

AN ANALYSIS OF IRANIAN NEGOTIATING STYLE AS EVIDENCED
FROM THE 1979 US HOSTAGE CRISIS AND THE IRAN-EU
NUCLEAR NEGOTIATIONS
FROM 2003 TO 2006

By

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I declare that *An analysis of Iranian negotiating style as evidenced from the 1979 US hostage crisis and the Iran-EU nuclear negotiations from 2003 to 2006* is my own work. Also, that all the sources I have used or quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

CM LANDSBERG

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SUMMARY

The intention of this research is to analyse the process and methodology of the Iranian negotiating style. The research is mainly premised on Putnam's two-level game metaphor (1988) and the "ultimate decision making unit" of Hermann *et al.* (1987), the purpose being to identify key leadership units, individuals, and formal and informal networks in Iran. The study further takes cognisance of key elements of the Iranian national character, which naturally impacts directly on what Iran considers to be a suitable negotiating style. It provides an overview of how the 1979 revolution changed Iranian diplomacy and how it forced international political theorists to take note of the cultural-religious dimension, ignored until then as elements of international politics and theory. Two case studies, deal respectively with the US hostage crisis (1979-1981), and the Iran-E3/EU nuclear negotiations, between 2003 and 2006. The analysis shows how Iran assumed the character of a revolutionary country and how its new religiously driven diplomacy is evolving. The study finally identifies and illustrates the active deployment of Shī'a negotiation doctrine as the basis of Iranian diplomacy and the use of techniques such as *taqiyyah*, *tanfih* and *khod'eh*. A model for negotiations with Iran is developed using key elements of the research.

Culture, Europe Union, hostage siege, Iran, US, leadership, negotiation, nuclear, Putnam, Hermann, ratification, religion.

OPSOMMING

Die studie fokus op Iranese onderhandelingsstyl en - metodiek. Twee teorieë, naamlik Putnam (1988) se “twee-ledige interaktiewe onderhandelingsproses” en Hermann *et al.* (1987) se leierskapsmodel, is gebruik om Iran se gefragmenteerde leierselite asook die staat se formele en informele netwerke wat ‘n sleutelrol vervul in onderhandeling te identifiseer. Bykomend hiertoe is ‘n analise gemaak van faktore soos kultuur en godsdiens wat onderliggend is aan Iran se “nasionale karakter” en dus ‘n direkte invloed uitoefen op Iranese onderhandelingsstyl. Die studie wys ook hoe die 1979 rewolusie ‘n verandering gebring het deur godsdiens en kultuur tot gelykwaardige dimensies van die internasionale politiek te verhoog nadat dit voorheen heeltemal geïgnoreer is. Dit bly egter vreemd vir die Weste. Die studie slaag daarin om deur middel van twee navorsingsondersoeke rakende Iran se oornam van die VSA ambassade in Tehran tussen 1979 en 1981) en die Iran-E3/EU kernonderhandelings tussen 2003 en 2006 die fokus te plaas op die identifisering en ontwikkeling van ‘n Iranese onderhandelingsstyl. Tegnieke soos *taqiyyah*, *tanfih* en *khod’eh* wat die basis van Iran se diplomatieke onderhandelingsstyl vorm, word vervolgens bespreek terwyl ‘n model vir onderhandelings met Iran ook ontwikkel is uit die gegewens wat verkry is uit die navorsing.

Iran, Amerika, gyselaars, onderhandeling, leierskap, godsdiens, kultuur, Europese Unie, Putnam, Hermann, ratifisering, kern.

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GLOSSARY

Dynasties and individuals

Achaemmenid (559 BC-330 BC): The first Persian Imperial dynasty, founded by Cyrus the Great and overthrown by Alexander the Great.

Aghazadeh-Khoi, Gholamreza: Director of the AEOL. He also claims to be the “father” of the Iranian nuclear programme.

Ahmadinejad, President Mahmoud: Elected as Iranian president in June 2005. He is despite close links to the *ulamā* (clergy), the first non-clerical president of Iran.

Amini, Ali: An independent economist and friend of the Kennedy family who was elected as Iranian Prime Minister in 1961.

Bakhtiar, Premier Shapur: A member of the National Front (NF) who established an interim government in late 1978 and governed from 30 December 1978 until the collapse of the Iranian government on 11 February 1979. *See also NF.*

Bani Sadr, Abol Hassan: Islamic intellectual and supporter of Khomeini in Paris. He serves briefly as Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs and then as first President after the revolution. Despite his alleged closeness to Khomeini, the latter’s fear of Bani Sadr’s belief in liberal ideas lead to his impeachment and Bani Sadr’s flight into exile where he joined hands with the MEK. He still lives in Paris.

Behesti, Ayatollah: Close associate of Khomeini during the revolution. He headed the Iranian Judiciary and the shadowy Revolutionary Council, which functioned as an alternative government structure to Bazargan’s provincial government. He was assassinated in 1981 in a MEK bomb attack together with 72 other key leaders.

Bihbihani, Ayatollah: Religious leader at the time of the 2nd Shah and also active supporter of the latter. He even went so far as to support the Shah’s centralisation programme and only became involved in protest action after the implementation of the largely undesirable land reform programme. He was a close supporter of Ayatollah Borujerdi, the principal religious leader or source of imitation *marja i-taqlid*, at the time.

Bazargan, Mehdi: He was the founder of the Freedom Movement. He believed in constitutional politics and his appointment as interim Prime Minister in February 1979 gave secularists hope that a post-revolutionary Iran would be run by intelligentsia, with the *ulamā* again withdrawing to Qom. However, the hostage crisis changed this and led to his resignation in 1981.

Borujerdi, Ayatollah Mohammad Hosayn: Grand Ayatollah or highest ranking religious leader, perceived as a source of imitation *marja i-taqlid*, during the 1950s. He was also a key exponent of a quietist approach, in other words a non-interventionist view regarding religious involvement in politics.

Christopher, Warren: US Deputy Secretary of State during the hostage crisis and designated US negotiator.

Cyrus the Great: Founder of the Achaemenid Persian Empire and first monarch to unite the Medes and the Persians. He is increasingly seen by modern Iran as the “Father of the Iranian State”. He is known in Hebrew as King Ahasuerus and as Artaxerxes in Greek.

El Baradei, Mohammad: Head or DG of the IAEA.

Ghotzadegh, Sadegh: Iranian Foreign Minister at the time of the hostage crisis.

