sup>

Iran joined the Baghdad Pact in 1955 because it went in line with the idea of them being secure and at peace with its neighbors. The Baghdad Pact included Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, and Britain. <sup>69</sup> The U.S. did not join the pact and Iran worried that since the U.S. did not join it would prove ineffective against the Soviet Union. By the U.S. not joining the Pact, this was the first point of contention between the U.S. and Iran.<sup>70</sup> This only increased Iran’s desire to have closer ties with the United States. The Shah saw the United States as the “third power” which could counter British interests and Russian expansionism. By gaining closer ties with the U.S., the Shah could strengthen Iranian armed forces. Lastly, the Shah realized that he could no longer have a neutralized approach.<sup>71</sup> Eventually the U.S. caught wind of the fact that the British were trying to get involved in Iranian’s intelligence service and as a result, the CIA countered the Iranians an offer of “good services.”<sup>72</sup>

As stated in Chapter One, during the Kennedy Administration there was a lack of trust between the U.S. and Iran. Many Democrats in the U.S. Congress did not have good relations with the Shah.<sup>73</sup> President Kennedy's foreign policy approach was focused more on economics than military. He expressed opposition to "authoritarian regimes, such as that of the Shah."<sup>74</sup> Based on evidence during the Kennedy administration, the U.S. was going to support a coup against the Shah using support from General Valiullah Qarani, who was the Chief of Military Intelligence in Iran. The U.S. had even offered to pay to get information on Qarani in different Savak files. However this coup was not executed.<sup>75</sup>

Due to Kennedy's foreign policy approach, the Shah appointed Ali Amini as Prime Minister. The Kennedy administration took to Amini and had hoped that Amini would lead the change to reform Iran. However, the Shah did not take well to Kennedy's support of Amini.<sup>76</sup> As a result, Amini ended up resigning from his role of Prime Minister due to his disagreement with the Shah over defense spending. Even though the Kennedy administration supported Amini, the United States still had to support the Shah "to avoid 'near political chaos' in Iran."<sup>77</sup> President Kennedy tried to encourage the Shah to support reform movements and as a result Kennedy supported the Shah's White Revolution in 1963. As a result of this support, relations between the United States and Iran moved from reform movements and focused on military and defense support.<sup>78</sup>

In the beginning of President Johnson's Administration the relationship between the United States and Iran were not strong. The war in Vietnam consumed much of President Johnson's foreign policy agenda.<sup>79</sup> Later on in the Johnson administration,

Iran emerged as a strategic American partner in the Middle East. Iran changed from being a “military and economic aid recipient in the 1950s to becoming a military credit purchase partner from 1964 onward.”<sup>80</sup> One of the reason for this change in policy was in response to the Cold war.<sup>81</sup>

The use of having Iran as an ally during the Cold War to the United States was that they saw Iran as a way to prevent the spread of Soviet influence in the Middle East.<sup>82</sup> Relations between the U.S. and Iran improved by 1962 where there was increased support for the Shah as being pro West in a region that was cornered by communists countries during the Cold War.<sup>83</sup> As a way to contain Soviet influence from spreading, Johnson continued the “patron-client” relationship that was started under the Eisenhower administration and was also exercised during the Kennedy administration.<sup>84</sup>

In 1963 there was an agreement between the United States and Iran for a “five-year military aid program.”<sup>85</sup> However the Shah was not fully satisfied with this agreement. With the Johnson administration being focused on Vietnam, the Shah’s unhappiness of the deal went unanswered. The Shah was thinking far in the future beyond the 1963 deal in wanting more military arms. There were those within the Johnson administration who stressed to the Shah that he should focus more of Iran’s resources on economic and social programs rather than the military. The Shah did not like this answer.

In 1964 Iran signed the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) which reminded the Shah that Iran was more of a client to the United States rather than a partner.<sup>86</sup> The SOFA was originally brought up in 1962 by the U.S. Department of Defense in regards

to “protecting the growing number of U.S. military personnel in Iran.”<sup>87</sup> The U.S. had asked for diplomatic immunity be applied to both military and non-military staff along with their families.<sup>88</sup> According to Article 1 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, those working as part of the Pentagon’s personnel as “members of the administration and technical staff”<sup>89</sup> in Iran would have diplomatic immunity from the Iranian court system. This application of diplomatic immunity was more than what had been given to U.S. personnel in NATO countries. One of the reasons why Iran signed the SOFA was for opportunities to buy more U.S. weapons. According to the U.S. Embassy in Iran “the Shah’s regime has paid an unexpectedly high price in getting this done.”<sup>90</sup>

The turning point of U.S.-Iran relations in the 1960s came when the Shah starting looking towards the Soviet Union for military equipment he was not receiving from the U.S.<sup>91</sup> He ended up buying some lower grade weapons from the Soviets. In 1966, the United States laid out a plan that they thought would satisfy the requirements the Shah had been asking for in a new military deal. There were several contributing factors to this new deal. One was because of the withering relationship between the U.S. and Iran and the Shah’s willingness to negotiate with the Soviets.<sup>92</sup> The second factor was the result of findings from the Iran survey group which concluded that the state of Iran’s military was in the condition the Shah was mentioning for the past few years. However there were several people within the Johnson administration who disagreed with this assessment. Armin Meyer, the U.S. Ambassador to Iran, stated that “additional sales to Iran is of considerable political value. The Shah is one of the best friends we have in the Afro-Asian milieu.”<sup>93</sup> President Johnson agreed with Meyer and

supported the 1966 military deal.<sup>94</sup> In a 1965 State Department Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) meeting it was noted that “it is a constant struggle to keep the Shah's appetite within bounds.”<sup>95</sup> This was the theme of the relationship between Iran and the United States during the Johnson administration.<sup>96</sup>

Another factor that shaped the Johnson administration's policy on Iran was the British announcement that they were removing their forces east of the Suez by 1971. As a result of this announcement the U.S. had to decide if they wanted to invest more resources to Iran. Another factor in the Johnson administration's approach to Iran was the rise and spread of Arab nationalism in the Middle East.<sup>97</sup> During the Shah's visit to the U.S. in 1968 the State Department stated that “military cooperation with Iran is fundamental to our overall relationship.”<sup>98</sup> As a result of his visit in 1968 the Shah was able to receive a \$100 million dollar line of credit from the U.S., which was a little short of the “five-year military credit commitment” he ultimately wanted.<sup>99</sup>

On May 31, 1972 President Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger visited Tehran. Under President Nixon and Kissinger's leadership, this was the pinnacle of U.S.-Iran relations.<sup>100</sup> “The Nixon Doctrine was a way of limiting and simplifying American intervention in the Third World.”<sup>101</sup> Nixon, opposed to Johnson and Kennedy, agreed that the United States would supply Iran with the weapons and military support they needed to maintain security of Iran within the Gulf.<sup>102</sup> Iran's victory over Iraq during the 1969 war in the Shatt al-Arab waterway reinforced that Iran was able to maintain their security within the Middle East.<sup>103</sup> It was under the Nixon administration that Iran could be depended on to prevent communism from spreading throughout the Middle East.<sup>104</sup> During the Nixon administration, U.S. military sales to

