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NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE
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**IRANIAN WELTANSCHAUUNG AND ITS RELEVANCE
TO U.S. NATIONAL STRATEGY**

by

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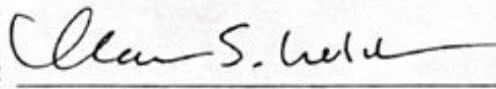
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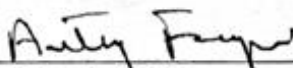
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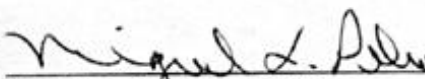
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ABSTRACT

Understanding the world view, or *weltanschauung*, held by Ayatollahs Khomeini and Khamenei is the key to designing effective US national strategy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran. Although Khomeini died over 30 years ago, his world view lives on through his disciple, Khamenei, now ruling the country. Khomeini and Khamenei's world view stymied every US administration since President Carter, and contemporary administrations continue to struggle with developing strategies to counter Iran's ceaseless war on America. To date, no national strategy has achieved the *ends* of rolling back Iranian revolutionary expansionism, global terrorism, and pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. Overwhelmingly, the paramount weakness found in US strategy is failure to adequately understand the operating environment, namely, failure to comprehend Iranian decision making—how they think and what they believe. Consistently, the United States treats Iranian decision makers as simple rational actors that mirror US ways of thinking rather than attempting to see world the through an Iranian lens—the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the memories of over 882 US Servicemen and Servicewomen killed by proxy forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the lives of more than 77 US Citizens taken hostage by the Iranian Regime—some of which remain in captivity to this day.

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This analysis was made possible by the contributions of experience and expertise of Dr. Anthony Feagin, Dr. Mark Luce, and Mr. Fouad Ghorra. The counsel and encouragement provided by Dr. Feagin kept the topic focused and research schedule on track. The historical, political, religious, and cultural perspectives given by Dr. Luce and Mr. Ghorra provided insights only possible by researchers who have lived among the peoples of the Middle East and dedicated decades to understanding the same.

Additionally, the warfighting knowledge imparted through the JAWS curriculum laid the foundation for the effort. The competence and commitment of professors Colonel Kristian Smith, Dr. Charles Davis, and Dr. David Rodearmel bestowed an unparalleled footing in strategy, operations, theory, and history.

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INTRODUCTION

First, the existence of a non-Islamic political order necessarily results in the non-implementation of the Islamic political order. Then, all non-Islamic systems of government are systems of *kufir* [infidel] since the ruler in each case is an instance of *taghut* [tyrant], and it is our duty to remove from the life of Muslim society all traces of *kufir* and destroy them.

—Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islamic Government: Velayat-e Faqeeh Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist*

Since the revolution of 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran has waged incessant war against the United States, US allies, and generally any opponents of governance by Islamic jurist or the *Velayat-e Faqeeh* doctrine.¹ War, for the Iranian Regime, mostly takes place in the shadows. Kidnapping, bombing, assassination, propaganda, proxy warfare, subversion, and missile-mine attacks are the preferred tools of the regime. Masters of the guised tools, the Iranian Regime conducted countless acts of war against the United States over the last four decades—ranging from taking 52 US diplomatic personnel hostage in Tehran to killing more than 608 US servicemen in Iraq.² However, the United States remains perplexed on how to moderate the Iranian Regime’s bellicose statecraft.

¹ *Velayat-e Faqeeh* is the Islamic doctrine propagated by Imam Khomeini where a single Islamic jurist is picked by *Allah* to provide Koranic interpretation and governmental leadership for all Muslims across the world.

² In 2019, the U.S. Department of State Special Representative for Iran, Brian Hook, stated declassified reporting indicates that Iran was responsible for the deaths of at least 608 U.S. service members in Iraq between 2003 and 2011 - equates to 17 percent of total U.S. Killed in Action (KIA) during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Jerry Dunleavy, “Iran responsible for deaths of more than 600 American troops in Iraq,” *Washington Examiner*, April 03, 2019, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/us-military-blames-iran-for-deaths-of-608-american-troops-during-iraq-war> (accessed March 14, 2020).

Every administration since President Carter struggled with Iran's war against the United States. Republicans and Democrats, hawks and doves, realists and liberals alike, each administration set forth strategies to achieve *ends* of stopping the Iranian Regime's terrorism, revolutionary expansionism, and ambitions to gain weapons of mass destruction. From strategy to strategy, approaches varied—deter, contain, compel, induce—however, no strategy achieved the *ends*. Across 40 years and seven presidents, US strategy failed. So much so, the Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism *Country Reports on Terrorism 2018* assessed Iran as now being the most prolific state sponsor of terrorism in the world. According to the report:

Iran remains the world's worst state sponsor of terrorism. The regime has spent nearly one billion dollars per year to support terrorist groups that serve as its proxies and expand its malign influence across the globe. Tehran has funded international terrorist groups such as Hizballah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. It also has engaged in its own terrorist plotting around the world, particularly in Europe . . . Tehran continued to allow an AQ facilitation network to operate in Iran, which sends fighters and money to conflict zones in Afghanistan and Syria, and it has extended sanctuary to AQ members residing in the country.³

Making matters worse, Iranian Regime expansionism reached new summits in the wake of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) crisis. An inability of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Republic of Iraq to provide security opened a doorway for unprecedented Iranian intervention. Deploying key Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps—Quds Force (IRGC-QF) elements to Syria and Iraq, the Iranian Regime mobilized tens of thousands of militia members to ostensibly shore up the failing national militaries. As a

³ Bureau of Counterterrorism, United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2019), <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Country-Reports-on-Terrorism-2018-FINAL.pdf> (accessed March 14, 2020), 9.

result, thousands of Iranian troops and Iranian-sponsored militias are now steadfastly stationed inside of Syria. Moreover, the IRGC-QF's Iraqi-Shi'ite progeny, collectively known as the *Popular Mobilization Force* (PMF), is now the dominant security provider for the Iraqi Republic. Coupled to existing relationships with Lebanese Hezbollah, the Iranian Regime has successfully extended its de facto land borders to the Mediterranean Sea.⁴

By the same token, the Iranian Regime capitalized on the downfall of governance in Yemen, constructing the southern bastion of a new Shi'ite empire. Civil war has plagued the Republic of Yemen since 2004 and the IRGC-QF has sponsored the *Ansar Allah* Shi'ite (Zaydi sect) militant group, commonly referred to as the *Houthis*, since the 1990s. However, from 2012 through 2014, *Ansar Allah* experienced catastrophic success by seizing the national capital and key ports. During the period the Iranian Regime doubled down on *Ansar Allah* providing a wealth of sophisticated weaponry previously unheard of, including anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCM), anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM), theater ballistic missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), and endless small arms. Through their newly won strongpoint and foster forces, the Iranian Regime now clutches the spigot of Middle Eastern oil production—capable of attacking the oil reserves of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia unabatedly and closing the Bab al-Mandeb (BAM) maritime chokepoint, entry point to the Suez canal, at will.⁵

⁴ Nader Uskowi. *Temperature Rising, Iran's Revolutionary Guards and Wars in the Middle East* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 77-93, 100-113.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 115-128.

Reaching even into Afghanistan, the Iranian Regime is sponsoring a historic enemy—the Taliban. Even though Iranian proxies of western Afghanistan fought alongside the Northern Alliance during the early years of the anti-Taliban effort, since at least 2007 Iran has provided extensive matériel support, training and sanctuary inside Iran, and at times even tactical coordination with the IRGC-QF. More strikingly, the IRGC-QF also trains, equips, and commands Afghan Shi'ite forces known as the *Fatemiyoun Brigade* that are currently 'forward deployed' into Syria. Albeit initially deployed to combat ISIS, the *Fatemiyoun Brigade* is likewise postured to “. . . continue to fight alongside the 'axis of resistance' to annihilate Israel.”⁶

Amidst the tidal wave of Iranian military efforts, US strategy continues to fall short in meaningfully abrogating of Iranian aggression—notably due to failure in contending with world view. Understanding the world view, or *weltanschauung*, held by Ayatollahs Khomeini and Khamenei is the key to designing effective US national strategy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran. Although Khomeini died over 30 years ago, his world view lives on through his disciple, Khamenei, now ruling the country. Khomeini and Khamenei's world view stymied every US administration since President Carter and contemporary administrations continue to struggle with developing strategies to counter Iran's ceaseless war on America.

To date, no national strategy has achieved the *ends* of rolling back Iranian revolutionary expansionism, global terrorism, and pursuit of weapons of mass

⁶ Uskowi, 77-93, 131-137; Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), *Iran Military Power: Ensuring Regime Survival and Securing Regional Dominance* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2019), www.dia.mil/Military-Power-Publications (accessed January 31st, 2020), 16, 29, 34, 63, 90.

destruction. Overwhelmingly, the paramount weakness found in US strategy is failure to adequately understand the operating environment, namely, failure to comprehend Iranian decision making—how they think and what they believe. Consistently, the United States treats Iranian decision makers as simple rational actors that mirror US ways of thinking rather than attempting to see the world through an Iranian lens—the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*.

Yet to suggest that there is a pervasive *weltanschauung* is not to assume that Iranians are a uniform block. Iran is composed of numerous ethnicities, generational groups, financial strata, etc. In fact, Persians only comprise half of the population. However, it is logical to assume that common perspectives and understandings are shared by the Iranian *Deep State* who grew to power under the leadership of Khomeini and Khamenei.⁷

This thesis attempts to frame and interpret the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung* and determine its relevance to Iranian foreign policy and US national strategy. Using history, sociology, psychology, and even theology as guides, the thesis

⁷ *Deep State* refers to internal actors or organizations that control the organs of a government without the consent or awareness of the governed, most often nested under some guise of democratic or representative government. A *Deep State* could be also be explained as a ‘State within a State’ or a ‘Shadow Government.’ Although the expression came in vogue relative to contemporary US political culture, the notion of *Deep State* stems from a Turkish security-judiciary consortium of the 1950s. Examples of a *Deep State* could include the Committee for State Security (KGB) of the latter-day Soviet Union, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Agency in Pakistan, or select corporate influences of the US. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the *Deep State* constitutes the senior clerical class led by the Supreme Leader and the supporting security wing syndicate headed the by IRGC. Robert Longley, “The Deep State Theory Explained,” ThoughtCo., August 06, 2019, <https://www.thoughtco.com/deep-state-definition-4142030> (accessed March 14, 2020).

attempts to discover new insights, perspectives, and understandings that may be of value to comprehensive strategy development.