Kashani, Ayatollah: A former ally of Mossadeq and key opposition leader during the 1950s.

Khamenei, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali: Current Iranian Spiritual Leader and guide.

Khatami, Muhammad (1997-2005): *hujjat al islam* Khatami served two terms as president and was seen as a moderate cleric with liberal views.

Khoeiniha, Hujjat al islam, Seyyed Mohamad Mousavi: Confidante to Khomeini and Prayer and spiritual leader to the Militant Students.

Khomeini, Ayatollah Ruhollah (1901-1989): Iranian Spiritual and ideological leader of the 1979 revolution and architect of the current religious-political system in Iran.

Larijani, Dr, Ali: Another Leader’s Representative of the *faqih* in the SNSC and successor to Rohani as nuclear negotiator.

Militant Students: Officially known as the Muslim Students Following the Line of the Imam (DAPKHA in Farsi). They occupied the US Embassy from 4 November 1979 until 20 January 1980.

Mossadeq, Dr. Muhammad: Nationalist Prime Minister (1950-53) who oversaw the oil nationalisation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) and who was overthrown in the joint CIA-SIS *coup* of 1953.

Nabavi, Behzad: Nabavi was a Minister of State for Executive Affairs during the 1980s and effectively became the “sole Iranian negotiator” at the end of the hostage mediation between Iran, Algeria and the US.

Nobari, Ali: Iranian official who headed an alternative Iranian structure of the Iranian Central Bank during the hostage negotiations, dealing with financial matters.

Pahlavi dynasty (1921-1979): It is the dynasty that succeeded the Qajar dynasty and lasted until the Islamic revolution in 1979.

Qajar dynasty (1797-1921): Dynasty who, despite a promising start in nation-building, finally oversaw a decline in Imperial Persian statehood.

Rafiqdust, Mohsen: A key functionary in Iran given his control of the *Bonyad-e Mostazafan* and the *Noor Bonyad* in Iran. *See also bonyads.*

Rafsanjani, Ayatollah Ali Hashemi: Served for two consecutive periods (1989-1997) as president and is currently one of the most powerful men in Iran. He chairs both the Expert Council and the Expediency Council; two of the key supervising structures in Iran and is also one of the richest *bazaaris* in Iran. *See bazaar.*

Reza Khan (Reza Shah): Founder of the Pahlavi dynasty who ruled as Shah or King / Emperor from 1921 until his “forced” abdication in 1941 and replacement during the Anglo-Russian invasion of Iran.

Reza Mohammad (Mohammad Reza Shah): Successor Shah to Reza Shah in 1941 and Iranian monarch until the Islamic revolution ended the Pahlavi dynasty in 1979.

Reza’i, Mohsen: Secretary of the Supreme Expediency Council and head of the IRGC from 1981 to 1997.

Ritzel, Gerhardt: German ambassador in Tehran during the revolution and the person instrumental in breaking the deadlock between Iran and the US.

Rohani, hujjat al islam, Hassan: One of the *faqih’s* representatives in the SNSC and also Iran’s first nuclear chief nuclear negotiator from 2003 until 2006.

Roosevelt, Kermit: Head of the CIA’s Near East and Africa (NEA) Division during the 1950s and the leader of Operation TPAJAX. *See Operation Boot.*

Safavid dynasty (1501-1736): It establishes the final border of modern Iran and made Shī'a Islam the State religion.

Solana, Javier: High Representative of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy Committee (CFSP),

Tabatabai, Sadegh: A State Secretary in the Iranian government and brother-in-law to Ahmad Khomeini, the only surviving son of Imam Khomeini. He initiated the original negotiation and compiled the "unofficial" draft solution with Ritzel prior to the start of the Algerian mediation.

Taliqani, Ayatollah: An Iranian intellectual and cleric member of the Iranian opposition movement against the Shah. He viewed communism and Islam as being compatible given Islam's communal nature and was during the 1960s much more prominent than Khomeini. He was at some stage close to the *Mujahedeen* as well as the democratic ideas of Bazargan. See also *Mujahedeen groups* and *Bazargan*.

Yazdi, Ibrahim: Initially a student supporter of Khomeini in Paris and was one of a group of moderates with a primary Western or French education. He became Iranian Foreign Minister during the Revolution, but he too was impeached and forced to the periphery of Iranian politics during the hostage crisis.

Farsi , Arabic Religious Phrases

Abadgeran-e Islami: Islamic Developers. They are 2nd generation revolutionaries dedicated to re-establish the ideals of the original revolution. They also share one common bond as members of the war-generation. They are currently one of the key political factions in the *Majlis*, supporting president Ahmadinejad.

The Ahl al-bayt: It refers to the House and immediate family of the Prophet Muhammad namely, his daughter Fatima, his cousin and son-in-law, Alī bin Abī Ṭālib and his two grandsons Hasan and Husayn.

Akhbari School: Main doctrinal school within Ithnā’asharī-Shī’ism until the 18th century. The *Akhbaris* denied any need for a *mujtahid* to exercise independent judgement, reason or consensus in matters of law, since they perceive the sacred texts (what is left from the Traditions of the Prophet and the *Imams*) as sufficient. It directly contradicts the *Usuli* School.

“al-Mahdi”: See Hidden Imam and the doctrine of Zoroaster.

Al Quds Forces: Special Operation Brigades of the IRGC.

Anjoman: Means society or organisation in Farsi.

Artesh: Iranian Regular Army or National Army.

ashti: It refers to a situation when a group of “mutual friends or relatives” step in to force reconciliation. *See also qadr.*

Ashura: Is the 10th day of the mourning month of Muharramm and also the first month in the Islamic lunar calendar. It marks the date of the battle of Kerbala in 680 AD when Mohammad’s grandson, Imam Husayn ibn Alī and his followers were “martyred”.

atabat: Threshold cities such as Kerbala and Najaf in Iraq.

aqazadeh: Phenomenon of wealth and corruption in post-revolutionary Iran. It refers to the misuse of official connections for economic advancement by family members

ayatallah or ayatollah: “sign of God”

ayatollah al-uzma: Grand Ayatollah is the highest rank amongst the Shī’a *ulamā* (clergy). See also *mujtahid*. Is also the only one which can be a source of imitation or emulation *marja i-taqlid*.

bast: It is an ancient Persian tradition to give protection or sanctuary to those fleeing from the governments' harassment or arrest.

basiji: Revolutionary militia, which functions under the supervision of the IRGC or *Pasdaran*. It literally means "mobilised forces" in Farsi. *See also IRGC.*

baten: Refers to the "hidden" or internal core of a human's feelings and emotions and connotes an area where it is safe from the outside world e.g. the centre of social peace in a household or family in Iran. It is the space where events are predictable and is the source of positive traits such as compassion, generosity and trust in God. *See also zaher.*

bazaar: It refers to the market or *bazaar* in Iran as well as to those individuals and families and guilds, closely involved as so-called *bazaaris*) in its function. Due to their close support for the revolution *bazaari* families are politically important and the linkage between religion, politics and the *bazaar* unquestionable.

bonyads: Post-revolutionary term for economic conglomerates in Iran. The *Bonyad –e Mostazafan* (Foundation of the Oppressed) is the largest economic entity in Iran.