Iran increased seven times than during the Johnson administration. The height of U.S. military sales to Iran was in 1977 when it reached a total of \$2.55 billion.<sup>105</sup>

Kissinger saw the difference in the hostile relationship between Saudi Arabia and Israel and the secretive alliance relationship between Israel and Iran which began in the 1950s. According to President Nixon, the United States' close relationship with Israel made the U.S. unfavorable to other countries in the Middle East. As a result Israel and Iran became the two most important countries in the Middle East for the Nixon Doctrine.<sup>106</sup> Towards the end of the Nixon Presidency, the United States would eventually no longer impose arms restrictions on Iran which would allow Iran to independently defend their country.<sup>107</sup>

It was Henry Kissinger who was able to bridge the gap between the Nixon and Ford Presidencies.<sup>108</sup> Henry Kissinger was behind the nomination of W. H. Sullivan to become the U.S. Ambassador in Iran.<sup>109</sup> Kissinger believed that the blank check deal was working out for Iran and that Iran was "becoming militarily and industrially, a regional superpower."<sup>110</sup> This deal resulted in the upper class of Iran benefitting the most.<sup>111</sup> As a result of the country becoming more industrialized, people moved in from the countryside and into Tehran. However these people moving into the city were against the modernization efforts the Shah was trying to implement.<sup>112</sup> Before Sullivan left Tehran in 1978 he met with an Israeli official representative, Uri Lubrani. During this meeting Sullivan discussed the 'gloomy prognosis' of the situation within the country. Lubrani sent his concerns to the Israeli Embassy in Washington, but Sullivan did not mention this discussion with any of his supervisors in Washington.<sup>113</sup> During

the mid-1970s, the CIA station in Tehran stated that there was a rising degree of opposition against the Shah.<sup>114</sup>

In 1971, Iran became America's number one Foreign Military Sales customer. In 1972, Iran had a special policy arranged by the Nixon administration that essentially gave Iran a blank check for the Shah to purchase whatever military equipment he deemed necessary for his country. This deal, however, did not include nuclear weapons.<sup>115</sup>

The relationship between the United States and Iran during 1974-1978 was complicated. During this time Iran had become one of the stable countries in the Middle East. As a result of this, the Shah wanted from the United States "either a stronger formal alliance... or a massive transfer of sophisticated arms."<sup>116</sup> The CIA moved its strategic weapons monitoring system from Turkey to Iran which resulted in Iran majorly increasing its deterrence position. It was also during this period that the United States increased their sale of military weapons to Iran.<sup>117</sup> At first, President Ford continued in Nixon's policy of arms sales to Iran. In fact arms sales doubled during Ford's time in office by \$1 billion.<sup>118</sup>

The Watergate scandal and the Vietnam War made the American people question how "America's role in the world" was viewed. There was a shift of wanting to focus more on human rights and "moral foreign policy."<sup>119</sup> After the 1974 Congressional mid-term elections Democrats gained more of a majority in both the Senate and House of Representatives. A new Foreign Assistance Act was passed which restricted the exports of U.S. arms to countries that had human rights violations. Part of this new Foreign Assistance Act required the State Department to provide human rights

reports every year for “countries that received security assistance from the United States.”<sup>120</sup> As a result of this, there was a change in policy from President Nixon to President Ford.<sup>121</sup>

Under President Ford, relations between the United States and Iran started to decline. From 1974-1976 there were multiple discussion of nuclear exports to Iran.<sup>122</sup> The discussion for U.S. nuclear exports to Iran began in 1974, towards the end of the Nixon presidency. During a 1974 trip to the Middle East, “Nixon had offered to provide Egypt and Israel with civilian nuclear technology, even though neither country was a party to the [Non-Proliferation Treaty] NPT.”<sup>123</sup> It was after this offer that advisors at the State Department suggested that Iran have additional precautions if they were given the same type of offer. One of the reasons for this suggestion was that there were those within the State Department who were concerned if the Shah was overthrown there would be a chance that the nuclear materials could “fall into the hands of ‘domestic dissidents’, ‘foreign terrorists’ or ‘an aggressive successor’.”<sup>124</sup> There was a point where Iran stated that they would change their policy on nuclear weapons program and no longer being a part of the NPT. The Shah stated that this would only happen if other countries in the Middle East, such as Israel and Egypt, started their own nuclear weapons program.<sup>125</sup> President Ford wanted to impose restrictions on Iran that were beyond the scope of the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.<sup>126</sup> One of the proposals by Kissinger was that Iran would have to agree to additional security parameters to prevent the nuclear material from getting into the wrong hands and would also have to agree to a U.S. veto against Iran reprocessing their spent nuclear fuel.<sup>127</sup> In response to these additional security parameters the Shah stated “I think it will not be

difficult to come up with a formula so long as it is not an American *diktat*.”<sup>128</sup>

Additionally the Shah believed that this veto right was “a violation of Iran’s sovereignty.”<sup>129</sup> Ultimately it was a failure to come to an agreement on shipment of nuclear waste that created a dramatic rift in U.S.-Iranian relations.

The Shah came to the United States during May 1975 which was the height of contention between the U.S. and Iran.<sup>130</sup> It was also during this time that Kissinger also started to believe that the Shah had other intentions for Iran’s nuclear program other than for peaceful civilian purposes.<sup>131</sup> The United States finally came to an agreement that Iran would have national reprocessing rights.<sup>132</sup> The moment that ended the potential nuclear agreement between the U.S. and Iran came in October 1976 in which President Ford announced “the United States should no longer regard reprocessing of used nuclear fuel to product plutonium as a necessary and inevitable step in the nuclear fuel cycle.”<sup>133</sup> As a result of this statement the entire U.S.-Iran nuclear agreement had to be totally renegotiated.<sup>134</sup>

The election of President Carter in 1976 changed the relationship the United States had with Iran. President’s Carter’s objective while he was in office was to reduce the amount of arms sales and focus on human rights which were a central focus of his policy. Both of these issues did not bode well with Iran.<sup>135</sup> In 1977, before Ambassador Sullivan left for Tehran, President Carter stated that the already established arms agreement between Iran and the United States would continue. As President Carter stressed his Human Rights Campaign, Ambassador Sullivan stated that after Israel, Iran is the United States closest ally in the region and curtailing the sales of arms would damage the situation.<sup>136</sup> Towards the end of 1978, U.S. relations with Iran

deteriorated. As a way to pacify President Carter's human rights agenda several Islamic Fundamentalists were released from prison. However, as a result of their release they attacked military and civilian targets.<sup>137</sup>