CHAPTER 1: SPIRIT OF THE TIMES *WELTANSCHAUUNG*

Moral indignation against westernization in Iran predated the outbreak of revolution in 1979 by a few decades. It began as a series of nativistic protests, which gradually cohered in the shape of an Islamic ideology. The mythical construction of the West was the counterpart of native myth-making, and it was not exclusively or primarily a religious affair. It was rather a fairly indigenous response to Western culture domination in which Islam played a varied and fluctuating role before becoming dominant in the revolutionary crescendo of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

–Said Amir Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran after His Successors*

If there used to be a time when one could silence opponents and end all arguments by citing one verse of the Qur'an or one tradition transmitted in Arabic, now one does so relating one sentence from some European, whatever the subject under discussion.

–Jalal Al-i Ahmad, *Occidentosis: A Plague from the West*

Khomeini and Khamenei–Founding and Formation of a *Weltanschauung*

Only two men have ruled the Islamic Republic of Iran as *Supreme Leader*, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei. In western culture, Khomeini is the more recognized of the two as the architect and face of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Without Khomeini no revolution would have occurred. It was Khomeini's sermons and writings, often circulated underground, that inflamed and organized the Iranian disenfranchised. More importantly, Khomeini was the author of *Velayat-e Faqeeh* or governance by Islamic jurist doctrine—that, after the revolution, established himself as the supreme representative of *Allah* on earth and *Allah*'s guardian of Islamic law. Holding that power, Khomeini's passion, philosophy, example, and governorship

conditioned the perceptions of millions of Iranians; however, after serving as the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic for a decade, Khomeini died in 1989. Upon Khomeini's death and after serving eight years as the Islamic Republic's president, Khamenei was selected as Supreme Leader and holds the position to this present day. Khamenei, mentored and groomed by Khomeini over decades, learnedly subscribed to *Velayat-e Faqeeh* and oversaw the fruition of the doctrine over three decades.

The collective Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*, or world view, shared by the two leaders has guided Iranian internal politics and foreign policy since the formation of the Islamic Republic. Incomprehensible to western minds, this *weltanschauung* has stymied US strategies ever since. Surely not every modern Iranian shares the particular *weltanschauung*, yet for those among the regime's *Deep State*, those who paid their due to the ayatollahs and were hand-selected for a seat at the table—a prevalent world view can be deduced.

One pillar of the world view hinges on the times that Khomeini and Khamenei experienced. Experiences naturally have formative effects on human psyche. The formative era and ordeals of Khomeini and Khamenei may be best perceived through two lenses: the philosophy of *occidentosis* and the manifestation of *occidentosis* during life under the *American Shah*.

Occidentosis – Western Cultural Invasion

Tumult and transformation characterized the mid-twentieth century Middle East. The aftermath of colonialism and global conflicts brought monumental foreign encroachment into centuries old systems of Islamic governance. Moreover, thirst for

petroleum spawned western commercial incursions that solicited pacts with indigenous despots for inequitable benefits. As a counterforce, throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, nationalist and independence movements exploded and the Middle East was wracked with political, military, and economic turmoil. Amidst the flurry of insurrection and reformation, a less recognized revolt percolated—an upheaval that was less tangible yet more potent. The more subtle uprising was against the influence of western culture on the whole of Islamic society. The influence of western culture, from an Iranian perspective, was characterized as *occidentosis*.

Occidentosis is a pejorative euphemism popularized by Jalal Al-i Ahmad, a prominent Iranian writer, scholar, and activist of the 1960s.¹ By and large, *occidentosis* refers to the erosion and dilution of Islamic society and cultural sovereignty due to western geopolitics and global economics. More succinctly, *occidentosis* is the belief in deliberate western advancement of consumerism, industrialization, urbanization, women’s rights, nationalism, and moderated religion—at the cost of Islamic and Iranian traditions and identity.² Perhaps most simply put, *occidentosis* describes a guised form of western subjugation. In Ahmad’s view, *occidentosis* created an environment where “. . . boundaries throughout the world serve only to distinguish the domains of various [western] corporations . . .” and “. . . nations, languages, races, and religions . . .” become playthings of western powers.³

¹ *Occidentosis* is the English transliteration for the word Persian-Farsi word of *gharbzadegi*. Jalal Al-i Ahmad’s writings were in his native language of Persian-Farsi.

² Jalal Al-i Ahmad, *Occidentosis: A Plague from the West*, trans. r. Campbell (1962; reprint Berkeley: Mizan Press Berkeley, 1984), 65-77.

³ *Ibid.*, 75.

Ahmad's observations and theories on the playthings of western powers were unlikely to have influenced the thinking of his contemporaries, Khomeini and Khamenei. No evidence exists suggesting Khomeini and Khamenei were familiar with Ahmad's works. Nonetheless, the relevance of *occidentosis* has less to do with the propagation of Ahmad's concepts but rather that Ahmad's writings provide a supplementary and independent characterization of the *spirit of the times* that Khomeini and Khamenei grew out of. *Occidentosis* then provides an elucidative window into mid-twentieth century Iranian thinking. And this anti-western sentiment transcended Iran.

Ahmad was not the only Middle Eastern scholar espousing such observations as *occidentosis*. Neither Iranian nor Shi'ite, Seyyid Qutb seconded Ahmad's opinion—indirectly. Qutb was a prominent Islamic philosopher, writer, and political dissident eventually executed in Egypt in 1966. Qutb is best known as the thought leader associated with inspiring Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and Saudi Arabia's al Qaeda. Much of Qutb's philosophy centered around revulsion of western, namely American, culture. Having lived in the United States and traveled Europe, Qutb believed that western culture, although appealing to many Muslims, was carnal, materialistic, and ultimately perverting. Further, Qutb assessed the only way to combat the invasion of western culture was to establish true Islamic governance, meaning that existing Islam-in-name-only governments had to be torn down. And following establishment of a unified Islamic government, a new world order would be imposed.⁴

⁴ Henry Kissinger. *World Order* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), 153, 155.

Unlike Ahmad, Qutb was well known to Khomeini and Khamenei. In fact, Khamenei personally translated two of Qutb's works from the Arabic language into Persian-Farsi. In 1965 and 1972, Khamenei published the Farsi-language versions of *The Future of the Religion* and *Islam and Problem of Civilizations*. Inasmuch, in writing about Qutb, Khamenei noted, "He had personally experienced the West and its beating heart – America – and with his knowledge of Muslim countries, he knew that the blades of Western cultural swords were descending upon the roots of the Islamic tenets."⁵ Khamenei personally took Qutb's writings to heart and frequently warned of the "threat of western cultural invasion."⁶ In fact, the ayatollahs were so concerned with western influence, that Article III of the Islamic Republic's constitution includes the prescription that ". . . the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has the duty of directing all its resources to the following goals . . . #5. the complete elimination of imperialism and the prevention of foreign influence."⁷

Dread of 'foreign influence,' as documented by Ahmad and Qutb, was clearly in the air in the mid-twentieth century Middle East. Neither Khomeini nor Khamenei created this western scorn, rather both were immersed in the sociological cauldron that fostered the psychological phenomenon. Maturing their world view amidst the era of colonial roll-back, cold war obtrusion, and burgeoning globalism, the ayatollahs learned to appreciate the advancement of western culture as a deliberate effort to subvert Islamic

⁵ Yvette Hovsepian-Bearce. *The Political Ideology of Ayatollah Khamenei: Out of the Mouth of the Supreme Leader of Iran* (New York: Routledge, Taylor, & Francis Group, 2016), 33-35.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁷ Constitute Project, *Iran (Islamic Republic of's) Constitution of 1979 with Amendments through 1989*, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iran_1989.pdf?lang=en (accessed March 14, 2020).

culture. And nothing more cemented this notion into the consciences of Khomeini and Khamenei as did their own personal experiences under the imperial rule of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi; the Pahlavi dynasty was the supreme validation of *occidentosis*.

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi—The American Shah

As only two men ruled the Islamic Republic of Iran for over four decades, only one man ruled the Imperial State of Iran for roughly the four decades preceding, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, commonly called Mohammad Reza *Shah* or ‘king’ in Persian-Farsi. Following his father’s abdication in 1941, Mohammad Reza inherited monarchical rule at the age of 21 and kept in tune with his patriarch’s priorities—nationalism and modernization.⁸ However, due to American, British, and Soviet military occupations; power struggles with his prime minister;⁹ and global petroleum economics; the first years of Mohammad Reza Shah’s rule were marked by political turbulence, governmental ineptitude, and monarchical weakness.

Yet swept up in the bi-polarity of the Cold War, Mohammad Reza Shah found a benefactor to help Imperial Iran stabilize economically and militarily—the United States. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, US presidents invested heavily in Imperial Iran to create a buffer against Soviet satellite expansionism, primarily Iraq and Egypt, and

⁸ George Lenczowski, ed., *Iran under the Pahlavis* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), xvi-xxii.

⁹ During 1951 to 1953, a power struggle occurred between the Iranian imperial family and the Iranian prime minister. The prime minister, Mohammad Mosaddegh, briefly held *de facto* national power and the monarch, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, temporarily fled the country. However, Mosaddegh was ousted in a US-UK orchestrated coup due to his nationalization of Iranian-British oil interests. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who never abdicated his role as monarch, returned to Iran immediately following the coup and resumed his role as national leader.

against pan-Arab radicalism.¹⁰ During the period, the United States provided extensive aid, investment, and military assistance, including “. . . large numbers of economic, financial, military, and policy advisors.”¹¹ The relationship proved highly beneficial to the Shah, so much so that by the mid-1970s, Iran boasted the eighth largest defense budget in the world and an expanded oil income 100 times greater than that of 20 years earlier.¹²

Still all was not well *outside* of the palace. In addition to the introduction of western patronage, the Shah also introduced western ideas—through a series of social and economic reforms known as national development plans and the 1963 *White Revolution*. Collectively the programs altered traditional Iranian society via land reforms, privatization of industries, expanded secular education, and incremental steps towards the emancipation of women.¹³ Welcomed by some sectors of Iranian society, the reforms were rejected by others. Of the rejectors, the Iranian mullah class was most offended and most vocal. In fact, at this point, Ayatollah Khomeini first entered the international stage as he “. . . perceived the Shah’s reforms as an American and Israeli agenda for Iran . . .” and Khomeini publicly condemned the Shah as an “infidel Jew” and “the American Shah.”¹⁴ Naturally, Mohammad Reza Shah did not appreciate the dissent.

¹⁰ William E. Griffith, “Iran’s Foreign Policy in the Pahlavis Era,” in *Iran under the Pahlavis*, ed. George Lenczowski (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 373, 374; Alvin J. Cottrell, “Iran’s Armed Forces under the Pahlavis Dynasty,” in *Iran under the Pahlavis*, ed. George Lenczowski (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 397, 419-425.