čāne zadan or ***mo'male-ye bāzāri:*** Farsi term referring to economic discussions or bargaining. Refer also to *mufāwadat* and *musāwadama*.

"Capitulations": The most merciless exploitation or "surrender" of Iran's entire industrial and economic resources to foreign powers, (mostly Britain, the US and Russia) by a successive number of Shah's. Their greed and continuous foreign pressure led to a situation where Iran had almost no control over its own resources.

chador: It is widely recognised as an Islamic mode of dress for women, covering the hair, hands, and extending to cover the feet. It is usually a black cloak-like cloth, which is used to cover a women's clothing from head to feet. While it is tradition to link it with Islam, there is no religious prescription to do so in the Qur'an and it is actually more a matter of taste, tradition and a male belief that their females are not to be seen by others. The usage and variation of especially the veil, full-face or not, differ between Islamic countries according to the strict (or not) application of traditions and religious custom. *Refer to hejab as used in Iran.*

Dār al-Harb: The “realm of war and disbelief”. It is the 2nd part of the Muslim world, which would end with the return of the “al-Mahdi” and the absorption of these remnants in a new unified world. *See also* “*al-Mahdi*”.

Dār al-Islām: “House of Islam” or the “realm of peace and belief”, one of the two existing Muslim views of the world.

darurat: Necessity.

dowreh: Farsi word meaning circle refers to persons bound together due to a common life experience. *Dowreh* is also a key communication channel with overlapping formal and informal “circles”.

“***faqih***” plural ***fuqaha***: Jurists or experts in religious jurisprudence and equal term to *mujtahid*.

farhang: Farsi term for culture.

fatwa: An authoritative religious legal opinion or ruling.

Feda’iyan-e-Khalq: Marxist oriented group that came into being after World War II and was initially a clerical group opposing the sidelining of the Islamic Law and the Shah’s modernisation programmes. It radicalised in the 1950s and became responsible for attacks and assassinations on key Iranian officials.

firman: Royal decree.

foqara: Poor.

Friday Prayer Sessions: These are weekly prayers institutionalised in Iran. Traditionally it has two elements namely, a religious prayer followed by a political speech in which the prayer leader or *ulamā* expressed his views on critical religious and policy issues, thus mobilising the population directly for or against domestic and foreign policies.

“***Gharbzadaha***”: Westoxicated” or contaminated with Western “diseases” or foreign and Western culture and influence. *Gharbzadegi* or “Westitism” also used in same context. *See also xenomaniacs*.

ghair-e khodi: Outsider (See also *khodi*).

hadith: Traditions concerning the *sayings* and *deeds* of the Prophet. For the Shī’a, those of the Imams are also included.

hajj: Pilgrimage to Makkah.

haqq, (hāqq in Arabic): It refers to the principles of righteousness and justice in Iran specifically to the former suppression by foreign powers. It is one of the few terminologies in Farsi that denotes negotiation. It is also one of 99 names of Allah (*Al Haqq*) meaning “The Truth” and is known to every Muslim. It denotes that justice is from God, which makes it impossible and repugnant to compromise on what is believed to be sacrosanct positions.

haram: Refers to conduct that is prohibited under Islamic Law.

Hejab: It is a modest Islamic dress that covers the hair and the contours of a women’s body. While it is often equated with the *chador*, this less severe cloak and scarf are worn instead of the more traditional “head-to-toe” *chador* in Iran. More traditional and religious women though still prefer the *chador*. *See also chador*.

“Hidden Imam”: Refers to the infant son of the 11th Imam who went into “occultation” (*ghāyba*) in the 9th century, leaving behind only four “interpreters” of his will. He is expected to return at the “End of Time” as the “*al-Mahdi*” or Islamic messiah to create a new order, which will restore the purity of Islam as taught by the Prophet and the Imams. (*See also Imam and Imamate*).

hijrah: It has two meanings, namely a reference to the Prophet Mohammad’s persecution in Makkah and his subsequent “migration” with 70 of his followers to Medina in September 1622 in what has since been taken as the start of the Muslim era. In another sense, *hijrah* also refers to a Muslim’s withdrawal from society because of tyranny and the domination of corrupt thoughts where true believers cannot live in accordance with their beliefs. They have thus only three choices: to die, renounce their faith or go temporarily into exile with the acceptance that they will return to destroy their enemy.

Hizb-i Rastakhiz (Resurgence) Party: Party was formed in 1975 by the Shah embodying his idea of “popular suppression” under the cover of a “one-party democracy.”

“hokoumat-e haq”: A “government of God.” It was the belief of Khomeini at the time of Mossadeq’s government during the 1950s. He did not advocate either the overthrow of the monarchy or the destruction of the monarchy, but rather attacked secularism and autocracy, while asking that Iran’s government become a “government of God” through the religious supervision of all the secular laws made in the *Majlis*.

hokumat-shaytan: Satan's government.

hujjat al islam: "proof of Islam".

"*Hukumat-i Islam*": Title of Khomeini's best known book of the mid-1970s dealing with the creation of an "Islamic Government, responsible only to God. It also became the guide for the institutionalisation of post-revolutionary Iran.

ihtiyat: Prudence and caution.

ijm: Consensus. For the *Ithnā'asharī* Shī'a the consensus opinion of the *ulamā*, both the living and the dead.

ijtihad: Is the process of independently arriving at judgement on points of religious law using reason and the principles of jurisprudence. It must also include the opinion of the Hidden Imam and is therefore correct. *Ijtihad* is thus the process whereby various opinions are considered until a final consensus, which is the truth, is arrived at.