When Ayatollah Khomeini took control of Iran in 1979 relations between Israel and Iran deteriorated. This then resulted in "the beginning of covert Jewish efforts." A direct result of these covert Israeli-Iranian relations resulted in a strain on U.S.-Israel relations in 1980 during the Carter Administration.<sup>138</sup> One of the reasons Israel was willing to agree to these covert relations with Iran was because there were almost 8,000 Jews living in Iran in which they emerged in "every aspect of Iranian life." This is something that the U.S. Ambassador to Iran made note of during his time in Iran.<sup>139</sup> The U.S. could not abandon Israel during the time of their secret alliance with Iran because if they did, then the Soviet Union would have become Israel's main supporter.<sup>140</sup> When Ayatollah Khomeini came to power and Bazargan was Iran's Prime Minister, one of the first things they did was cut off relations with Israel. One of the first changes Khomeini made after coming into power was to make the Israeli Mission in Iran become the PLO Mission.<sup>141</sup> Khomeini's intention of cutting off relations with Israel was to try and make a "wedge between Israeli and U.S. interests in Iran."<sup>142</sup>

After the 1979 revolution in Iran, the Shah fled the country. Kissinger had worked with President Carter on trying to get the Shah to come to the U.S. At first President Carter agreed to the request but then reversed his opinion stating that it might cause a bad reaction from Ayatollah Khomeini and his supporters back in Iran.<sup>143</sup> However, when the Shah was diagnosed with cancer, President Carter reluctantly allowed the Shah to come to the U.S. for his treatment. This angered many people

within Iran. As a form of retribution for allowing the Shah to enter the United States, a group of Iranian students overran the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and took Americans as hostages. As a result of the hostage crisis President Carter pressured the Shah to leave the United States. The Shah left the U.S. and went to Panama and finally to Egypt where he died on July 28, 1980.<sup>144</sup>

The hostage crisis and the Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan forced the United States to take a new policy approach to the Middle East. In President Carter's 1980 State of the Union address he announced this new position as the following:

[a]n attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.<sup>145</sup>

This became known as the Carter doctrine and led to "direct U.S. military intervention in the Gulf."<sup>146</sup>

Four months into the hostage crisis Khomeini announced that he wanted Iran to continue normal relations with the United States.<sup>147</sup> After the hostage crisis, President Reagan tried covertly to deal with the Khomeini. However, when it was discovered, they received a lot of backlash.<sup>148</sup> In 1983 the United States was possibly looking to mend relations with Iran. Iran was going to pay \$26 million for the U.S. Embassy. This payment was more of a symbolic gesture.<sup>149</sup> However during this period, many Iranians were becoming tired of the anti-American slogans. As a way to show that Iran was still against the U.S., Iran began focusing on their terrorist group proxies, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon.<sup>150</sup>

In 1983, there was a terrorist attack on the U.S. Navy barracks located nearby Beirut International Airport. During this attack, 241 U.S. Marines were killed. Also on this day there was an attack on a French military center in Beirut. A month later there was a terrorist attack in Tyre at an Israeli military center in which 67 people were killed. When asked about these terrorist attacks President Reagan stated that he did not know who was responsible for these attacks. However, Secretary of Defense, Casper Weinberger, stated that Iran was directly involved in these attacks. At this time the United States did not have a clear response of how to respond to Iran.<sup>151</sup> Behrouz Souresrafil, author is *Khomeini and Israel*, states the following:

Khomeini believed that the only effective means against the industrial and military power of the West is terrorism and that Western democracy is defenseless. Thus terrorism became the major foreign policy of the Khomeini Regime.<sup>152</sup>

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 the President of Iran, Mohammad Khatami, condemned the attacks and held a vigil to show their solidarity with the American people. However shortly after this, President Bush named Iran one of the countries in the “axis of evil.”<sup>153</sup>

On May 8, 2006 President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sent a letter to President Bush. This marks the first formal and official communication between the United States and Iran since 1979. According to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, there is nothing significant in the letter and the majority of the letter critiques U.S. foreign policy. There is only one time in the letter that President Ahmadinejad mentions the nuclear issue. He goes on to state that any development in the nuclear field is

“portrayed as a threat to the Zionist regime, which, of course, he means Israel. Is not scientific R & D one of the basic rights of nations?”<sup>154</sup>

In 2006 President Bush was receiving a lot of pressure from Israel to harden his stance on Iran. Israel would have liked the United States to fully commit to bombing Iran if they did not stop their nuclear program. According to Israel’s security doctrine with the United States, Israel is to be the dominate country militarily in the region. If Iran was to gain nuclear capabilities it would change Israel’s status in the region. One of the “fears” of direct negotiations with Iran is that it would give the impression that the United States would “legitimize the theocratic regime” and possibly degrade Israel’s status as a strategic ally in the Middle East. There was fear from the International community that President Bush subsided to the pressure from Israel. Leaders from the International community were open to dialogue with Iran instead of using military action.<sup>155</sup>

The 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) stated that Iran stopped its nuclear weapons program in 2003. The findings of the NIE are a stark contrast to the policy taken by the Bush administration. The NIE stated that while the timeline for Iran to acquire materials necessary to build a bomb has not changed, the intentions for Iran’s nuclear program has changed.<sup>156</sup>

The NIE “represents the consensus view of all 16 US intelligence agencies.”

Three important findings came from that report. They are the following:

1. It expressed “high confidence” that Iran’s nuclear weapons program stopped in 2003. This is different than what was reported in the 2005 report stating that the program was continuing.
2. The report stated with “moderate confidence” that Iran has not resumed its nuclear weapons program as of mid-2007. One of the reasons was the result of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. According to the Swiss legation in Tehran, they stated that Iran “would be open to a bilateral strategic dialogue with Washington.”
3. The nuclear program for uranium enrichment for civilian purposes is still open.<sup>157</sup>

Despite the report, Stephen Hadley, National Security Advisor, and President Bush stated that “U.S. policy towards Iran would not change.” Bush said that Iran was “a danger to the world.” Instead President Bush used this as a time to gain more international support for sanctions against Iran. As a result of the Bush administration not altering their policy on Iran, there were calls regarding a policy change towards Iran. During the 2008 Presidential campaign, Senator Hillary Clinton and Senator Obama stated that they support having negotiations with Iran.<sup>158</sup>

After the 2009 election, Khamenei was “firmly opposed” to direct talks with the United States.<sup>159</sup>

According to U.S. National Security Advisor Tom Donilon, he stated

Washington's opinion of Iranian government as the following:

This is a regime that offers nothing to its young burgeoning population, and which employs intimidation and violence to remain in power-the same recipe for unrest that has fueled the Arab Spring...Iran has failed in its cynical attempts to take advantage of the Arab Spring, which, to put it mildly, has been unkind to Iran.<sup>160</sup>