¹¹ Griffith, 373.

¹² Cottrell, 425; Robert B. Stobaugh, “The Evolution of Iranian Oil Policy, 1925-1975,” in *Iran under the Pahlavis*, ed. George Lenczowski (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 248.

¹³ Roger M. Savory, “Social Development in Iran during the Pahlavi Era,” in *Iran under the Pahlavis*, ed. George Lenczowski (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 97, 103, 104-110, 115, 116.

¹⁴ Hovsepian-Bearce. 6, 7.

Over the course of four months in 1963, Khomeini's condemnations and rabble-rousing triggered harsh reaction. Khomeini's theological school in Qom was stormed by security forces and two students were killed; hundreds of formerly-exempt theological students were drafted into the military; over 60 mullahs were arrested; and Khomeini himself was imprisoned until the following year.¹⁵ A few months after his release from prison, Khomeini was exiled from Imperial Iran—not to return until 1979.¹⁶

Ayatollah Khamenei shared a similar experience to Khomeini, only much worse. In the early 1960s, Khamenei was a student at Khomeini's Qom seminary and a most committed disciple. After Khomeini's banishment, Khamenei was imprisoned six times and twice internally exiled by the Shah's Organization for Intelligence and National Security, or *Sazman-e Ettelaat va Amniyat-e Keshvar* in Persian-Farsi, commonly known as the SAVAK. Formed and trained by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Israeli Mossad to serve as the Shah's secret police, the SAVAK “. . . gained notoriety for its excessive zeal in maintaining internal security.”¹⁷ In the hands of the SAVAK, Khamenei experienced months of malnourishment, solitary confinement, and torture.¹⁸ At the summit of Khamenei's repression, agents of the SAVAK also assassinated Khamenei's close friend and fellow revolutionary, Mustafa. In addition to closeness to Khamenei, Mustafa was the son of exiled Ayatollah Khomeini.¹⁹

¹⁵ Sandra Mackey. *The Iranians: Persia, Islam, and the Soul of a Nation* (New York: Penguin Group, 1996), 226.

¹⁶ Hovsepian-Bearce. 8.

¹⁷ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, *Iran, A Country Study*, eds. Glenn E. Curtis and Eric Hooglund (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2008), 276, 277.

¹⁸ Hovsepian-Bearce. 31-40.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

Aftermath

Occidentosis, reflective of the spirit of the times, and life under Mohammad Reza Shah, the personal manifestation of *occidentosis*, established the base foundation of the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*. Western culture's encroachment into Islamic lands and perversion of Islamic peoples was not lost on the ayatollahs. Moreover, western powers were reshaping the Middle East for their own interests and despots like Mohammad Reza Shah were seduced and controlled by western powers, as apparent to the future leaders of the Islamic Republic. Most keenly, the ayatollahs understood the close and personal relationship that several US presidents enjoyed with the *American Shah*, and, by extension, how the United States was directly responsible for the sufferings of Khomeini, Khamenei, and large swaths of the Iranian people. Religiously reprehensible, culturally corrupt, and politically poisoned, the United States and the west were the root of all that was wrong with Imperial Iran and the post-colonial Middle East—according to the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*.

CHAPTER 2: SHI'ITE WELTANSCHAUUNG

Thus, the view of the Shi'a concerning government and the nature of the persons who should assume rule was clear on the time following the death of the Prophet (upon whom be peace and blessings) down to the beginning of the Occultation. It specified that the ruler should be foremost in knowledge of the laws and ordinances of Islam and just in their implementation. Now we are in the time of the Occultation of the Imam (upon whom be peace), it is necessary that the ordinances of Islam relating to government be preserved and maintained. Therefore, the establishment of government is still a necessity.

–Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini (1941-1980)*

Being Shi'ite—Succession of Allah's Spirit and Glorification of Martyrdom

Greater than any other driver, the cornerstone of the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung* is Islam, namely the Shi'ite interpretation. Understandably though, western attempts to comprehend and appreciate Shi'ism overwhelmingly fall short—especially among US decision makers and those that advise them. The shortcoming has less to do with historical comprehension than it does the sociological and psychological implications. In the contemporary West, religion has slowly become a peripheral aspect of life. Yet in contrast, to countless Iranians, Shi'ism remains the core of human purpose. Therefore, no adequate assessment of the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung* can be made without some endeavor to understand what it means to be Shi'ite—to be a partisan of Ali.

Ostensibly, Shi'ism is characterized by succession of Islamic authority. In A.D. 632, when Muhammad died suddenly, the Prophet of Islam left no heir nor public

instructions regarding his succession. Contention followed immediately amongst the Prophet's companions regarding who should become the next Muslim leader, the *caliph*, and holder of religious authority. To the followers of Ali ibn Abi Talib, the first convert to Islam and husband to Muhammad's only daughter, Ali was the rightful successor. To other companions of the Prophet though, succession was the right of the Muslim that best upheld the traditions of the Prophet. Household of the Prophet or election by consensus was then the question to be settled. And at that time, due to expediency and rivalry among the companions, the 'traditions of the Prophet' adherents or *Sunnis* won the day electing the first three *caliphs*.¹

Nonetheless, in time Ali was elected as the fourth caliph by the early Muslim community. According to Shi'ite tradition, Ali was unique among the caliphs in that the Prophet declared Ali to be free from error in action or speech. Also, after Muhammad's death, Ali was the first to compile the Quran in written form. Most critically though, Ali's offspring carried the *ruh* or spirit of Allah passed down only through Muhammad's blood-line.² Nonetheless, Ali's reign lasted only five short years and ended with his own murder in the Mesopotamian village of Kufa whereupon the Sunnis, then represented by the Umayyid clan, regained political power.³

Going beyond lineage and delving into principle, the substance of Shi'ism budded with Ali's caliphate but blossomed with the martyrdom of Hussein ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib—

¹ Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, *Shi'ite Islam*, trans. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 39-42, 191.

² *Ibid.*, 40, 49, 50-54; William P. Polk. *Understanding Iran: Everything You Need to Know, from Persia to the Islamic Republic, from Cyrus to Ahmadinejad* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 69.

³ Tabataba'i, 50, 53.

second son of Ali and grandson of the Prophet. Wishing to rebel against the ruling Umayyids, the village of Kufa appealed to Hussein to reestablish authority over the region as the descendant-heir of Muhammad. Hussein answered the plea to liberate the village despite the great risk the act would inevitably elicit from the Umayyids. However, upon his arrival to Karbala, a desert plain near Kufa, Hussein met with treachery. After sending a cry for help, the Kufa village reversed loyalties and a massive Umayyid army stood waiting to entrap Hussein. Cut off from escape by the overwhelmingly superior Umayyid force and offered “allegiance or war” during a last opportunity to capitulate, Hussein instead decided to fight to the death rather than renounce his blood-line authority and divine right to rule.⁴ The precedent set in Karbala established Hussein as the “Lord of Martyrs” and he became the archetype of Shi’ism to this day—having the willingness to be destroyed rather than sinning by abdicating the veracity of Allah’s *ruh*.⁵ Hussein’s exemplar set the anchor in the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*.

Velayat-e Faqeeh—Governance by Islamic Jurist

Drawing from deep Quranic study over decades, Khomeini came to believe in a novel doctrine that he referred to as *Velayat-e Faqeeh* or Governance of the Jurist. *Velayat-e Faqeeh* was a break with Shi’ite tradition that for centuries separated religious practice from governmental administration. In essence, Shi’ites believed all governance since the disappearance of the Twelfth Imam was illegitimate.⁶ In contrast, Khomeini

⁴ Tabataba’i, 199.

⁵ Ibid., 59, 60, 196-201; Christopher De Bellaigue. *In the Rose Garden of the Martyrs: A Memoir of Iran* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005), 2-5, 9.

⁶ In Shi’ite tradition, the title of ‘imam’ is given only to those appointed by Allah with the intent that the imam be the leader and governor of all Muslims on earth. As such, only 12 imams have existed for

argued that in the absence of the Twelfth Imam, governance must be carried out by a jurist (*faqih*), as selected by *Allah*, and that the jurist's authority is commensurate with that of the Prophet and the twelve Imams. As one historian noted.

Khomeini and his supporters interpreted *vilawyat-I faqih* as investing the jurist (*faqih*) with all the political authority and powers previously vested in the Prophet and the Shi'a Imams. In the absence of the Hidden Imam, the status and the authority of the *faqih* were equivalent to that of "the Most Noble Messenger and the Imams." . . . *Vilayat* became a divine appointment that exempted the Supreme Leader as clerical jurist from any human oversight through the process of his election.⁷

Over decades then, many in exile, Khomeini convinced himself, as well as Khamenei and millions of others, in the doctrine of *Velayat-e Faqeeh*. Fundamentally, Khomeini laid his own foundation for his *weltanschauung* after realizing his own divine appointment. According to Khomeini, "The Ve-layat-e Faghih is not something created by the Assembly of Experts [senior Iranian religious council]. It is something God has ordained."⁸ Even from his first day back in Iran in 1979, Khomeini made it clear to the world proclaiming that, "I appoint the government," and disobedience to the government was now disobedience to *Allah*.⁹

In establishing the Islamic Republic of Iran, Khomeini ensured the concept of *Velayat-e Faqeeh* was written into law, namely in the 1979 constitution. Khomeini had a spectrum of autocratic powers written into the document, including overarching control stated as ". . . legislative, executive, and judicial branches in the Islamic Republic of Iran

the Shia and the 12th Imam, or the Mahdi, is said to not to have died but rather disappeared in occultation. The Mahdi is expected to return to the earth preceding the End of Days and the final judgement of Allah. See Mackey, 108-110, 233; Polk, 68-70, 73, 74, 224.

⁷ Hovsepian-Bearce. 14.

⁸ Polk, 136.