Imam: Spiritual or Prayer Leader of the *ummah* (community). Literally meaning those "who is in front" For the *Ithnā'asharī* Shī'a it means one of a succession of 12 divinely appointed guides to lead the *ummah* in both religious and political affairs.

Imamate: It is based on two fundamental principles: "*Naṣṣ* which entails that the Imamate is a prerogative bestowed by God upon a chosen person from the family of the Prophet who before his death and with the guidance of God transfers the Imamate to another by specific designation;" and the doctrine of *Ilm*, which means that an Imam is a divinely inspired possessor of a special sum of knowledge of religion, which can only be passed on before his death to the next Imam. In this way the Imam of the time becomes the exclusively authoritative source of knowledge in religious matters. In the case of the *Ithnā'asharī* Shī'a, it links directly with the 12 divinely guides who act as God's representative in the secular world.

Iranshahr: Traditional name for Iran according to Arabic sources.

Islam: Surrender to the will of God.

Ithnā'asharī-Shī'ism: Twelver Shī'ism belongs to the *Shiah-i Alī* or the Party of Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, the Prophet's son-in-law and designated successor. When he was "rejected" they consequently created the Imamate based on the direct male descendants of Alī and his wife Fatima, the Prophet's daughter. The divisions with

the Sunnī thus originally started as a purely political difference. It has been Iran’s State religion since 1501. *See also Sunnī.*

Jamiyat-i Isargaran-i Inqilab-i Islami: The Islamic Revolution Devotees Society or Isargaran / Isargar technically means giving selflessly to a sacred cause. Presently it has been adopted with special meaning, namely somebody who has sacrificed in the cause of the Islamic revolution and the Iran-Iraq War. *See Abadgeran-e Islami.*

jihad: It has a dual meaning, namely in Qur’anic terms a struggle or effort to reform bad habits that a Muslim might have. This is “an internal cleansing effort”. In the more modern usage it refers to a “war waged in the service of religion” or a “holy war”.

Kashf al-Asrar: “Discovery of Secrets” is Khomeini’s first book and dates back to the 1940s. He addressed the development of his religious-political treatise and even identified specific institutions which would later be developed after the 1979 revolution. *Kashf al-Asrar* clearly articulated the shift in Khomeini’s viewpoints namely, that the only acceptable legislator is God.

Khalifah: “Successor” or Caliph in English. The successor however, is only God’s “vice Regent on earth“ in the temporal sense, in contrast to the Prophet who combined the political and the religious roles. (*See also Rashidun and Ulū-l-amr*).

khod’eh: It refers to the historic Shī’a tradition of tricking one’s enemy in order to benefit from them. The frequent use of half-truths instead of direct lies is a well known *khod’eh* tactic.

khodi: Insider, or “one of us”. (*See also gheir-e- khodi*).

madrasih (Farsi) madrasa (Arabic): Religious seminaries. Most major Iranian cities have their own *madrasih* who provide religious training. It infuse Shī’a *ulamā* with a joint educational experience and knowledge regarding management and political survival.

maktab: Elementary Qur’anic Schools.

Majalla: Ottoman Code.

Majlis: Iran’s Consultative Assembly.

marja’ -i taqlīd (Farsi) or ***marja’al-taqlid*** (Arabic): It means the “source of emulation”.

In other words one, like Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who through his

learning and probity is qualified to be followed in all points of religious practice and law by the generality of the Shī'a.

maslahat: Public interest.

mellat-e mos-tazaf: One of Khomeini's many descriptions of "oppressed nations".

mosálemat ámiz (salām in Arabic): It is a Farsi expression meaning peace as non-aggression. It also means "peaceful coexistence" or cold peace and implies a situation without war and the existence of formal diplomatic relations, without economic advantages or cordiality.

mostakbarin: Oppressors. It forms part of Iranian philosopher Ali Shariati's ideas about the world being divided between this group and the *mostzafin* or the oppressed. The theory was adopted by Khomeini.

mostzafin: Oppressed or angry oppressed masses (See also *mostakbarin*).

mozákereh: Farsi term implying discussions at the "political" level. (Refer also *mufāwadat* and *musāwadama*).

mufāwadat: Arabic term referring to political "negotiation", "debate" or "conference." (Refers also to *mozákereh* and *čāne zadan* or *mo'male-ye bāzāri*).

Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK/MKO): Organisation who represents the radical left wing of the Muslim organisations. Founded in the early 1970s and is currently the most prominent Iranian opposition group in exile.

mujtahid: Shī'a scholars who as a result of their eminence in learning may, according to their own judgment, issue authoritative opinions in matters of Islamic law. They are also *marja'-i taqlid*. See *marja'-i taqlid*.

musāwadama: Arabic term referring to the economic sphere particularly the bargaining over goods in the market place. See *mozákereh* and *čāne zadan*.

Muqallid: Someone who must accept the judgement of others.

nazam: Religious and political "system" in Iran.

nofouz: Refers to concentric circles of *political influence* in Iran.

ofuli: It refers to a *sunset power* and is President Ahmadinejad's view of the US in contrast with Iran, which he sees as a rising power. See also *tolu'ee*.

parti or **partibazi:** It is "the institution of inside connections" in Iran with persons in the position of granting favours or marshalling power on one's behalf. It refers in

particular to the behaviour between the persons in those relationships and not as in the case of *dowreh* the institutionalisation of relationships. The closest English term is “lobbying”, but with persons most often described as perceptual equals.

Persia: It was the name foreigners used traditionally for Iran, following the Greek and Roman example. The name was derived from the province Pars / Fars. Since the country was called Iran by the inhabitants its name was officially changed by the Shah from Persia to Iran in 1934.

qahr: It means a methodical selection process. An example is the way in which Iran hand-picked Europe as mediator because of the close relationship and trust existing at the time, as the first step in reaching its goal of negotiating directly with the US.

qodrat-e mentaqe’i: Regional Power Status. It formed a central part of the Shah’s “Vision” to elevate Iran’s regional role.

Qur’an: Literally meaning the “Recitation”. It is the Muslim Holy Book revealed by Allah to the Prophet Mohammad.

Battle of Qādisiya: The Islamic / Arab victory over the Persian Empire in 637 AD.