However this is not the best assessment because it does not leave the door open to possible cooperation on common issues.<sup>161</sup>

Since President Obama came to office in 2009, he has offered to "hold unconditional negotiations with Iran." He had sent a private letter to Ayatollah Khamenei. The election of President Rouhani in Iran in 2013 brought this new wave of sentiment in Iran. President Obama wanted to show that he differentiated himself from the previous administration and wanted to show "his belief in Tehran's political legitimacy and that the administration did not have a policy of regime change."<sup>162</sup>

"The future of relations between Iran and the United States is highly uncertain."<sup>163</sup> Since there are no formal diplomatic relations between the United States and Iran, it creates restrictions on what can be accomplished. Some of the issues that could be resolved with direct communication would be the following:

A nuclear deal with Iran would not only resolve a primary national security challenge without war but also finally allow Washington to pivot away from that issue to others, within and outside the region that had been subordinated for over a decade.<sup>164</sup>

Iran's nuclear program has been a threat to U.S. security, however "there has never been a viable military option for checking the country's nuclear ambitions, whether it was Israel acting alone or a U.S.-led coalition."<sup>165</sup>

The United States believes that by achieving the nuclear agreement with Iran, it could lead to greater cooperation between the two countries.<sup>166</sup> The deal may allude that it is acceptable for Iran to have a nuclear program. Also it may lead to Iran gaining power in the region where for the past several years Saudi Arabia has been in power.<sup>167</sup> It is important to note that "Neither President Obama nor President Rouhani can provide a guarantee to secure the deal's implementation path after they leave office in 2016 and 2017."<sup>168</sup> Future leadership of both countries will affect the implementation and the future of the deal. The deal will also have a different outlook if Ayatollah Khamenei is no longer the Supreme Leader. "Failures at reform could presage a similar, troubling transfer of presidential power in 2017."<sup>169</sup>

It is important to note that according to the findings of a University of Maryland phone poll "showed 62 percent of Iranians don't trust the United States to implement the agreement." Additionally, a February 2016 Gallup poll, "showed only 30 percent of Americans favor the deal, with 57 percent opposed." It is important to note that a majority of Iranian's parliament favored the nuclear agreement, where as "a majority of the United States Senate" opposed the deal.<sup>170</sup> According to Foad Izadi, an associated professor at the University of Tehran, the hardliners in Iran are the minority while the hardliners, referring to ultra conservatives, in the U.S. are the majority.<sup>171</sup>

## What is the Future Role the U.S. Can Play in Bettering Relations Between These Two Countries?

There could be a debate of who “lost” Iran. There are those who blamed President Carter for his failure to issue a “crackdown in Iran” while others blamed President Nixon and Kissinger through their encouragement of the unlimited arms deals to Iran. There are some who believe that the downfall of relations between the U.S. and Iran came during the Eisenhower administration as a result of the 1953 coup. The 1953 coup had a ripple effect on U.S.-Iranian relations and undid much of the progress that was made between these two countries.<sup>172</sup> As a result of President Obama’s approach to dialogue, the United States now has some, even though not official, lines of communication with Iran as a result of the JCPOA.

What the United States needs to “understand is the role of religion and clerics in political equations of Iran and the region.”<sup>173</sup> Previously the United States has spent too much of its resources focusing on “regime change” within Iran.<sup>174</sup> The most powerful structure in Iran “is the Shia Cleric Organization.”<sup>175</sup> While political leaders in Iran have some influence in shaping policy, the real authority comes from the Supreme Ayatollah and the Shia religious leaders. President Obama understands this approach and has tried building a relationship with President Rouhani as a way of using his power and influence the Supreme Leader.

Instead of focusing on “regime change” the United States should shift its attention to other issues that could possibly lead to more cooperation with Iran. These issues include Palestine, working on “engaging moderate Islamists, and pursuing a regional security pact.”<sup>176</sup> Other issues include making sure Israel does not carry out

military action against Iran which will only make the situation in Iran and the region worse. Another issue is to improve Iranian security and trying to keep stability in the country.<sup>177</sup>

During the Reagan administration, the U.S. used Israel as a back channel to communicate with Iran. With the new JCPOA, this could be used as another back channel route in which the United States, Israel and Iran could communicate and dialogue about security issues.

Presently the United States' relationship with Israel is not the strongest as it has been with previous Presidential administrations. The current military arms deal that is being negotiated shows that the United States is still committed to providing Israel with the defense and security it needs to defend itself. While the United States can continue to show that they support the security of Israel there many Israelis' who believe that the United States is turning against Israel. In a poll conducted by the Rafi Smith Institute, the question asked to participants was whether they believed if "the Western world is against Israel." Of all of the participants, 63 percent of those who were under the age of thirty-four, agreed with this statement.<sup>178</sup>

Israel has been the United States' primary ally in the Middle East since the 1980s. With President Obama's approach to dialogue it has opened the possibility that the U.S. could rebuild their relationship with Iran. With this approach to dialogue, Israel is starting to believe that they are losing their status as the United States closest ally in the Middle East. Granted it would not happen overnight, but slowly the United States and Iran could rebuild their relationship and possibly rebuild an alliance. Improved U.S. Iranian relations do not necessarily mean that Israel loses its status as

America's closest ally in the region. It means that the U.S. is willing to work with countries that were at one time considered enemies. If the U.S. and Iran rebuild their relationship, the U.S. could act as the middle man and help Israel and Iran rebuild their strategic alliance. It will be up to President Elect Trump if these initiatives, such as the JCPOA and the MOU (if it is not signed before President Obama leaves office), will continue to be implemented.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

The Millennial generation of both Israel and Iran are the future of their countries. Even though Millennials from Israel and Iran are both part of the same generation, it does not mean that they share the same outlook on the world and current events. In order to understand different generations within Israel and Iran generational theory will be applied. Each generation affects the generation that comes after it and not every generation shares the same outlook. With that being said, the Millennial generation of Israel is strikingly different than the Millennial generation of Iran.

#### Generational Theory

The definition that will be used to define a generation will be the one presented by William Strauss and Neil Howe in their book, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069*. Strauss and Howe define a generation as “a cohort group whose length approximates the span of a phase of life and whose boundaries are fixed by peer personality.”<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that Strauss and Howe talk about generations in relation to American history. According to Morley Winograd and Michael D. Hais in their book *Millennial Momentum: How a New Generation is Remaking America*, “hard evidence for the existence of generational cycles in this part of the world [the Middle East] is thin.”<sup>2</sup> However the definition can still be applied to generations living in Israel and Iran.