⁹ Ibid., 130.

are under the supervision of the *vali-e-faqih* and the Imam of the Islamic ummah.”¹⁰

Later, after Khomeini’s death in 1989 and Khamenei’s rise to the position of Supreme Leader, the constitution was amended to remove the position of prime minister and effectively neuter the presidential position, further consolidating all power under the Supreme Leader.¹¹ After 1989, the Supreme Leader appointed and dismissed all major senior government officials, controlled state run media, and alone held the power to declare war.¹² The constitution defined the principle as:

The Wilayah of the Just Faqih

In keeping with the principles of governance [wilayat al-’amr] and the perpetual necessity of leadership [imamah], the Constitution provides for the establishment of leadership by a faqih possessing the necessary qualifications [jami’ al-shara’it.] and recognized as leader by the people (this is in accordance with the hadith “The direction of [public] affairs is in the hands of those who are learned concerning God and are trustworthy in matters pertaining to what He permits and forbids” [Tuhaf al-’uqul, p. 176]). Such leadership will prevent any deviation by the various organs of State from their essential Islamic duties.¹³

Of note, *Velayat-e Faqeeh* did not just make Khomeini the Supreme Leader of Iran. In Khomeini and Khamenei’s world view, the doctrine established the Supreme Leader as the head of all Muslims *worldwide*—with Iran acting only as the vanguard for a global movement.¹⁴ Consistently over decades, Khomeini and now Khamenei spoke of exporting the revolution and creating unity of Muslims under a single Islamic government. According to Khomeini, “Islam is revealed for mankind . . . An Islamic

¹⁰ Mohammad Mohaddessin. *Islamic Fundamentalism: The New Global Threat* (Washington, DC: Seven Locks Press, 1993), 23.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 23-25, 29-31.

¹² *Ibid.*, 29-31.

¹³ Constitute Project, *Iran (Islamic Republic of’s) Constitution of 1979 with Amendments through 1989*.

¹⁴ Kissinger, 154, 156.

movement, therefore, cannot limit itself to any particular country.”¹⁵ In fact, this principle is even captured in the Islamic Republic’s constitution as:

With due attention to the Islamic content of the Iranian Revolution, which has been a movement aimed at the triumph of all the *mustad’afun* [oppressed] over the *mustakbirun* [oppressor], the Constitution provides the necessary basis for ensuring the continuation of the Revolution at home and abroad. In particular, in the development of international relations, the Constitution will strive with other Islamic and popular movements to prepare the way for the *formation of a single world community* (in accordance with the Qur’anic verse “This your community is a single community, and I am your Lord, so worship Me” [21:92]), and to assure the continuation of the struggle for the liberation of all deprived and oppressed peoples in the world.¹⁶

Khomeini’s Eschatology—Inducing the Return of the Mahdi

As crucial as *Velayat-e Faqeeh* is to the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*, Khomeini’s eschatological understanding is equally key. According to leading Shi’ite tradition, the law of *Allah* is interpreted by a sliding scale of expertise with *ayatollohas* and *imams* holding supreme understanding; *ayatollohas* being the highest order of Shi’ite cleric and *imams* being the appointees of *Allah* to provide leadership to the Muslim community. Of the Shi’ite imams, *Allah* ordained only twelve throughout history with the last emerging over millennium ago. Yet differing from the previous eleven imams, the *twelfth imam* is believed not to have died but rather to have been hidden away or placed in *occultation* by *Allah*. The *twelfth imam*, Muhammad al-Mahdi, then would remain in occultation until returning to vanquish evil in a final apocalyptic battle, establish global

¹⁵ Farhang Rajaei, “Iranian Ideology and Worldview: The Cultural Export of Revolution,” in *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact*, ed. John Esposito (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1990), 67, 68.

¹⁶ Constituent Project, *Iran (Islamic Republic of’s) Constitution of 1979 with Amendments through 1989*.

Islamic rule, and posture the world for the judgement of the *Last Day*.¹⁷ For the majority of Shi'ites, this eschatological description is dogma; Khomeini created none of this understanding personally.

Yet, Khomeini promulgated a slight derivative of opinion regarding the timing of the return of the Mahdi. War, mass chaos, and a number of disasters are to precede the return of the Mahdi according to tradition commonly referred to as *Mahdaviat* or *Mahdi'ism*.¹⁸ Critical to Khomeini's interpretation of *Mahdi'ism* was the concept of *intezar*. *Intezar* is the Shi'ite state of waiting for the return of the Mahdi, in steadfastness and patience. Patience was Khomeini's point of contention. Khomeini endorsed a minority point of view where the Mahdi's return could be accelerated if Muslims actively molded conditions through war and proselytization. To Khomeini, 'active' *intezar* was an eschatological reality.¹⁹

Totality—the Weight of being Shi'ite

In totality, Shi'ism may be interpreted as the anchor that holds the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung* steady in the torrent of the tempest. Although time moves on and eras shift, the rightness of the Prophet's bloodline, the exemplar of martyrdom, the understanding of Islamic governance, and the bearing of the Mahdi's return—remain

¹⁷ Tabataba'i, 189, 190, 210-214; Polk, Kissinger, 156.

¹⁸ Reza Kahlili, *A Time to Betray: A Gripping True Spy Story of Betrayal, Fear and Courage* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2010), 333, 334; Said Amir Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran under His Successors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 135; Kissinger, 156.

¹⁹ Ardalan Rezamand, "Use of Religious Doctrine and Symbolism in the Iran-Iraq War," *Journal of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society Graduate Students Association* Vol. 9, No. 1 (2010): 83-107; Arjomand, *After Khomeini*, 74, 135; Saskia Gieling, *Religion and War in Revolutionary Iran* (London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1999), 124; Henner Furtig, *Iran's Rivalry with Saudi Arabia between the Gulf Wars* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2002), 30.

constant. The elements, taken together, provide a backdrop for behavior and ways of thinking that confound western paradigms. Also, Shi'ism provides the lens for regional understanding.

CHAPTER 3: REGIONAL WELTANSCHAUUNG– MIDDLE EASTERN ENEMIES

Saudi Arabia is governed by the ‘House of Saud’, the family which has a great role in distortion of the Islamic Spirit in Saudi society. . . the Saudi monarchy has totally turned into an American satellite and Saudi Arabia has been rapidly becoming Americanized in every respect. Saudi riches such as oil and its domestic as well as foreign policy are employed to promote American interests.

–Henner Furtig, *Iran’s Rivalry with Saudi Arabia between the Gulf Wars*

Today the first qibla [direction a Muslim faces when praying] of the Muslims has fallen into the grasp of Israel, that cancerous growth in the Middle East. They are battering and slaughtering our dear Palestinian and Lebanese brothers with all their might. At the same time, Israel is casting dissention among Muslims with all the diabolical means at its disposal. Every Muslim has a duty to prepare himself for battle against Israel.

–Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini (1941-1980)*

House of Saud–Second American Puppet and Usurper of Islam

Loathing and contempt for the House of Saud, the royal monarchal family of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, pulses through the veins of the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*. Naturally, antagonism exists between the Middle East’s two most powerful nations stemming from regional hegemonic rivalry. In fact, Saudi Arabia and Iran were at odds long before Iran’s Islamic Revolution due to territorial disputes and historical ethno-religious tensions.¹ Even so, apart from politics and economics,

¹ During the late 1960s, United Kingdom Middle Eastern foreign policy underwent substantial revision. British military forces vacated the region and former British protectorates achieved full autonomy. However, territorial disputes immediately arose between Imperial Iran and Arab-led gulf states. Namely, the sovereignty of Bahrain and the Persian Gulf islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa were

Khomeini and Khamenei's assessment of the Saudis is far more egregious than just that of nation-state competition. In the world view of Khomeini and Khamenei, the House of Saud is a mortal enemy of the Islamic Revolution due to its twin sins: 1) allying with the United States and 2) holding an illegitimate mantle of Islamic guardianship as protector of Mecca and Medina, the representations of Islam.²

Perception of the first sin is entirely accurate. Along the pattern of Muhammad Reza Shah, the Saudis developed a deep cooperative relationship with the United States spanning decades. Establishing nascent economic partnerships as early as the 1930s, the ties matured into security assistance and cooperation under President Nixon's 'twin pillars' strategy. The twin pillars strategy intended to bolster the military capabilities of the Saudi Kingdom and Imperial Iran so as to offset threats imposed by Soviet Middle Eastern client-states and simultaneously provide a regional police force capable of self-securing the petroleum value chain.³ Since the 1970s, and partly due to Iran's Islamic Revolution, successive presidents have catapulted the US-Saudi armament project that now, under President Trump, has reached the magnitude of a \$110 billion defense capabilities package.⁴ The armaments did not go unnoticed by Khomeini and Khamenei;

disputed. Off-shore drilling rights in the Persian Gulf were also disputed. Political resolution on Bahrain was settled by the Saudi-led Continental-Shelf Agreement that resulted in Iran ceding its centuries-old claim to the territory of Bahrain in 1969. However, Iran chose to settle sovereignty of the disputed islands by military action and occupied Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa by force in early 1972. The three islands were and are key military territory as they reside in the Strait of Hormuz. See Faisal Bin Salman al-Saud, *Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf: Power Politics in Transition 1968-1971* (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2003), ix, x, 3, 32-35, 55, 56, 79, 98, 121-124.

² Robin Wright, *In the Name of God, the Khomeini Decade* (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1989), 165.

³ Furtig, 1-9; Amitav Acharya, *U.S. Military Strategy in the Gulf: Origins and Evolution Under the Carter and Reagan Administrations* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 21-33.

⁴ Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "Fact Sheet: Intended Sales to Saudi Arabia via Foreign Military Sales," May 20, 2017, <https://www.dsca.mil/print/1025> (accessed March 14, 2020).

as Iranians and Iranian proxies were on the receiving end of Saudi-fired and US-supplied munitions over the Persian Gulf in the 1980s and currently over Yemen.

Yet in the eyes of Khomeini and Khamenei, the second sin is of greater consequence as the House of Saud retains guardianship of Islam. Geographically, Saudi Arabia physically hosts the two holiest sites of Islam, the towns of Mecca and Medina. Faithful Muslims are required to conduct the *hajj* or pilgrimage to Mecca during their lifetime. Location then, combined with tribal-to-monarchal rule, provided the Saudis with de facto governorship of Islam. Yet to Khomeini and Khamenei, Saudi-Islamic governorship was and is unjust. Foremost, Khomeini despised the association of monarchy with Islamic leadership—as according to Khomeini’s doctrine of *Velayat-e Faqeeh* [Governance of the Jurist] Allah picked the *Jurist* to govern Islam not any king.⁵ Furthermore, Khomeini detested *Wahhab’ism*, the Saudi-fostered faction of Sunni Islam. *Wahhab’ism*, to Khomeini, was an apostate sect of Islam that Khomeini at times referred to as ‘American Islam.’ Adding even more insult to Islam, Khomeini hated the Saudi royal family for their conspicuous opulence that he equated to that of the Iranian Pahlavi family.⁶ How could the leadership of Islam live in luxury while millions of Muslims lived in squalor? In the minds of Khomeini and Khamenei, the House of Saud was simply a usurper of Islam—no different than the Omayyids that struck down Hussein.