Rashidun: The “Four Rightly Guided Caliphs”, who led the community after the Prophet’s death: e.g. Abu Bakr, Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Uthman ibn Affan and Alī bin Abī Ṭālib.

razdari: Refers to the tactics of secrecy in a *madrasih*, meaning that no *ulamā* should divulge information about the inner most working and secrets of the *ulamā* and the techniques of *taqiyyah*.

salat: Worship or more specifically five ritualised prayers oriented towards Makkah.

“Saqīfa”: This was the old assembly hall in Medina where a successor was chosen for the Prophet Mohammad. Since his wishes were disregarded here, “Saqīfa” also came to be linked with the division of the community or *ummah* in Sunni and Shī’a branches. See also *Ithnā’asharī-Shī’ism*.

sarvatmandan: Rich.

satrapes: Persian transliteration of the Greek word for a person or subject or subject states who in Persian tradition have first been subjugated and then left to their own devices. Original Persian term was *xsachapava*.

saum: Fasting which signifies the abstinence from food, drink and sexual relation from dawn to sunset during Ramadan.

Sazman Amiyat va Ettelaat Keshvar (SAVAK): The Shah's secret police. *It is currently replaced by the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS).*

shahadah: Proclamation of the main doctrine of Faith in Islam. "I bear witness that there is no God but *al-Lah*" It is one of the five pillars of faith.

shahadat: "Martyrdom" as a key principles to wage war against injustice.

"Shahanshah Aryamehr": Persian or Farsi term linking the Shah with his Persian heritage as the "King of kings", a similar patonymic as the one used by the Sassanian Emperors. It is also spelled *Shāhinshāh*. See also *zill-allāh*.

Sharia: Islamic Law.

Solh (Farsi), **sulh** (Arabic): Peace as reconciliation. *Solh* is slightly more inclusive referring to peace in its total most comprehensive sense.

Sunnah: The exemplary *practice* of the Prophet Mohammad and for Ithnā'asharī Shī'sm, that of the Imamate. *See also Imamate.*

Sunnī: They represent approximately 75 percent of all Muslims and adhere to four Sunnī schools of law i.e. the Maliki, Hanafi, Shafi and Hanbali, named after their respective founders. They are spread across the Middle East region and North Africa. The first two schools are relatively progressive in nature and the last two schools conservative.

Sūra: Sections or Chapters of the *Qur'an*.

tabaqat: Warring classes.

tabaqeh-e bala: Upper class.

tabaqeh-e payin: Lower class.

tabarra: A 1000-year old Persian tradition of cursing and vilifying of your enemies.

tae'arof: It is defined as the active, ritualized realization of status in interaction, which emphasises and preserves the integrity of culturally defined status roles as they are carried out throughout Iranian society on a daily basis. In terms of language, it is also a "lie" or rather duplicity, since Iranian negotiations are filled with concealed facts, half-truths and outright lies. Iran however does not see it as lies but rather a chance to offer knowingly false promises based on false premises.

taghut: The term denotes a rebel. It is also one of many applications of Satan in the *Qur'an*. Khomeini used the term in 1963 to describe the Shah as a “tyrant, thus equalising him and later all those who opposed his (Khomeini’s) rule with Satan.

tahliya: It refers to a sweetening process when things or ideas are added such as the creation of the position of the *faqih* (*fuqaha*) or Jurisprudent in Islam.

takhliya: To “get rid of obsolete ideas and practices”.

Tamaddon-e Bozorg: The Shah’s Great Civilisation, which was intertwined with his White revolution and “Vision”. (*See also qodrat-e mentaqe’i*).

tanfih / tanfieh: It is an Iranian strategy whereby one is “judiciously doing nothing” under specific circumstances.

taqiyyah/ (taghieh): It refers to a Shī’a doctrine meaning to guard one from physical and mental harm on account of holding a particular belief opposed to that hold by the majority. It is the same method as *kitmān* (ketman) with *taqiyyah* as the religious principle and *kitmān* as the term used in current language. While its standard translation in English refers to either “dissimulation” or “expedient concealment” its Arabic translation rather encapsulate the ideas of *taqiyyah* as an instrument to safeguard the faithful and protect their lives, while it also keeps the Shī’a claim to the spiritual leadership of the Islamic community alive. It thus did not reflect the modern Western idiom of deception or even terrorism, but rather a more obscure definition describing it as “double dealing” or the “pursuit of two different objectives at the same time”. It is a key Iranian negotiation strategy.

taqlid: It is the process of following the practices and pronouncements of a scholar more learned than oneself in matters relating to religious law, with faith in his correctness and without independent investigation of his reasons.

Tawhid: Islamic and non-*Tawhid* un-Islamic. A *Tawhidi* leadership refers to those accepting only the dominance of God and non-*Tawhidi* to those accepting human dominance.

ta’zyeh: Iranian passion plays recounting the events or “martyrdom” of Imam Husayn ibn Alī and his followers in 680 AD near Kerbala.

tolu'ee: Defined as a “*sunrise power*” by President Ahmadinejad’s when he described Iran, which is destined to supersede the US in reshaping the world with a *jihād*. See also *ofuli* or *sunset power*.

Tudeh: Iranian Communist Party.

Ulū-l-amr: The “guardian” or supervisor of God’s absolute sovereignty over the world and man in *Qur’anic* terms.

Ulamā / singular ***ālim***: Clergy or religious leaders. Refers to those learned men of religious law of Islam. It also means those who “know” since the root word from which it is derives means knowledge.

ummah: The Muslim community.

uṣūl al-fiqh: Jurisprudence.

Usuli School: Replaced the *Akhbari* School in the 18th century. It assigned the *ulamā* the key role in the interpretation of law and demanded that all believers follow a living *mujtahid* and abide by his judgement.

vilayat-i faqih: Farsi spelling referring to the “guardianship of the jurisconsult” or “*faqih*.” and allegiance to the rule of the Imams. *Arabic spelling wilāyat al-faqih*. See also *faqih*.

wajib: It is an Islamic legal obligation or duty. In other words it is “incumbent on them” for example to speak the truth.

waqf: It is an inalienable endowment whose revenue ensures the functioning of particularly religious institutions.

White Revolution: Also known as the “the revolution of the Shah and the People, which he launched in 1963. It was a comprehensive programme inclusive of political, economic, military, societal and educational reforms, intended to consolidate and widen his popular support base. However, as Iran was Westernised and lessening his dependence on the US, the unacceptability of some of the programmes and the general result of forced reforms led to a backlash by particularly the *ulamā* given the sudden appearance of job losses, prostitution and other societal ills.