There are two key phrases from Strauss and Howe's definition of “generation.” They are “phase of life” and “peer personality.” Each generation's “phase of life” is broken into 22 years.<sup>3</sup> The second important phrase is “peer personality” which

essentially defines the characteristics of one generation from the next. There are three important factors that define “peer personality.” They are “common age location,” “common beliefs and behavior,” and “perceived membership in a common generation.” Historically, it has been those on the “social periphery” who play a significant factor in determining a generation’s peer personality.<sup>4</sup>

The year in which a person is born and the year in which s/he comes to age are important in defining the “common age location” of a generation.<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that not all members of a generation share the exact same common beliefs. “Generational awareness” is important to each generation because not only does it define the current status or state of a generation, it also lays important groundwork for the future expectations of a particular generation.<sup>6</sup> The Millennial generation defined by Strauss and Howe are those born from 1982 onward. Winograd and Hais define the American Millennial generation as those people being born between 1982 and 2003.<sup>7</sup> This age range will be used for defining the Millennial generation of both Israel and Iran.

Strauss and Howe state that social moments are critical to defining a generation. They define social moments as “an era, typically lasting about a decade, when people perceive that historic events are radically altering their social environment.” Strauss and Howe divide social moments into two categories; secular crises and spiritual awakenings. Secular crises occur “when society focuses on reordering the outer world of institutions and public behavior.” Spiritual awakenings occur “when society focuses on changing the inner world of values and private behavior.” According to Strauss and Howe, “secular crises and spiritual awakenings never occur back to back.” They often

occur two generations apart from one another and alternate between secular crises and spiritual awakenings. What defines a social moment is the type of response that results from a particular moment.<sup>8</sup>

There are four types of generations that occur throughout history in a defined order. It is within each of these generational cycles that a generation develops unique characteristics and “its own unique type of peer personality.”<sup>9</sup> These four types of generations include Idealist, Reactive, Civic and Adaptive. Strauss and Howe define each generation as the following:

1. A dominant, inner fixed Idealist Generation grows up as increasingly indulged youth after a secular crisis; comes of age inspiring a spiritual awakening; fragments into narcissistic rising adults; cultivates principles as moralistic midlifers; and emerges as visionary elders guiding the next secular crisis.
2. A recessive Reactive Generation grows up as underprotected and criticized youth during a spiritual awakening; matures into risk-taking, alienated rising adults; mellows into pragmatic midlife leaders during a secular crisis; and maintains respect (but less influence) as reclusive elders.
3. A dominant, outer fixed Civic Generation grows up as increasingly protected youth after a spiritual awakening; comes of age overcoming a secular crisis; unites into a heroic and achieving cadre of rising adults; sustains that image while building institutions as powerful midlifers; and emerges as busy elders attacked by the next spiritual awakening.
4. A recessive Adaptive Generation grows up as overprotected and suffocated youth during secular crisis; matures into risk-adverse, conformist rising adults; produces indecisive midlife arbitrator-leaders during a spiritual awakening; and maintains influence (but less respect) as sensitive elders.<sup>10</sup>

Each generation has its own corresponding era. As stated above each generation spans about twenty-two years. Strauss and Howe define these eras as the following:

1. An Awakening Era (Idealists coming of age) triggers cultural creativity and the emergence of new ideals, as institutions built around old values are challenged by the emergence of a spiritual awakening.
2. In an Inner-Driven Era (Reactives coming of age), individualism flourishes, new ideals are cultivated in separate camps, confidence in institutions declines, and secular problems are deferred.
3. A Crisis Era (Civics coming of age) opens with growing collective unity in the face of perceived social peril and culminates in a secular crisis in which danger is overcome and one set of new ideals triumphs.
4. In an Outer-Driven Era (Adaptives coming of age), society turns toward conformity and stability, triumphant ideals are secularized, and spiritual discontent is deferred.<sup>11</sup>

Strauss and Howe also discuss a “fourth turning” which occurs about every 80 years. The “fourth turning” forces a nation to confront “its most fundamental challenges.” Winograd and Hais describe the “fourth turning” as a confrontation between those who want to uphold the status quo of a country’s ideals and those who want to take the country to a new direction.<sup>12</sup>

The events that lead to a “fourth turning” are summarized by Winograd and Hais as the following:

1. “Catalyst”: This is an event that dramatically changes the mood and direction of a country.
2. “Regeneracy”: This usually occurs within three years of a catalyst event. During this time the new direction in which the country is going due to the catalyst movement is seen as the way of moving forward.
3. “Climax”: This event usually occurs about midway of the fourth turning process. This event brings about new social and political ideals.
4. “Resolution”: Results in a defining moment that brings about new clear order.<sup>13</sup>

At the beginning of each “fourth turning” there is a moment of fear, uncertainty, and doubt which Winograd and Hais call the “year of FUD.” “Periods of FUD filled with harsh dissent and rancor have occurred early in every fourth turning.”<sup>14</sup> The Millennial generations of Israel and Iran have each experienced periods of FUD. For the Israeli Millennial generation the period of FUD was the time period following the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The Iranian Millennial generation’s period of FUD was breakout of the Green Revolution.

#### The Millennial Generation of Israel

Since the modern state of Israel was created in 1948 and applying Strauss and Howe’s generational theory there have only been three generational cycles within Israel. The modern state of Israel was created at the end of the Second World War as a Jewish homeland. There is this protective sense about the people of Israel even though those who came to the country as Holocaust survivors are now elderly and dying. The

generations of Israel do not follow the linear pattern set by Strauss and Howe, but they do share characteristics of each type of generation.

According to the CIA World Factbook, the median age for men in Israel is 28.9 years and the median age for women is 30.2 years. Those between 25 and 54 years old make 37.13 percent of the country's population while those between the ages of 15 and 24 make up 15.5 percent of the population.<sup>15</sup> It is also important to point out that the CIA World Factbook includes those who are living in the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem as part of Israel's total population. These areas of lands were annexed by Israel in the 1967 war and are borders that are heavily disputed. The makeup of the population who live in the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem is important when discussing the make-up of the Millennial generation of Israel.<sup>16</sup>

When defining an Israeli Millennial one would have to consider whether Palestinians who are living in Israel are taken into account. Many studies and polls conducted about Israeli youth may not include the Palestinian population. This population represents a different viewpoint of current events. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of Arabs/Palestinians living within Palestine in 2016 is 4,816,503.<sup>17</sup> Out of this population, 39.4 percent of this population is between the ages of 0 and 14 years old while the population of those between the ages of 15-29 make up almost 30 percent of the Palestinian people living within Palestine. It is also important to note that of the total Palestinian population living within Palestine 41.5 percent of them are refugees. It is important to note the Palestinian make-up of Israel because it is not clear whether the Millennials of this

population are considered when gathering data on the youth population of Israel. Since the Arab population makes up almost 25 percent of the total population of Israel, this is a significant portion that should have their opinions heard. In the make-up of the youth in Israel it is uncertain whether the 30 percent of Palestinian youth living within Israel are taken into account of the total youth population of Israel.<sup>18</sup>