⁵ Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini (1941-1980)*, trans. Hamid Algar (North Haledon, NJ: Mizan Press, 1981), 200, 202; Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist: Velayat-e Faqeeh*, trans. Hamid Algar (Tehran: Institute for Compilation and Publication of the Imam Khomeini’s Works), 11, 30, 34, 51.

⁶ Jacob Goldberg, “Saudi Arabia and the Iranian Revolution: The Religious Dimension,” in *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World*, ed. David Menashri (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1990), 155-160.

Israel—a Cancerous Tumor that Must Be Removed

Among the facets of the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*, perhaps the most challenging to characterize is that of dispositions towards the nation of Israel and ethnic Jews in general. Any review of Khomeini and Khamenei's works yield an inordinately prominent fascination with anti-Semitism and the destruction of Israel. Albeit, due to the ubiquity of Khomeini and Khamenei's anti-Semitic rhetoric, efforts of separating genuine beliefs from propaganda-for-the-masses may be a fool's errand. Certainly accepting anti-Israeli declarations at face value, such as "the universally recognized enemy of Islam" would provide less-than-critical appraisal.⁷ Yet Khomeini and Khamenei's consistently stated hatred for Israel cannot be dismissed simply as a contrived rallying cry. Something deeper must be at hand; something just below the skin of an engrained world view.

Needless to say, anti-Semitism in Islamic societies is pervasive apart from the beliefs of Khomeini and Khamenei, partially stemming from the example set by the Prophet Muhammad. Setting aside Qur'anic discussions, generally-accepted historical accounts of the Prophet Muhammad record great hostility towards Jews during the original caliphate. Although estimations and interpretations may differ, it is clear that the Prophet Muhammad subjugated, dispossessed, exiled, or killed the Jewish tribes of the Arabian Peninsula. Most notably around A.D. 627, after the *Battle of the Trenches*, the Prophet Muhammad ordered the beheading of between 600 and 800 males of the Jewish Qurayza tribe and directed the females and children be taken as slaves. Whether assessing

⁷ Hovsepian-Bearce. 226; Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*, 197.

the historical actions through a Sunni or Shi'ite lens, the precedent of anti-Semitism was established early in Islamic culture.⁸

Persian culture, also, held unique experiences with Jewish peoples. The depth of the Persian-Jewish relationship is well pre-Islamic yet soured significantly under Shi'ite influence. Jews and Persians have interacted for at least 2,500 years, originating during the times of Cyrus the Great. In fact, Cyrus is credited with liberating the original Israelites from Babylonian slavery. However, for the last five centuries, starting with the Safavid Dynasty (A.D. 1501-1736), Shi'ite Islam dominated Iranian culture and with it anti-Jewish sentiment increasingly propagated.⁹ The culture that nurtured the views of Khomeini and Khamenei then was not decades deep but rather centuries. Yet virulent hatred requires dramatic stimuli—circling back to the United States.

Understandably, in the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*, the line between Israel and the United States is a thin one. Hatred for the United States then, naturally extends to Israel and vice-versa. In fact, through the ayatollah's eyes the United States is responsible for the formation and sustainment of Israel. The view is a logical piecing of tangibles as the United States was the first nation to recognize the State of Israel in 1948 and since then Israel has been the largest national recipient of US foreign assistance, now totaling some \$142 billion.¹⁰ Connections were not lost on Khomeini as his writings note that without US backing, “. . . a handful of wretched Jews (the agents of America,

⁸ Tabataba'i, 152, 153.

⁹ Rouhollah.K. Ramazani, *Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 150, 158-160; Tabataba'i, 66.

¹⁰ Congressional Research Service (CRS), *US Foreign Aid to Israel*, RL33222 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2019, updated January 24, 2020), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222> (accessed March 14, 2020), 1.

Britain, and other foreign powers) would never have been able to accomplish what they have.”¹¹ Without over-sensationalizing, Khomeini’s own pre-revolutionary words may do the best justice to the expression of his consistent beliefs and views:

All of our troubles today are caused by America and Israel. Israel itself derives from America; these deputies and ministers that have been imposed upon us derive from America—they are agents of America, for if they were not, they would rise up in protest.¹²

We must protest and make people aware that the Jews and their foreign backers are opposed to the very foundations of Islam and wish to establish Jewish domination through-out the world. Since they are a cunning and resourceful group of people, I fear that—God forbid!—they may one day achieve their goal, and that the apathy shown by some of us may allow a Jew to rule over us one day. May God never let us see such a day!¹³

Likewise, Khamenei’s own words in the post-revolution era echo his views most accurately.

Moreover, they [US] planted the malignant tumour of the Zionist regime in the heart of the West Asian countries, thus creating a constant threat for regional countries. After the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, severe political and military blows were dealt to that usurping regime.¹⁴

. . . the complicated networks of global dictatorship and their satanic links to the Zionism; the Zionists and the Great Satan and the Western powers; the global arrogance spearheaded by the U.S. and Zionism; all tyrants and the Zionists, the agents of the Zionist regime; America, NATO, and Zionism; intelligence services of America, England, and the Zionist regime; the most terrorist nation; dangerous and fatal cancer; and a cancerous tumor that must be removed.¹⁵

¹¹ Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*, 47.

¹² *Ibid.*, 187.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 127.

¹⁴ Khamenei.ir, “Our Islamic power will overcome the superficial grandeur of material and corrupt powers,” excerpt from the Friday prayer sermons delivered on January 17, 2020, by Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/7318/Our-Islamic-power-will-overcome-the-superficial-grandeur-of-material> (accessed February 6, 2020).

¹⁵ Hovsepian-Bearce. 282.

Adding to the Prophet Muhammad's precedent, Persian culture, and US association, one symbolic yet tangible item also appears to contribute to the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*, Israel's 'unjust' possession of the al-Aqsa Mosque. The al-Aqsa Mosque, meaning the farthest mosque in Arabic, marks the location where the Prophet Muhammad was divinely transported during the *Night Journey* of Islamic tradition. As a result, the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem is revered as Islam's third holiest site. Although Muslims enjoy relatively open access to the mosque, at least as much as to the *Kaaba* in Saudi Arabia, Jewish governorship of the site remains a significant affront to Muslims. So much so, when Khamenei created the external wing of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in 1990, Khamenei named it the *Jerusalem Force* or 'Quds' Force in Arabic.¹⁶ Albeit the IRGC-QF possesses global responsibilities, the title indicates the IRGC-QF priority. A former QF member, reflected on al-Aqsa as such:

It was during this conflict [Iran-Iraq War] that we learned that he [Khamenei] believed we must continue to wage war until we destroyed all nonbelievers. This included, of course, the destruction of Israel. Ali Khamenei also wanted Jerusalem and the return of one of the most sacred mosques and holiest places to Muslims, the Masjid al-Aqsa.¹⁷

In Context—Usurpers and Cancers

Taken in context, the regional-adversarial aspect the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung* is nested in rivalry and struggle with two ideological and blasphemous enemies, the House of Saud and the *Wretched Jews*.¹⁸ Khomeini and Khamenei

¹⁶ Steven Ward, *Immortal: A Military History of Iran and Its Armed Forces* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 303.

¹⁷ Kahlili, 156.

¹⁸ Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*, 47.

understand the Saudi Monarchy not only as American puppets but even worse as the illegitimate keeper of the faith due to their geographic control of Mecca and Medina. More complex and possibly even more hated is Israel or ethnic Jews in general. Viewed as the original combatants against Islam and *Dhimmi* usurpers of the al-Aqsa Mosque, Israel is held in the highest contempt in the world view of Khomeini and Khamenei.¹⁹ In fact, reminiscent of Nazi Germany, Khomeini and Khamenei espoused Jewish treachery on a global scale. Needless to say, the critical linkage binding the hatred nation of the two nations, Saudi Arabia and Israel, lay in relationships with the United States.

¹⁹ Dhimmi status refers to non-Muslims living in Islamic lands. Dhimmis, commonly Jews or Christians, are responsible to pay taxes or perform certain tasks as homage and subordination to Muslims.

CHAPTER 4: WARFIGHTING WELTANSCHAUUNG– FIGHTING IN THEIR EYES

The day when the missiles of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps demolished the American base was another day of God as well [Audience chant, “Allahu Akbar”] . . . That a certain force and a certain nation has the power and the psychological capability to slap the face of an arrogant and bullying power in the world in such a way, shows that the hand of God is involved. So that day, was a day of God. Days come to an end, but their outcomes and effects prevail in the life of nations. The effects that such days bring about in the morale, outlook and path of nations will be permanent and—in the case of some of them—eternal.

—Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei, *Excerpt from Friday prayer sermons delivered on January 17, 2020*

Learning What Does Not Work—Traditional Warfare

Weltanschauung, like all points of view, grow with time. Adding to their formative world view, the wartime experiences of Ayatollahs Khomeini and Khamenei further informed and evolved their views. In September 1980, Saddam Hussein’s military swiftly attacked deep into the fledgling Islamic Republic of Iran—initiating the *Imposed War* (as the Iranians referred to the conflict).¹ The *Imposed War*, known as the Iran-Iraq War to the West, lasted eight years and gained neither nation any tangible ends. Ostensibly, contentious borders and disputed waterways sparked the Iran-Iraq War; however, underlying the territorial pretenses were Saddam’s fear of a Khomeini-style revolution spreading among the Shi’ite population of his Republic of Iraq and also Saddam’s economic opportunism seeking to annex oil-rich Iranian lands nestled

¹ Bryan R. Gibson, *Covert Relationship: American Foreign Policy, Intelligence, and the Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), 39-42.

adjacently to southern Iraq. Marked by a pendulum of terrain-focused battles, ballistic missile exchanges, chemical weapon strikes, naval skirmishes, peripheral terrorism, and massive soldier attrition, the *Imposed War* devastated Iran. Yet, the *Imposed War* further informed the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*.²

Most poignantly, the *Imposed War* confirmed to Khomeini and Khamenei, then Supreme Leader and President respectively, that the United States was conspiring against their Islamic Republic. Despite Khomeini's paranoia, in regard to the *Imposed War*—Khomeini was in fact correct. Embarking in the 1970s, the United States pursued a strategy of massive Foreign Military Sales (FMS) to balance power across the Middle East and offset Soviet clientelism. Apart from the earlier Imperial Iran and Israel, the nations of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also became massive FMS customers. Then stemming from the 1979 Iran Hostage Crisis and Iranian-sponsored terrorism in Lebanon, the United States covertly and later overtly modified the armament strategy to include sponsorship of Iraq and its war against Iran.³

Being that Iraq was a designated state sponsor of terrorism through 1984, US sponsorship initially manifest via illegal 'third-party assistance' where legal FMS

² Williamson Murray and Kevin Woods, *The Iran-Iraq War, A Military and Strategic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 44, 49, 50, 242; Edward R. Hooton, Tom Cooper, and Farzin Nadimi, *The Iran-Iraq War, Volume 1: The Battle for Khuzestan, September 1980-May 1982* (Dorchester: Helion & Company, 2016), 3; Farhang Rajaee, *Iranian Perspectives on the Iran-Iraq War* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997), 2, 4, 5, 31.