Xenomaniacs: This is the translation of a Persian term *Gharbzadaha*, popularised by Jalal Al-e Ahmad, an Iranian leftist articulated in his book, *Gharbzadagi* (Xenomania) and frequently read by Khomeini. It refers to everything that is

infatuated with Western, especially foreign models of culture, in both Iran's internal and foreign politics. See also "*Gharbzadaha*".

zاهر: Refers to the external elements and is an unpredictable and corrupt space of worldly influences. It is a realm of controlled behaviour where politeness, proper conversation, expression and one's true feelings must be held in check. It is the direct opposite and acts as buffer to the *baten*. The *zاهر* is also the source of all the negative characteristics attributed to Persian / Iranian culture, e.g. suspicion, cynicism, pessimism, defeatism, shrewdness, opportunism, hypocrisy and insincerity.

zاهر-ra- hefz kon!: It is an admonition meaning to protect external appearances.

zakat: A "purifying tax" on the property of Muslims for the purposes of charity or wealth sharing.

zeraengi: It is a defensive Iranian communication technique based on uncertainty and used to control or manipulate message interpretation.

zill-allāh: One of the Shah's most famous titles, meaning "Shadow of God on Earth."

The doctrine of Zoroaster: Religion in Iran predating Islam. Its key teachings are reflected in the main sacred book of the Iranians, the *Avesta*, which deals with the perpetual conflict between "Good and Evil". These are: *Ahura Mazda* or the Creator, representing goodness and light and *Ahriman*, the Destroyer. It influenced Islam, Christianity and Buddhism and was revived as "Mazdaism" or Zoroastrianism by the *magi* (priests) as the State Church under the Sassanian dynasty. Like Twelver Shī'sm it too believes in the coming of a world saviour or *Saoshiyant*. See also "*al-Mahdi*".

zurkhaneh: Traditional houses of strength where Iranian athletes lift weights.

General Acronyms and Selected Nuclear Terminology

AEOI: Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran. It was established in 1974 by the Shah with the mandate to plan for and work on the complete fuel cycle. It is also referred to in the literature as the “IAEO”, but the general form is AEOI as used by the IAEA.

AIOC: Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Became the successor organisation of APOC in 1935 when Reza Shah changed the name of the country to Iran.

APOC: Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

“axis of evil”: US depiction of Iran, Iraq and North Korea since 2002.

CIA: US Central Intelligence Agency.

CW: Chemical Weapons.

Expediency Council: Supervisory institution in Iran with religious membership who are directly appointed by the *faqih*.

“Full fuel cycle”: It refers to the process including uranium mining, uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing.

GAERC: General Affairs and External Relations Council of the EU.

Guardian Council: A 12 member Council of six clerical members appointed directly by the *faqih* and six lawyers who are nominated by the head of the judiciary, who in turn is directly appointed by the *faqih*. The Guardian Council has a key role to vet all potential members of the *Majlis* and all presidential candidates.

HAMAS: Islamic Resistance Movement (Jihadist rejectionist Palestinian movement).

Hezbollah: “Party of God” Lebanese Shi’a movement.

IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency.

ILSA: Iran-Libya Sanctions Act.

Iran-E3/EU: It is how the Iranian nuclear negotiations with the three countries of the European Union (Britain, France and Germany) are officially known.

IRGC: Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or *Pasdaran*. Created by Khomeini to safeguard the Islamic Revolution and serve as an alternative to the Iranian Regular Army / National Army or *Artesh*.

ISA: Iran Sanctions Act. (Successor act to ILSA).

NF or National Front: The National Front was founded by Mossadeq as a political party advocating economic nationalisation and democratic principles. It is currently banned in Iran, but continues to function although it has withheld its candidates out of fear that it would split the reformist vote.

NAM: Non-Aligned Movement.

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

NIE: National Intelligence Estimate.

NPT: The Non-Proliferation Treaty.

“Nuclear opacity”: Refers to a policy of nuclear ambiguity currently followed by Israel and aspired to by Iran whereby a country keeps the status of its nuclear capability deliberately veiled.

NSC: National Security Council in the US.

Operation Boot: SIS cover-name for project to overthrow Prime Minister Mossadeq. See also TPAJAX.

PFLP: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

PIJ: Palestine Islamic Jihad.

PLO: Palestine Liberation Organisation.

SIS: British Intelligence or the Secret Intelligence Service.

SNSC: The Supreme National Security Council is Iran’s highest defence and security authority and plays a key role in foreign policy and the nuclear decision making process.

SOFA: Status of Forces Agreement.

TCA: Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

TPAJAX: The CIA’s name for the joint project with SIS to overthrow Prime Minister Mossadeq. It was initially called Operation Boot by the SIS, but was re-named TPAJAX by the CIA. The TP prefix indicating that the operation was to be carried out in Iran and AJAX was the name of the operation. *See also Operation Boot.*

UN: United Nations.

UNSC: United Nations Security Council.

WMD: Weapons of Mass Destruction.

WTO: World Trade Organisation.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND, KEY CONSTRUCTS
AND AIM OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the dissertation is to research the diplomatic negotiating style of the Islamic Republic of Iran (henceforth to be called Iran) by analysing two key events in its diplomatic history, namely the bilateral negotiations with the US during the 1979 hostage crisis and the 2003-2006 Iranian nuclear negotiations with the E3/EU (Britain, Germany and France). The intention is not to analyse the content or outcomes of each negotiation or series of negotiations, however, but rather the process and methodology of Iran's negotiating style during each event. The research will also include an analysis of the various Iranian decision making units or Iran's hierarchical command system (*nazam*), both formal and informal, insofar as these units impacted on the two case studies.