With the ongoing conflicts Israel is having with Gaza, the West Bank and Proxy groups such as Hezbollah, the Millennial generation has become more conscious of national security issues. In an article published by DefenseOne.com it states that the youth of Israel are “more conservative than the current generation of Israeli leaders.”<sup>19</sup> Two-thirds of first time voters within Israel described their political affiliation as “right-winged.”<sup>20</sup> According to a poll conducted by the Rafi Smith Institute published on ynetnews.com in May 2014, it showed that 58 percent of Israelis to the age 35 described their political affiliation as “right-winged.”<sup>21</sup> The right-wing party of Israel includes the current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud party, and takes a firm stance against the Iranian nuclear deal. According to the same poll only 21 percent of those up to the age of 34 participated in political activity in 2013. Only 22 percent of those polled from the same age bracket described their political affiliation as “left-winged” and 20 percent described their political affiliation as being towards the middle.<sup>22</sup>

A survey conducted by Panels Folitiks in 2012 of first time Israeli voters showed that a majority of them, 69 percent, aligned with the right or right of center politically. Only five percent of those surveyed aligned with the political left and 14 percent aligned with the political center. The candidate that received the most votes

from this selected survey was Benjamin Netanyahu, with 32 percent. The survey projected that 87 percent of the young people who participated in the survey were going to vote in the upcoming elections.<sup>23</sup>

Panels Folitiks conducted another survey for the Parliamentary elections in Israel for 2015. The survey consisted of 300 first time youth voters. Their findings are consistent with their 2012 findings, that the youth are aligned more with the political right. From this survey 18 percent of those surveyed supported candidate Yair Lapid and 26.5 percent of the youth supported the Likud party.<sup>24</sup>

One of the reasons for this trend among Israeli youth to lean more to the right is because of the environment in which they lived. They started to come of age during the second intifada, 2000-2005, and they feel that their sense of security has been threatened.

The DefenseOne.com article describes a hypothetical timeline of an Israeli who would be 30 years old today and the events that s/he would have witnessed and experienced during his/her short life. The timeline is described as the following:

He was 10 when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat met at the White House to sign the Oslo Accords; 16 when the Second Intifada erupted; 18 when Israel began constructing a security barrier with the West Bank (the age when Israelis enter mandatory military service); 21 when Israel withdrew its soldiers and settlers from the Gaza Strip; 24 when Israel and Hamas went to war in Gaza. His childhood was marked by the promise of peace; his teenage years by intense violence; his early adult life by security policies, separation, and sporadic conflict.<sup>25</sup>

The assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was the beginning of the year of FUD for Israeli Millennials. Any chance of peace was taken from them. Israeli Millennials were just entering their teenage years about this time, and they have constantly lived in times of violence and where they were under threat of attack. As a result they grew up to have a mindset that was heavily focused on fear and security, which affects their outlook on current world events and their perspective of their Arab neighbors.

From this description of a young Israeli's life one could see why this generation would be more security focused and more right leaning. They feel that their daily existence is continuously threatened and are in constant "flight or fight" mode. According to Strauss and Howe's different types of generations, the Israeli youth would fit into the "Adaptive Generation." Referencing the "snapshot" described above of a typical Israeli youth they have grown up in nothing but a constant state of war and fear. Before they had a chance to grow up they lost any hope of seeing a peace process with

the assassination of Rabin and the constant breakout of war between Israel and their neighbors such as Palestine and Proxy groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah. This also relates to the Outer-driven era in which society tries to find conformity and stability. The Millennials find security through stability. With the youth's shift towards security and strong leadership this matches the characteristics of an outer-driven era and adaptive generation.

Tamar Hermann, a senior fellow at the Jerusalem-based Israel Democracy Institute, stated in a *Los Angeles Times* article in 2013 that "today's Israelis grew up in dark, dark times. They missed the short-lived elation of the [1993] Oslo peace accords. They did not experience the hope." The Israeli youth did not grow up knowing Israel's pre-1967 borders. It is with this upbringing and living in an environment that is always under constant threat from its neighbors that "young Israelis as a whole are less tolerant of minorities, less committed to democracy and more prone to violence." According to a survey conducted in 2011, Israelis polled between the ages of 15 to 18, "found 60% preferred "strong leaders" to the rule of law and 70% said security concerns trump democratic values."<sup>26</sup> Since the Millennials in Israel are focused on security issues they are more likely to support the annexation of the West Bank. This position is held by Naftali Bennett who is an up-and-coming political leader within Israeli's conservative party. He also holds the position that he would not extend Arab citizens of Israel civil rights.<sup>27</sup>

In a recent poll conducted by the Israeli Democracy Institute in March 2013, only 29 percent of Israelis between the ages of 18 and 29 years old believe that there is any chance that President Obama could bring a breakthrough to the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict.<sup>28</sup> This prospect for a breakthrough increased as the age of participants increased in age.<sup>29</sup>

Edmund Sanders and Batsheva Sobelman's *Los Angeles Times* article states that there is a noticeable change of the youth generation of Israel today from its previous generation before which was more liberal and secular. One contributing factor to this change is the effectiveness of the conservative political parties in Israel. In the 2013 elections, conservative parties received 40 percent of the youth vote whereas the more left leaning parties received only 10 percent of the vote from the same age group.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, 30 percent of Israelis to the age of 34 define themselves as "ultra-Orthodox."<sup>31</sup> Sanders and Sobelman state in their article that 15 percent of Israelis between the ages of 15 and 24 define themselves as ultra-orthodox along with "nearly a third of Jewish first-graders."<sup>32</sup>

However, there are some, not many, who have a hopeful outlook for the Millennial generation of Israel. Uri Savir, who "served as Israel's chief negotiator of the Oslo Peace Accords" has a different opinion of the youth generation of Israel. He is more hopeful for their future. He acknowledges that they grew up in a time in which Israel was entrenched in regional conflict and that this generation has not known peace with the Palestinian settlements. He hopes that this young generation who are technologically savvy and ambitious will realize that their Palestinian neighbors share the same aspirations they have. He states that peace is a "generational issue" and hopes that one day this young generation will be able to experience that peace.<sup>33</sup>

## The Millennial Generation of Iran

According to a *Time* magazine article titled “Is Iran finally ready for change?” it states that 70 percent of the population within Iran was not born during the time of the 1979 revolution. This means they do not have the same connection with the current regime structure as their parent’s generation. Recent trends in Iran point that the younger generation is wanting their country to move in a more moderate direction. They are “eager to engage the outside” world.<sup>34</sup> Winograd and Hais state that according to Howe, the Millennial generation of Iran is comparable to Generation X, or the Thirteenth Generation, in the United States. This is the generation that was born between 1961 and 1981, and is characterized as a Reactive generation which is “pragmatic, individualistic, commercial and anti-ideological.”<sup>35</sup> However with the events that have occurred in Iran within the past several years, the millennial generation has more characteristics of an Idealist generation than a Reactive generation.