³ Acharya, 134, 135, 141, 143, 144; Saideh Lotfian, "Taking Sides: Regional Powers and The War," in *Iranian Perspectives on the Iran-Iraq War*, ed. Farhang Rajaee (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997), 15, 16, 17, 24; Reza Ra'iss Tousi, "Containment and Animosity: The United States and The War," in *Iranian Perspectives on the Iran-Iraq War*, ed. Farhang Rajaee (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997), 53.

recipients further transferred US equipment to Iraq. Jordan, along with Egypt and Saudi Arabia (to a lesser degree), provided the covert conduit for moving US equipment to Iraqi hands. US aircraft, vehicles, arms, munitions, repair items, and technical support were all made available to Iraq, starting around 1982. Later after official reestablishment of US-Iraqi diplomatic relationships, support intensified with Iraq-stationed US military liaisons-observers, satellite and aerial reconnaissance intelligence sharing, and extensions of US-backed credit.⁴ Eventually, even sharing of advanced ballistic missile technologies and dual-use commodities transpired.⁵

Apart from the greater US-Arab conspiracy, the *Imposed War* provided another experience to develop Khomeini and Khamenei's world view—the experience of US naval power. Commonly referred to as the *Tanker War*, a sub-component of the *Imposed War* consisted of a massive naval contest where both Iraq and Iran attempted to strangle each other's petroleum-based economies via sea lines of communication. With air strikes on oil-servicing seaports, cannon and missile fires against merchant oil tankers, small boat swarms of naval escort vessels, and subsurface mines for all underway, the tactics of the *Tanker War* were as diverse as those of their counterpart land battles. Applying the tactics, Iraq and Iran both scored intermittent victories for themselves and over the course of eight years, approximately 440 oil tankers were struck or damaged.⁶ Howbeit, being the hub of the global oil supply, disruption of the oil tankers triggered international

⁴ Alan Friedman, *Spider's Web: The Secret History of How the White House Illegally Armed Iraq* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993), 17, 19, 25, 26-29, 31, 33, 36, 37, 38; Acharya, 133, 134, 135, 141, 143, 144; Gibson, 77-79.

⁵ Friedman, 33, 63, 336, 337.

⁶ Lee Allen Zatarain, *Tanker War, America's First Conflict with Iran, 1987-1988* (Philadelphia: Casemate, 2008), 386.

intervention. And for Iran, the *Tanker War* brought direct confrontation with the US Navy.

As the Iranians understood the complicity of Arab states, Iranian naval attacks were not limited to Iraqi oil tankers. Iran targeted Saudi, Kuwaiti, and other Gulf States' tankers along with the Iraqis—many of which were bound for US markets. Reaching a boiling point in 1987, the United States implemented Operation EARNEST WILL. Re-flagging 11 Kuwaiti oil tankers as US registered vessels, Operation EARNEST WILL extended legal US naval protection to Kuwaiti ships. To the Iranians, the legal maneuver was strategic communications—the United States was clearly and directly entering the war.⁷

And enter the war the United States did. Coinciding to the Kuwaiti re-flagging, the United States created the 40-warship Joint Task Force Middle East (JTFME) to secure the sea lanes. Throughout roughly 12 months and spanning to 1988, JTFME would engage in the largest US naval campaign fought since World War II.⁸ Precipitated by Iranian speedboat provocations, mine strikes, and missile attacks, the United States undertook a series of naval actions known as Operations NIMBLE ARCHER and PRAYING MANTIS. Through the two punitive operations and a few protectionary skirmishes with Iranian forces, JTFME sank assorted small vessels, captured one minelayer, destroyed four offshore oil platforms, and sunk one frigate and damaged another. By the end of the battles, 20 percent of the Iranian Navy lay destroyed or

⁷ Zatarain, 55-62.

⁸ Ibid., 1; Sreedhar Kapil Kaul, *Tanker War, An Aspect of the Iraq-Iran War 1980-1988* (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1989), 58.

damaged including half of Iranian frigates. In short, JTFME decimated Iranian naval capacity.⁹

Yet one egregious act overshadowed the naval defeat, the downing of an Iranian Airbus, Air flight 655 killing 290 civilian passengers. In the midst of an on-going two-way surface melee with Iranian gun boats, the USS *Vincennes* mistook the inbound Airbus for an Iranian F-14 fighter jet and downed the aircraft. Albeit inside of Iranian territorial waters and within a commercial air corridor, in the heat of battle the unidentified aircraft appeared to be a threat. Armchair admirals may need to debate the action but Khomeini and Khamenei did not. From Khamenei's perspective in particular, the Airbus downing was deliberate and confirmed the United States as "criminals and murders."¹⁰

Cumulatively, the effects of the ground war with Iraq, the sea war with the United States, and the accidental downing of the Iranian Airbus took their toll on the ayatollahs. In August 1988, Khomeini conceded and agreed to end the war well short of his espoused goal of the removal of Saddam Hussein. Khomeini had learned that traditional war was too costly and to avoid it altogether. The *Imposed War* cost the Islamic Republic over \$69 billion and up to 1.9 million Iranian casualties.¹¹ Of the Iranian casualties, between 450,000 to 730,000 were killed.¹²

⁹ Zatarain, 155, 291, 387.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 297-314, 323.

¹¹ Murray and Woods, 44, 49, 50, 242; Hooton, Cooper, and Nadimi, *The Iran-Iraq War, Volume 1*, 3; Rajaei, *Iranian Perspectives on the Iran-Iraq War*, 2, 4, 5, 31.

¹² Anthony Cordesman and Abraham Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War Volume II: The Iran-Iraq War* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 3.

Learning What Works—Irregular Warfare

Through the devastating experience of the *Imposed War* and later observing the swiftness of the *Persian Gulf War*, or Operation DESERT STORM, the warfare aspect of Khomeini and Khamenei's *Weltanschauung* solidified. Heurism led Khomeini and Khamenei to develop strategy, operations, and tactics that overcome superior conventional militaries—especially those governed by democratic processes. Avoiding western-style pitched battle, Khomeini and Khamenei simply transitioned to applying cultural, positional, and capability strengths of the regime. From the ayatollahs' view, subversion, terrorism, and deep strike became the preferred methods of combat. The tools of the indirect approach provided either plausible deniability or strategic deterrence—both side-stepped traditional large-scale combat operations, perceived as too costly.¹³

Subversion came naturally to Khomeini and Khamenei's world view as it was subversion that brought the regime into power in 1979 and subversion corresponded to the ayatollahs' desire for 'export the revolution.' Correspondingly, subversion is well suited to the operating environment of the Middle East where, as the ayatollahs describe it, an *Axis of Resistance* naturally exists primarily made up of minority Shi'ite communities in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Lebanon. Due to the regional perception of *Shia Victimhood*, disenfranchised communities were and are susceptible to Iranian Regime ideology and support. Through propaganda, humanitarian

¹³ Ward, 316, 317; DIA, *Iran Military Power: Ensuring Regime Survival and Securing Regional Dominance*, 7-9.

assistance, military training, and weapons transfers, the Iranian Regime has organized and cultivated regional subversion over four decades.¹⁴

Subversion was so key to the ayatollah's world view that a guised discussion of subversion was even included in the Islamic Republic's constitution as:

An Ideological Army

In the formation and equipping of the country's defence forces, due attention must be paid to faith and ideology as the basic criteria. Accordingly, the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps are to be organized in conformity with this goal, and they will be responsible not only for guarding and preserving the frontiers of the country, but also for fulfilling the ideological mission of jihad in God's way; that is, extending the sovereignty of God's law throughout the world (this is in accordance with the Qur'anic verse "Prepare against them whatever force you are able to muster, and strings of horses, striking fear into the enemy of God and your enemy, and others besides them" [8:60]).¹⁵

To shepherd regional subversion more systematically, following Khomeini's death in 1989, Khamenei created a special wing of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) in 1990 called the *Jerusalem Force*, more commonly referred to using its Arabic translation as the *Quds Force* (IRGC-QF).¹⁶ As the IRGC was primarily responsible for domestic control of the Islamic revolution, the QF was tasked with external operations, namely subversion, and answered directly and solely to Khamenei.¹⁷ According to a recent speech of Khamenei:

¹⁴ Jay Soloman, *The Iran Wars: Spy Games, Bank Battles, and the Secret Deals that Reshaped the Middle East* (New York: Random House, 2016), 85; Uskowi, 17-23; Ward, 267-268; Ramazani, 157.

¹⁵ Constitute Project, *Iran (Islamic Republic of's) Constitution of 1979 with Amendments through 1989*.

¹⁶ The Arabic word for Jerusalem is *Quds*.

¹⁷ Uskowi, 2, 13, 14; Ward, 226-228; Congressional Research Service (CRS), *Iran's Foreign and Defense Policies*, R44017 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2019, updated January 30, 2020), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R44017.pdf> (accessed April 26, 2020), 4.

The Quds Force is a force that looks at everyone in every place with broad-mindedness. They are warriors who have no borders: they are *borderless warriors*. They are warriors who show their presence wherever needed. They preserve the dignity of the underprivileged. They sacrifice themselves for holy beliefs and holy principles. We should look at the Quds Force like this. These very individuals – who rush to the help of other nations and the weak in the region and who do so with their lives and all their power – help our own country escape from the specter of war, terror and sabotage as well.¹⁸

Terrorism, very similar to subversion, became an integral component of Khomeini and Khamenei’s developed view of warfare—yet one written in history rather than document. Almost immediately upon coming to power, the ayatollahs kick started their reign with the taking of 66 US diplomatic personnel as hostages. However, this act of terrorism was one of few directly attributable to the Islamic Republic. The ayatollahs preferred to employ terrorism as they did subversion using a degree of separation to enable deniability. Of greatest value, Khomeini and Khamenei grew to understand the strategic impact of terrorism with the highly politically successful proxy bombings of the US Embassy, US Marine Corps (USMC) barracks, and US Embassy Annex in Beirut that killed 281 Americans and the later bombing of Khobar Towers housing complex in Saudi Arabia killing 19 more US Servicemen.¹⁹

Apart from bombings and the original *Iran Hostage Crisis*, Khomeini and Khamenei’s world view was deeply informed by the value of political kidnappings. The technique started with the proxy kidnappings of a number of westerners in Lebanon in the 1980s, including high-profile taking of US CIA officer William Buckley and USMC

¹⁸ Khamenei.ir, “Our Islamic power will overcome the superficial grandeur of material and corrupt powers.”