Little is known about Iran's negotiating style. According to Briant (2002:6-7) and Vaziri (1993:78-79) ancient Persia only has an oral history, while the Achaemenid dynasty (559 BC-330 BC) only spoke Old Persian and did not have their own alphabet. They rather used the Aramean alphabet. More than 30 000 clay tablets discovered at Persepolis in Iran were also in the cuneiform of proto-Elamitic, thus providing credence to Briant's argument that ancient Persia left its narrative memory and control thereof to its subject states and enemies. The foundations were thus laid for a historical bias as Persia became earmarked as the "barbarians of Asia", a characterisation also accepted by the West. Moreover, presently most writers and academics make no distinction between Farsi Iran and its Arab neighbours when the Middle East and Persian Gulf regions' negotiating style is addressed. Academics as a rule ignore Iran's unique political history and identity. It has almost become a tradition just to "lump" Iran together with the broader Islamic world. This is illustrated by Hourani (2002), among others, while Hill (2003:6) has defined Iran as a "new state" where detailed research is lacking regarding foreign policy analysis. Authoritative studies on these issues by specialists on Iran are rare, e.g. R. K. Ramazani (1966, 1975), and even Ramazani did not address Iran's negotiating style, but rather described the "interaction" between internal conditions, the external environment

and foreign policy methods as the “dynamic triangular interaction” of Iranian foreign policy (Ramazani 1966:vii).

The interaction between internal and international variables in foreign policy analysis is a key theme in the research of Iranian negotiating style. While the foreign policies of countries in general are primarily influenced by their respective external environments, the Iranian situation is different. Because of Iran’s unique political history, the Islamic revolution and Iran’s current political isolation, this research will argue that Iranian foreign policy and negotiating style are influenced by domestic rather than international variables (Ramazani 1982a:20), although the issue remains controversial. For example, authors such as Hill (2003:248-249) unqualifiedly reject the notion of “the primacy of domestic politics.” This interaction between the domestic and international variables in foreign policy will be discussed in detail in chapter 2, using primarily the two-level game metaphor of Putnam (1988).

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Negotiators and diplomats are social actors and active participants in a negotiating process, acting according to where they come from (Gelfand & Cai 2004:238), for which read cultural contexts and multiple relationships, roles, constituencies and networks that cut across relationships ranging from the physical-personal to the institutional-authoritative level of ultimate decision making, particularly regarding foreign policy. A study of the environment is therefore required to provide context and to define key principles that will be important when Iran’s negotiation style is analysed. However, the focus will eventually be less on the context than on the key principles “identified”. The following environmental issues are reviewed:

- Defining the Middle East as a region.
- The Sunni-Shīa religious divide in the region.
- The multi-dimensional nature of Iranian identity.

1.2.1 Defining the region

It is also necessary to clearly define the Middle Eastern region. As noted by Anderson, (2000:11-12) it became increasingly customary from the fifteenth century onwards to

distinguish between the Near East (Levant) and the Far East. The Near East comprised essentially the eastern Mediterranean countries such as Turkey and the Balkan countries, while the Far East encompassed all the countries east of India. The Indian subcontinent was regarded at the time of the British Empire as the centre of British colonial affairs and vital to British trade and military strategy. Since India was accepted as a separate entity in the East, but neither in the Near East nor in the Far East, the “Middle East” became almost by default the area lying between the Indian subcontinent and the Near East. While the term Near East or Levant were primarily in use before and during World War I, it became less common after the war, with the break-up of the Ottoman Empire when “Middle East” became the new accepted designation.

The term “Middle East” is thus in essence Eurocentric according to Mansfield (2003:1). However, while Britain was instrumental in the original delineation of the region and usage of the term “Middle East,” coinage is usually attributed to Alfred Mahan, the American geopolitical historian who considered the area to be in the “middle” in both the east-west sense and the north-south conflict between Britain and Russia in progress at that time. However, the central focus of his delineation of the region was the Persian-Arab Gulf (Anderson 2000:12).

The usage of the term “Persian Gulf” has regrettably become excessively contentious since 1960. From the times of the earliest Greek geographers such as Strabo, this body of water was referred to as either the “Persian Gulf” or the “Persian Sea,” while the “Sea” presently known as the Red Sea was referred to as the *Sinus Arabicus* or “Arabian Gulf” (Strabo Volume VII. Book XV:155, 163, 301, 341). This tradition was followed in most maps printed prior to 1960 for the purposes of international treaties and documents and thus reflects the geopolitical realities of the time when a powerful Persian / Iranian Empire was the dominant force in this region. With the rise of Arab nationalism and independence in the 1960s a movement started to substitute the traditional term “Persian Gulf” with “Arabian Gulf” as the standard usage in modern Arabic. The term also won growing international support, particularly in the West, as Arab oil became more important. Iran in turn became increasingly isolated and thus less able to project its influence in the “Persian Gulf” region after 1979.

Due to the political controversy regarding the terminology, countries have opted increasingly for dual usage or just “Gulf”. For a short period the new Islamic Republic of Iran even raised the possibility of referring to this waterway as the “Islamic Gulf”, but dropped the idea after Iran was invaded by its neighbour Iraq, another Islamic country. To clarify the confusion the UN has made several rulings over the years, which affirmed that only “Persian Gulf” should be used as the standard geographical designation. The UN position is clearly articulated in parts of two editorial directives (cf. UN Secretariat CS/SER.A/29/Rev.1 dated 18 August 1994 and 14 May 1999) quoted below:

1. The term “Persian Gulf” is used in documents, publications and statements emanating from the Secretariat as the standard geographical designation for the sea area between the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The full term “Persian Gulf” is always used to designate that sea area when it is first referred to in a text and is repeated thereafter whenever necessary for the sake of clarity.

2. The term “Gulf” is used in documents, publications and statements emanating from the Secretariat to identify or refer to the general geographical area surrounding or adjacent to the sea area referred to in paragraph 1 above or to refer to the situation around the sea area. The terms “Gulf area”, “Gulf region” and “Gulf States” are examples of such usage.

Since the dissertation deals with Iran and / or Iran-related issues, reference will be made to “Middle East” and “Iran”. Concerning references to “Persian Gulf”, the UN’s clarification will be followed.

1.2.2 The Sunni- Shī’a religious divide in the region

Religion plays a dominant role in the Middle East. It is home to four of the world’s greatest religions, in order of their emergence: Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Anderson, 2000:134). These religions spread across the region, climaxed and then continued to remain important for a selected if sometimes limited group of adherents. Presently the region is primarily dominated by Islam. The aim of this section is to review the background to the rift in the Islamic community (*ummah*), which has led to the

present Sunni-Shī'a divide in Islam and the predominance of *Ithnā'asharī-Shī'ism* or Twelver Imam Shī'ism in Iran.