According to the CIA World Factbook the median age in Iran is 28 years old and those between the ages of 15 and 24 make up 17.58 percent of the population. Nearly half, 46.87 percent, of Iran’s population is made up those between the ages of 25 and 54.<sup>36</sup> With the Millennial generation making up such a large part of the population they play a significant role in shaping the future of their country. Of the population between the ages of 18 and 24, over half of them “attend some form of higher education.”<sup>37</sup> However, with Iran’s unemployment issues, many of the educated youth do not have job opportunities. About 65 percent of young Iranian voters live with their parents.<sup>38</sup> It was under the leadership of President Ahmadinejad in which the millennial generation suffered the most hardship. During his time in office, from 2005 to 2013,

the Iranian economy suffered greatly and inflation was high. It was also during this time that Iran was isolated from the world community due to President Ahmadinejad's denials of the Holocaust and strong right wing political decisions.<sup>39</sup>

As a result of their unemployment status many youth joined the reform movement. This movement, according to Reese Erlich, wanted the religious leaders of the country to loosen the rules so they could have the freedom to criticize their government without the fear of being put in prison or worse. They also wanted leaders to focus more on domestic issues instead of using money on groups such as Hezbollah.<sup>40</sup>

The Green Movement of 2009 could be seen as the awakening era of the Millennial generation. During the 2009 Presidential election, the Iranian youth were major supporters of Presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi. One aspect of his platform that they supported was that he was going to "stop the public chastity police." The youth of Iran were more focused on Mousavi's social ideas rather than his economic plans for the country.<sup>41</sup> However when the election results were reported that President Ahmadinejad won the election, the population, especially the youth, felt robbed of their vote and believed that there was election fraud. They believed that President Ahmadinejad did not receive the most votes and the true winner should have been Hussein Moussavi. As a way to make their message of dissatisfaction known to the Iranian government they decided to take to the streets to protest. This protest movement was called the Green Movement.

The youth played a significant role in the Green Movement. Their most notable signs "Where is my vote?" showed that they knew "the difference between a legitimate

democratic vote-counting system and a system where elections are used merely to legitimize and mobilize tools of the establishment.”<sup>42</sup> The incident that caught the world’s attention from the Green Movement was the video of 26 year old Neda Aghasoltan bleeding to death after she was shot by Basij militia during the June 29<sup>th</sup> protest.<sup>43</sup> As Mehrangiz Kar states in her chapter “Democracy After the Green Movement,” the Green Movement “was the result of thirty-four years of increasing social, political, and economic discontent, as well as disappointment in the overall trajectory of the Islamic Revolution of 1979.”<sup>44</sup> The 2009 Movement had more secular goals such as voting participation and wanting to participate in the international community whereas the revolution of 1979 was more focused on religious ideals than secular. It could be said that the Green Movement demonstrations may “have changed the course of events from an election protest to an enduring movement.”<sup>45</sup> The Green Movement could be seen as the “catalyst” that changed the way in which the Millennial generation viewed their worth and participation within their government.

It is important to point out that the government’s reactions towards those who participated in the Green Movement severely impacted how the populace responds towards their disapproval of the government. When millions marched in the street during the Green Movement the government responded by arresting, torturing (and several sources include incidents of rape) and killing participants who were seen as a threat to the government. This type of response from the Iranian government against its citizens took a toll on how the Iranian people responded to government acts of corruption. According to Karl Vick who wrote the *Time* magazine article “Is Iran

finally ready for change?” “people have no aspiration beyond pain avoidance and a certain level of personal comfort.”<sup>46</sup>

The Green Movement was the beginning of the Iranian population shifting in how they saw their government and the direction they wanted their government to take. They wanted a more moderate and less conservative government. The “Regeneracy” movement could be seen in the next election cycle in which President Rouhani won the election and a new shift in Iranian politics began. There were more moderates elected which led to a change in tone in how the country would be perceived throughout the world community. The importance of the Green Movement was that it “reminded people of a vital power that they held: the ability to protest.” The Green Movement paved the way for Hassan Rouhani, a moderate conservative, to win the Presidency in 2013.<sup>47</sup> In the February 2016 elections this change continued and moderates won all 30 seats in Parliament.<sup>48</sup>

During the 2013 Presidential Election in Iran, many of the reformists voted for Hassan Rouhani. The median age of the voters during the 2013 Presidential elections was 38 years old, where as the median age voter in 2009 was about 35 years old. Those under the age of 30 made up one-third of the total voting population within Iran in 2013. In 2009 voters under 30 years old made up 37 percent of the total voting population. However even with this trend, Hassan Rouhani still won a majority of the votes.<sup>49</sup>

When the nuclear agreement, “formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action” (JCPOA), was signed in Vienna in 2015, many Millennials celebrated in the streets of Tehran. One of the reasons Millennials are excited about the new agreement

is that they see this as an opportunity to connect with the rest of the world and become part of the international community. According to Elrich, the Iranian youth is influencing their country's politics in "ways that have not been seen in years."<sup>50</sup> While Millennials of Iran do oppose "U.S. aggression in the area," they would like to have better relations with the West. Of Iran's population of 80 million citizens, nearly 60 percent of the population is under 30 years of age and they are "eager to engage with the world following the lifting of most sanctions."<sup>51</sup>

The generation that participated in the 1979 revolution shows similar characteristics of today's Millennials. However the Millennials of 1979 are today considered "Principalists because they stand by the principles of the Iranian Revolution."<sup>52</sup> They are the ones who support the actions of the Revolutionary Guards and the Basji. Lastly they also remain suspicious of the West, which makes sense given that they were the ones who supported the removal of the Shah who was in many ways seen as the puppet of the United States. The youth of Iran is more focused on democratic changes to their country rather than on issues relating to national security. They want to engage more with the outside world, which they have not been able to do in the past. They want to make sure that their voice is heard when it comes to participating in their political system. More Iranians are in favor of the nuclear agreement because they will have more of an opportunity to achieve their goals of engaging with the international community.