¹⁹ CRS, *Iran’s Foreign and Defense Policies*, 7; Uskowi, 24.

Colonel William Higgins—both of whom were murdered while in captivity.²⁰ However, the technique matured with the ‘arrests’ of various US citizens traveling abroad such as the 2009-2011 ordeal of backpackers Sarah Shourd, Shane Bauer, and Joshua Fattal.²¹ Khamenei also learned to gain political leverage through the official arrests of lesser known US citizens such as Xi Yue Wang, Banquer Namazi, Siamak Namazi, Reza Shahini, and Michael White; and the unofficial abduction of retired Federal Bureau of Investigation agent Robert Levinson, missing for over 13 years and presumed dead.²²

Deep Strike Capability, long-range missiles or close-range missiles fired by proxy forces, formed the third pillar of Khomeini and Khamenei’s warring *weltanschauung*. Learning from the *War of the Cities* SCUD exchanges and from the example of their rogue ally, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), Khomeini and Khamenei set in motion a systematic approach to achieving a strategic missile force. Over the course of four decades, the Islamic Republic built up the largest missile production capability and missile inventory in the Middle East including a gamut of close-range ballistic missiles (CRBMs), short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs), medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs), and land-attack cruise missile (LACMs).²³ In fact, the

²⁰ CRS, *Iran’s Foreign and Defense Policies*, 7.

²¹ CBS News, “The Freed American Hikers Speak on their Captivity in Iran,” <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-freed-american-hikers-speak-on-their-captivity-in-iran/> (accessed March 14, 2020).

²² Tom Porter, “Who are the five Americans currently detained in Iran?” *Newsweek*, <https://www.newsweek.com/who-are-americans-currently-detained-iran-659182> (accessed March 14, 2020); Lukas Mikelionis, “American Navy veteran held in Iranian prison since July on unspecified charges: report,” *Fox News*, <https://www.foxnews.com/us/american-navy-veteran-held-in-iranian-prison-since-july-on-unspecified-charges>, (accessed March 14, 2020); Phil McCausland, “Family of Robert Levinson, held in Iran for 13 years, calls prisoner exchange bittersweet,” *U.S. News*, December 7, 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/family-robert-levinson-held-iran-13-years-calls-prisoner-exchange-n1097591> (accessed March 14, 2020).

²³ DIA, *Iran Military Power: Ensuring Regime Survival and Securing Regional Dominance*, 19, 23, 30, 31; Ward, 317, 318.

Iranian missile deep strike capability cannot only reach any target in the Middle East but also Iranian MRBMs can range well into India, Djibouti, Greece, and Ukraine. Khamenei addressed this missile capability in 2019, concluding:

Today, by Allah’s favor, our youth build exact missiles whose range is 2,000 kilometers. At 2,000 kilometers, they strike every target with an error range of one meter! Well, this is very difficult for them [United States]. They say that we should destroy these missiles, that their range should not exceed 150 kilometers. They are bringing up these matters. If you accept these terms, you will be ruined! If you do not accept them, it will be the same story you see. They will begin to say the same things that they say today: that the other side will not give any concessions to you.²⁴

Range is not the only factor in deep strike capabilities. Both Khomeini and Khamenei understood the value of supplying *Axis of Resistance* factions with shorter range rockets and missiles but postured forward into the operating environment—but for strategic effect. Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), Hamas, and related proxies hammered Israel for decades with Iranian matériel. Shi’ite Houthis, also known as *Ansar Allah*, executed uninhibited strategic attacks against Saudi Arabia also using Iranian supplied missiles, reaching as deep as Riyadh and Jeddah. Kata’ib Hizballah (KH), Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), the Badr Organization, and sponsored Shia Militia Groups (SMG) attacked US facilities in Iraq from 2003-2011 and then again starting in 2015 using Iranian equipment—wounding and killing Americans as recent as March of 2020.²⁵

²⁴ Khamenei.ir, “The Islamic Republic has shut the door to political infiltration by the U.S. in Iran,” speech delivered on November 3, 2019, by Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in a meeting with a number of university and high school students, on the occasion of the “National Day of Fighting Against Global Arrogance” and capturing the Den of Espionage on the 13th of Aban, 1358 [November 4, 1979], <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/7140/The-Islamic-Republic-has-shut-the-door-to-political-infiltration> (accessed February 6, 2020).

²⁵ DIA, *Iran Military Power: Ensuring Regime Survival and Securing Regional Dominance*, 60-62; Uskowi, 20, 24, 101, 102, 115, 119; British Broadcasting Corporation, “UK Soldier and 2 Americans killed in rocket attack in Iraq,” March 12, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-51842744> (accessed March 14, 2020).

Yet range matters to Khamenei. Khamenei's warring *weltanschauung*, at least the deep strike component, was validated in January 2020 when the Islamic Republic attacked US forces in Iraq—for the first time from Iranian soil. Following a US targeted strike on the IRGC-QF commander, Qasem Soleimani, Khamenei unleashed a salvo of SRBMs on two Iraqi airbases housing US forces. Although the attacks bore no US loss of life, Khamenei valued the psycho-political effect offering “. . . Iran has the power to give such a slap to a world power shows the hand of God” and “More important and greater than a military strike, it was a blow to the dignity and awe of the U.S. as a superpower.”²⁶

Relative to deep strike capability, the nuclear weapons aspect of the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung* remains contested. Khamenei has openly communicated “. . . we are not seeking to build nuclear weapons,” and such weapons are “. . . against our political and economic interests and Islamic beliefs.” In fact, in 2003, Khamenei issued a *fatwa*, or Islamic ruling, condemning nuclear weapons as un-Islamic.²⁷ That being, *clandestine actions* of the Islamic Republic have not always aligned to *public claims*. In hindsight, throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, the Islamic Republic developed and fostered undeclared nuclear facilities and weapons programs. Namely, under Khamenei, the Islamic Republic adopted the *Amad Plan* to develop a nuclear weapon. Further posturing, the Iranian *Project III* was initiated in an effort to modify the *Shahab 3* missile to accept a nuclear payload; facilities were constructed to develop uranium enrichment and heavy-water capabilities not needed for a civil nuclear program; and Dr.

²⁶ Edmund DeMarche, “Iran’s supreme leader calls Trump a clown, praises missile attack in rare appearance,” *Fox News*, January 17, 2020, <https://www.foxnews.com/world/irans-supreme-leader-calls-trump-a-clown-praises-missile-attack> (accessed March 14, 2020).

²⁷ Arjomand, *After Khomeini*, 202; CRS, *Iran’s Foreign and Defense Policies*, 8.

A. Q. Khan, Pakistan's nuclear bomb creator, mentored Iranian scientists. Albeit, the regime may have halted the official program in 2003, due to uranium enrichment percentages observed after 2010, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) communicated doubts about "Iran's assertions of purely peaceful intent."²⁸

Strategic Offshoots

Painful lesions and prideful lessons built into the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung* over four decades—boiling down at the operational level—to avoid traditional warfare and pursue irregular warfare was the obvious drug of choice. Strategically yet, greater lessons were added. The strategic value of hostage-taking and nuclear weapons exploitation was not lost on Khomeini and Khamenei. Through hostage taking, the ayatollahs gained international concessions such as removing post-revolution Mohammad Reza Pahlavi from US assistance during cancer treatments, overwriting of arms embargoes as found during the *Iran-Contra Crisis*, and most recently receiving \$1.7 billion in cash as clandestine ransom for four US citizens held in Tehran.²⁹

Possibly, of greatest relevance, was the use of strategic psychological warfare—not through the use of a nuclear weapon but through the fear of nuclear weapon production. Due to existing knowledge of Iranian efforts to build a nuclear weapon; the *Amad Plan*, Khamenei was able to leverage the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to gain massive economic concessions. According to the Congressional Research Service

²⁸ DIA, *Iran Military Power: Ensuring Regime Survival and Securing Regional Dominance*, 8, 9, 20, 45; Ward, 321-323.

²⁹ Associated Press, "\$1.7-billion payment to Iran was all in cash due to effectiveness of sanctions, White House says," *LA Times*, September 7, 2016, <https://www.latimes.com/nation/nationnow/la-na-iran-payment-cash-20160907-snap-story.html> (accessed March 14, 2020).

(CRS), “JCPOA sanctions relief enabled Iran to increase its oil exports to nearly pre-sanctions levels, regain access to foreign exchange reserve funds and reintegrate into the international financial system, achieve about 7% yearly economic growth (2016-17), attract foreign investment, and buy new passenger aircraft.”³⁰ Additionally, the CRS noted President Trump’s concerns on the JCPOA that “. . . provided under the accord gives Iran additional resources to conduct ‘malign activities’ in the region.”³¹

³⁰ Congressional Research Service (CRS), *Iran Sanctions*, RS20871 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2019, updated September 11, 2019), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RS/RS20871/299> (accessed April 26, 2020), 2.

³¹ Congressional Research Service (CRS), *Iran Nuclear Agreement and U.S. Exit*, R43333 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2018), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/R43333.pdf> (accessed April 26, 2020), 2.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Yet revolutionary Islam has not, up to now, manifested itself as a quest for international cooperation as the West understands the term; nor is the Iranian clerical regime best interpreted as an aggrieved postcolonial independence movement waiting for hopeful demonstrations of American goodwill. Under the ayatollahs' concept of policy, the dispute with the West is not a matter of specific technical concessions or negotiating formulas but a contest over the nature of world order.

–Henry Kissinger, *World Order*

Hubris and Synthesis–Understanding *Weltanschauung*

Hubris may be the best characterization of any effort to describe another's perspective. As such, no study of the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung* and related implications for US national strategy could be presumed as authoritative. Bias, ignorance, and mirroring undoubtedly distort all western research and external analysis of the Iranian ayatollahs' world view. Be that as it may, thorough examination of the histories, actions, writings, and speeches of the Imams reveal an adequately substantiated assessment of perceptions and behaviors that collectively comprise the framework of a world view. The framework–being historically grounded, psychologically-sociologically representative, and theologically espoused–compose the critical components of the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*.

In framing the *weltanschauung*, four bins of formative contributors appear paramount. Foremost is the personally lived-out era of *occidentosis*, where Khomeini and Khamenei experienced an anti-western spirit of the times and further physical manifestation under the despotic oppression of the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza

Pahlavi. Second, ballasting *occidentosis* is a form of Shi'ite Islam that harbors extreme animosity against supposed usurpers of the faith, heralds martyrdom as the exemplar of piety, holds to a novel dogma of global governance by Islamic jurist, and believes in provoking an apocalyptic ending to the world as currently known. Third, nesting in both is a loathing of Sunni Muslims and ethnic Jews that seemingly manifest as the root causes of all injustices done to the nation of Iran and are presently clothed in the nation-states of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Israel. And fourth, providing the cornerstone of the *weltanschauung* is simply war- war as the religious and humanitarian duty-bound obligation against those who oppose the rightful path of Shi'ism. Correspondingly, being a learned understanding, is the preferred method of warfare—being indirect, asymmetrical, and guised. Also notable in war, the strategic value of hostage-taking and nuclear threats are paramount. Taken together, the bins substantially frame the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*.

Synthesis of the framed bins then lies in a perspective that is in complete antithesis to western, especially US, world view. For instance, what the United States labels as terrorist networks, the ayatollahs characterize as an Axis of Resistance. Where the United States assesses subversive expansionism, the ayatollahs consider as “extending the sovereignty of God’s law throughout the world.”¹ When the United States champions American Values, the ayatollahs perceive the “propagation of destructive and anti-Islamic practices.”² Where the United States perceives seven decades of Israeli-

¹ Constitute Project, *Iran (Islamic Republic of's) Constitution of 1979 with Amendments through 1989*.

² Ibid.

Palestinian conflict, the ayatollahs find fourteen centuries of Jewish stratagem against Islam. How the United States views world order, the ayatollahs view as *Kufr*.³ What the United States views as Islamic radicalism, the ayatollahs understand as religious piety. Where the United States sees military intervention in the Middle East, the ayatollahs see encroachment and encirclement of Iran. Most critically, what the United States assesses as Iranian foreign policy, the ayatollahs understand as divine mandate. With only a spattering of examples, clear perspectives are pivotal in the synthesis of the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*.

Perspective being established, synthesis of the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung* is not intended to garner *sympathy* to the ayatollahs' cause but rather to employ *empathy* as an aid for understanding the depth of the problem and complexity of the environment as found in design methodology.⁴ Overwhelmingly, US policy makers and strategists attempt to counter the world's preeminent state sponsor of terrorism through basal approaches of imposing proportional cost or extending cursory overture—without comprehending *cost* and *overture* as offset by a depth of psychological hatred, shored by formative ordeals, and governed by unquestionably divine prescription. The composite of hatred, ordeal, and divinity limit the decisional spectrum allowed within the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*.

³ Khomeini, *Islamic Government*, 23.

⁴ Stefan J. Banach and Alex Ryan, "The Art of Design, A Design Methodology," *Military Review* Vol. 89, No. 2 (March-April 2009): 107-110.

Paths to Nowhere—US Strategy

In the shadow of the world view and over some four decades, US strategists have attempted to deter or contain Iranian terrorism, subversion, and pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. Under President Ronald Reagan, and while still engaged in the Cold War, the United States sought to “isolate and deter state sponsors of terrorism” and “actively to block the flow of arms and military material to Iran.”⁵ With President George H.W. Bush came an attempt to “. . . remain open to an improved relationship with Iran but only “. . . after Iran makes clear it is lending no support to hostage-taking or other forms of terrorism.”⁶ Later, President Bill Clinton likewise chose to “remain willing to enter into an authoritative dialogue with Iran” but committed to “adopt policies to limit Tehran’s threatening behavior.”⁷ Afterwards, and amidst the turmoil of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, President George W. Bush assessed “no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran” and determined to “take all necessary measures to protect our national and economic security against the adverse effects of their [Iran] bad conduct.”⁸ President Barack Obama, following on, attempted to “Promote a Responsible Iran” through the JCPOA to halt Iran’s development of a nuclear weapon and later an

⁵ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987), <http://nssarchive.us/> (accessed September 22, 2019), 17.

⁶ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), <http://nssarchive.us/> (accessed September 22, 2019), 10.

⁷ U.S. President, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), <http://nssarchive.us/> (accessed September 22, 2019), 25; U.S. President, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), <http://nssarchive.us/> (accessed September 22, 2019), 16.

⁸ U.S. President, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006), <http://nssarchive.us/> (accessed September 22, 2019), 20.

unorthodox cash transfer of \$1.7 billion flown into Tehran.⁹ Currently, President Donald Trump strives to “deny the Iranian regime all paths to a nuclear weapon and neutralize Iranian malign influence.” More recently President Trump took more hawkish tactical measures but to little strategic avail.¹⁰

Be that as it may, though slight variance of military-diplomatic efforts occurred, US strategy towards Iranian aggression remained relatively constant for decades while Iranian sponsorship of terrorism snowballed, indigenous missile production blossomed, and brazen assassinations spread across the globe. In fact, according to the non-partisan CRS, “To date, no U.S. strategy, by any Administration, has reduced Iran’s inclination to intervene in the region to enhance its regional influence and security architecture. . . . Whereas deployments of additional U.S. military force to the region might deter some Iranian actions, U.S. buildups arguably have not caused Iran to alter its fundamental regional strategies.”¹¹ Not so ironically, the failure of strategy is not lost on Khamenei who seconded CRS opinion in a 2020 speech:

. . . The US has been receiving blows from and suffering defeat at the hands of the Iranian nation in a 40-year battle. And the reason behind the defeat of the US at the hands of the Iranian nation during the past 40 years is that they have used all the weapons that they could against Iran including political, military, security, economic and cultural weapons including media and various propaganda tools. They have done whatever they could. To do what? To overthrow the Islamic Republic which is what they have been trying to do in the past 40 years – from the first day until today. However, not only has the Islamic government not been toppled in the course of the past 40 years, but it has also become stronger. This is what the defeat of the enemy means. It is 40 years now that the people of

⁹ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010), <http://nssarchive.us/> (accessed September 22, 2019), 26; Associated Press, “\$1.7-billion payment to Iran was all in cash due to effectiveness of sanctions, White House says.”

¹⁰ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2017), <http://nssarchive.us/> (accessed September 22, 2019), 49.

¹¹ CRS, *Iran’s Foreign and Defense Policies*, 62.

Iran have been defeating America. We have become stronger while America has become weaker.¹²

Recommendations and Recklessness

The irony exists. Despite billions in sunk costs and hundreds of US Servicemen and Servicewomen killed, the strongest nation on earth has failed to curb the aggression of a relatively weaker state, the Islamic Republic of Iran. While US strategists contemplated costs and diplomats pursued concessions, Ayatollahs Khomeini and Khamenei incessantly proceeded with their own strategy, challenging world order one conflict at a time—not distracted, not stymied, not faltering on a mandate given by *Allah*. Due to the failure of US understanding of the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*, now supported by regional proxy-control, regional missile dominance, and budding nuclear weapon threats—options are now becoming more limited and likely reduced to four options: 1) abandon the Middle East, 2) continue the nominal strategy of containment, 3) sponsor indigenous revolution, or 4) escalate.

- 1) Abandon the Middle East. Removing all US military capability from the Middle East should, in the short term, reduce the level of aggression between the United States and Iran—as Khamenei and his followers will perceive less threat. However, removing military capability means departing from established security relationships with Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Afghanistan, and other

¹² Khamenei.ir, “Like the Titanic, the U.S. will sink!” Speech delivered on February 18, 2020, by Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, during a meeting with the people of East Azerbaijan, <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/7380/Like-the-Titanic-the-U-S-will-sink> (accessed February 6, 2020).

long-term strategic partners. Additionally, removing US military capability equates to providing de facto sanctuary to the devil's crew of international terrorists such as al Qaeda, ISIS, and affiliated movements. Redeploying military capability also lends to conceding freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, the BAM Straight, and generally all access to the Persian Gulf. Lastly, the retrograde of military capability would, over time, inevitably result of the overrun of Israel by the Shi'ite sponsored armies and a second *Holocaust*—removing the cancerous tumor.

- 2) Continue Containment. Containment is a strategic misnomer yet a politically acceptable one. Political temperament and military capacity lend to a continuation of the programs and policies currently in place while maintaining basing, access, overflight, and navigation. However, the efforts in no way fix Iranian subversive expansionism or limit asymmetric missile capability—both of which are functionally unfettered. Containment, in reality, is a falsehood in an attempt to push strategic onus farther down the road.
- 3) Foment Indigenous Revolution. Naturally the preferred solution of the Iranian threat would be an indigenous overthrow of the Khamenei Regime. A delayed expression of the Arab Spring, a misnomer in itself, where a people's revolt displace and replace the ayatollahs' regime would not only be least costly from a US perspective but would be most efficacious in the long term — natural evolution through the Iranian people's choice. Sadly, indigenous revolution is highly unlikely. Though popular sentiment of Iranian citizens seeks democratic reform and modernization of the country, Khamenei's

security apparatus of the IRGC, Basij, and related structures is so strong and pervasive as a ‘counter-revolutionary’ force that revolutionary movements are consistently discombobulated and suppressed.

- 4) Escalate. The only option remaining is the least preferable and least politically viable, escalating with conventional military force to decapitate the regime, destroy nuclear facilities, and suppress the hubs of IRGC strength. Breaking the chain of power and control ideologically, economically, and militarily through the overwhelming artful application of Joint Fires may present the only realistic option. Certainly, the effort would create a whole new genre of security challenges but may establish a security environment preferable to the one that preceded it. Escalation may appear reckless but it also may be the most calculated and pragmatic option available.

Realism and the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung*

Forty years of failing to understand the Khomeini-Khamenei *Weltanschauung* may have been enough. Infused with an abhorrence of the United States, beholden to a fatalistic and apocalyptic theology, committed to the eradication of US partners, and learned terror as the premier tool of warfare—the world view of the ayatollahs attests to a will that can only be broken with extreme force. Where sanctions have not choked and diplomacy has not persuaded, military force remains the *undertested* instrument of statecraft. Though US military forces have been *deployed* surrounding the Islamic Republic of Iran, military force has only been marginally *employed* against the nation. If the military instrument is to work, the tool must be use for its intended purpose – the

utility of force as General Rupert Smith surmised, “Military force when employed has only two immediate effects: it kills people and destroys things. Whether not this death and destruction serve to achieve the overarching or political purpose the force was intended to achieve depends on the choice of targets or objectives. . . That is the true measure of its utility.”¹³ If the Iranian nation truly is a threat, then is it irresponsible to not apply the capabilities at hand in order to safeguard the United States?

¹³ Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force, the Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 8.

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VITAE

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