Millennials make up the largest group of Iranians using social media and technology. Social media was an important tool during the Green Movement in 2009. "According to Internet World Stats (2015)" Iran was the country with the most internet

users in the Middle East. This study was published in 2014 and at the time Iran had 45 million internet users while Israel had only 5.9 million internet users.<sup>53</sup> A majority of the Millennial generation in Iran use social media, like the messaging service Telegram which “allows computer and smartphone users to quickly send text and photos.” Telegram was used as a way for Millennials and other Iranians to stay informed about the latest nuclear negotiations in 2015. The increased use in technology among young Iranians show that they wanted to be more connected with the world community. There are those who state that the amount of access to different internet sites under President Rouhani has improved. Increased internet access is another improvement the Millennial generation would like to see.<sup>54</sup>

Even President Obama is aware of the importance of social media within Iran. He made an address via a YouTube video in which his main audience was the Millennial generation. The message of his video was that the nuclear deal would allow them more opportunities than they ever had before. His address stated that there would be more of the following:

More cultural exchanges and chances for Iranian students to travel abroad. More partnerships in areas like science and technology and innovation. In other words, a nuclear deal now can help open the door to a brighter future for you — the Iranian people, who, as heirs to a great civilization, have so much to give to the world.”<sup>55</sup>

## Conclusion

Even though the Millennial generation of Israel and Iran are of the same age, they have a very different outlook of the world. The Millennial generation of Israel is very much focused on regional issues and national security whereas the Millennial

generation of Iran is more focused on how they can engage more in the world community.

Israel views Iran through its proxies such as Hezbollah which carries out terrorist attacks against Israel. Until the Iranian government stops supporting their proxy groups, Israeli Millennials will not change their opinion of Iran. The Millennials of Iran want their government to stop supporting these groups. When the Iranian Millennial generation comes to age in which they are ruling the country then possibly Iran will no longer be supporting terrorist organizations and relations between these two countries will be better. However that is more of a long term solution. Another long term solution would be if Israel found peace with its neighbors. There is not much of a short term solution other than the fact that maybe connecting via social media and other outlets the Millennials of Israel and Iran will be able to build better alliances.

There were also studies that showed that Iran's youth would like to have better relations with the West. However it is not clear if they consider Israel to be a part of the West, like the Millennials of 1979 associated Israel as part of the West. The Millennial generation of Israel is skeptical of the West. According to a poll conducted by Rafi Smith Institute published on ynetnews.com in May 2014, it showed 63 percent of those under the age of 34 who were surveyed stated that they believed that the "Western world is against Israel."<sup>56</sup> However with the recent nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 countries, Iran's Millennials have a different outlook towards the West, particularly with the United States. They see this as a way of rejoining the world community once more and reviving their economy for them which has been significantly impacted by the sanctions imposed.<sup>57</sup>

According to Strauss and Howe, a generation “feels the urgency and finality, conscious of the unrepeatable opportunities offered by whatever phase of life it occupies. It understands that work left undone at each phase of life may never be done by others.”<sup>58</sup> In many ways this represents the Millennial generation of both Israel and Iran. For Israel, they feel that they must act soon and take precautions to protect their future and the future of their country. The Millennial generation of Iran on the other hand feel that if they do not take a stand and create greater opportunity for better rights and engagement with the international community then the generation following them might not take the initiative.

## CONCLUSION

Israel and Iran are far from having the strategic partnership they once had sixty years ago. Previous Israeli Prime Ministers such as David Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir were willing to negotiate and have covert deals with Iran even though Iran only gave Israel de facto recognition. Even Menachem Begin negotiated with Khomeini in the early 1980's regarding weapons sales. The shift in policy Israel had towards Iran started when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin started using harsher language towards Iran. Although he knew of the historic past between these two countries, he wanted to make known to the rest of the world that he did not approve of the leadership and policies of Iran. Benjamin Netanyahu has continued with the same policy approach and does not have any ambition of trying to revive Israel's strategic relationship with Iran.

It was under the leadership of the Shah that Israel and Iran had the closest relationship. With rise of Khomeini in 1979, the relationship, while it still existed covertly, quickly deteriorated. Iran has had a few moderate Presidents over the past 30 years, such as Hasemi Rafsanjani and Mohammad Khatami, but much of the progress these Presidents worked towards became null and void after the rise of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. He took a hardline conservative approach regarding Iran's foreign policy, especially towards Israel. It is the Supreme Leader, Khomeini, who holds the ultimate power in Iran regarding policy. Khomeini was open to negotiating with the United States regarding nuclear issues. However, when it came to formally approving the JCPOA, he left it up to the decision of parliament that way he officially was not tied to this deal.

One of the reasons Israel and Iran were once allies was because they are both non-Arab countries in the Middle East. This fits with Ben-Gurion's Periphery Doctrine, which was to create alliances with other non-Arab countries in the Middle East. Today, Netanyahu has turned against the Periphery Doctrine and is creating his own security doctrine. Throughout Iran's history, and up to the 1970's, there was a significant Jewish population living in Iran. The Jews of Iran embedded themselves into Persian culture. The safety of Jews living in Iran was one of the main reasons Israel continued their strategic partnership with Iran for as long as they did after the rise of Khomeini. However, the Jewish population living in Iran today makes up less than one percent of Iran's total population.<sup>1</sup>

Recently there has been a change in dynamic regarding the United States' relationship with Israel and Iran. The United States' relationship with Israel has become tense over the past several years. While the U.S. is Israel's strongest supporter of economic and military aid, they have had less influence in persuading Israel to negotiate with their neighbors. Now the United States is willing to negotiate with Iran regarding their nuclear program. This has led Israel to wonder if the United States is shifting its focus away from Israel and trying to form better alliances with other countries in the region.

The Millennial generation offers a glimmer of hope that relations between Israel and Iran could improve. As stated earlier, Israel views Iran via their proxies, such as Hezbollah. No longer aiding Hezbollah is a priority for the Millennials of Iran. Iranian Millennials want their government to stop supporting this terrorist group and to invest that money into the Iranian economy. If this change does not occur under current

leadership, it will be changed once Millennials rise to positions of power. The Iranian Millennials, unlike the Israeli Millennials, have been turning away from the hardline political leaders and favoring more moderate leaders.

Regarding humanistic values, Millennials of both Israel and Iran want a future where they feel safe, secure from internal and external threats and have a sense of hope for the future. They approach these goals from different angles. The Millennial generation of Israel could be described as an “Adaptive” generation because they have grown up in nothing but war and fear. Israeli Millennials find their answer in security by electing leaders who take a hard stance on security issues, such as Benjamin Netanyahu. They are aware of their outside threats such as proxy groups such as Hezbollah. Until Israel no longer feels threatened from Hezbollah, Millennials have no intention of trying to rebuild their relationship with Iran.

The Iranian Millennials have goals of becoming more involved in the international community. The sanctions that have been placed on Iran have negatively impacted this generation. This is a country where half of those between the age of 18 and 24 “attend some form of higher education.”<sup>2</sup> This is a highly educated generation that has no outlet in which they can use the skills they gained in school. With the new nuclear agreement they see this as a moment that will allow them more opportunities to engage with the international community, which fits their Idealist generation cycle. It is this Idealist mentality that could be the motivating factor that could start the process of rebuilding their strategic relationship with Israel.

## ENDNOTES

### Chapter One

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## Chapter Four

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## Conclusion

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