Islam, which literally means submission to God (*al-Lah*), is based on the revelations that the Prophet Muhammad received from *al-Lah* through the angel Gabriel, from 610 until his death in 632. Since Muhammad could not read or write, his preaching was a “reciting” of the new divine message of submission to the will of one *al-Lah*, of which he was the chosen Prophet. His recollection of God’s message was only formally set down in Arabic script after his death during the reign of the first two caliphs. It was called the Qur’an or the Recitation and its 114 sections (*sūras*) are arranged roughly in descending order of lengths and dates dealing amongst others with prayers, introductions and conclusions and are the basis of Islamic religious and social life (Glassé 2002:219-220; Armstrong 1999: 155-161; Goldschmidt 1999:38).

Muhammad also developed the “Five Pillars” of the Faith as central elements of the *Sharia* (Islamic Law) (Hamid 2000:16-17, 46-49; Goldschmidt 1999:38-43):

- *Shahadah* (The confession of faith). “I bear witness that there is no god but *al-Lah* and that Muhammad is his Messenger. “Central here is the concept of *Tawhiid* which means “God is One”.
- *Salat* (worship), which refers to five ritualised prayers oriented towards Makkah.
- *Saum* (fasting) which signifies abstinence from food, drink and sexual relations from dawn to sunset during Ramadan.
- *Zakat* (charity or wealth sharing).
- *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah).

Due to persecution in Makkah, Muhammad and some 70 of his followers “migrated” to Medina in September 622 in what became known as the *Hijrah*. It was a turning point in Islamic history. Since then Muslims date the start of their era not from the birth of Muhammad or the first revelation, but from the *Hijrah*. Afterwards Muhammad enhanced his religious doctrine and also laid the foundation for the Islamic Empire. Through war and subjugation, selective marriages to link his Banū Hāshim tribe with opposing tribes as well as through political treaties, Muhammad unintentionally unified the political and religious leadership of the *ummah* in one person within his Banū Hāshim tribe and the *Ahl al-bayt* as Islam spread all over the Middle East and North Africa. In

Qur'anic terms (Sura XXXIII, 33) *Ahl al-bayt* refers to the house and immediate family of Muhammad, namely his daughter Fatima, his cousin and son-in-law Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, and his two grandsons Hasan and Husayn (Glassé 2002:81-182; Armstrong 1999:181-182; Jafri 1979:13, 16).

The division of the *ummah* into Sunnī and Shī'a branches caused a political crisis because Muhammad failed to appoint a successor before his death (Anderson 2000; Armstrong 1999; Goldschmidt 1999). The answer is more complex, however, since the event at "*Saqīfa*", the old assembly hall in Medina, showed that personal ambitions and tribal rivalries were equally important reasons. While no-one questioned the combined political-religious nature of Muhammad's leadership, the basic principle of leadership was changed at "*Saqīfa*". Former tribal rivalries re-emerged and Muhammad's successors disregarded the religious principle and the hereditary sanctity of Muhammad's Banū Hāshim tribe. Thus the main candidate from the *Ahl al-bayt*, Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, as attested by both Sunni and Shī'a sources, lost his rightful claim to the leadership of the *ummah* and the caliphate when Abu Bakr was hastily elected. "*Saqīfa*" therefore represents the first split amongst the *ummah*, while it also fuelled a perpetual struggle between Alī (with his Shī'a supporters) and the Umayyad family of the Quraysh tribe, which formed the core of the *Umayyad* Caliphate. It also introduced the era of the "Four Rightly Guided Caliphs",¹ which ended in 661 when Alī was murdered. The successor caliphs would be different since the position of caliph became hereditary (Jafri 1979:1, 2, 13, 27, 50, 137; Goldschmidt 1999:56; Hourani 2002:25).

The rival religious doctrines or branches are defined as follows according to Anderson (2000:138) and Glassé (2002:422): The Sunnī are the people of the Prophetic *Sunna*, the custom of the Prophet and the *ummah* (community), and they represent approximately 75 percent of all Muslims. They follow four Sunnī schools of law: the Maliki, Hanafi, Shafi and Hanbali, named after their respective founders. These schools are spread out over the Middle East region and North Africa. The first two schools are relatively progressive in nature, while the last two are conservative. The Sunnī recognise the first four "Rightly Guided" caliphs, but attribute no special religious function to the descendants of Alī. They view leadership during the era of the "Rightly Guided" caliphs as a Golden Age of

¹ The Four Rightly Guided Caliphs" or (*Rashidun*) are: Abu Bakr, Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Uthman ibn Affan and Alī bin Abī Ṭālib.

Islam, which depended not on the individual on which it was conferred, but on the commitment and loyalty of the community. Furthermore, as long as the community remain fully committed to the *Shari'a* its salvation is guaranteed regardless of the qualities of the leaders who head the community. The sensitive issue of separating religion from state authority, which was the position adopted by the Sunnī, was clarified by the 6th Caliph, Mu'āwiya, after he had persuaded Hasan, Alī's son, to abdicate in 661. It resulted in a situation where the Muslims placed the religious leadership in the totality of the community, represented by the *ulamā* as the custodian of religion and the exponent of the Qur'an and the *Sunna* of the Prophet, while accepting state authority as binding (Glassé 2002:441; Sachedina 1981:5; Jafri 1979:137).

The Shī'a branch of Islam comprises between 10 to 15 percent of all Muslims in the world, while 90% of all Iranians are Shī'a. Since Alī is viewed as the rightful claimant, given his membership of the *Ahl al-bayt*, the term "Shī'-i-Alī" (Party of Alī) came to refer collectively to the supporters of Alī. Because Alī's rightful claim was constantly denied, a religious schism arose between the Sunnī and Shī'a communities. According to Glassé (2002:422-423) and Jafri (1979:71-72), the differences between the Sunnī and the Shī'a hinge on their religious approach and their opposing views on Alī's leadership claims. Like the Prophet, Alī also wanted to combine the religious and political offices. When offered the position of 3rd Caliph he rejected the offer and the precedents of the first two Caliphs. He stressed that if he is to rule as caliph, his rule would only be in accordance with the Qur'an and the Prophetic *Sunna*. If however, he could find no positive law in the Qur'an and *Sunna*, he would follow his own judgement. This clarification became the basis of the differences between the two doctrines and the basis of Shī'a legal theory and practice. It is also the main reason why Shī'a jurists reject the decisions of the first three caliphs.

When Alī finally became the fourth Caliph, the Shī'a believed that he had a special spiritual function alongside that of the Prophet, which gave him the absolute right to spiritual leadership. He was consequently elevated to the position of 1st Imam or Leader of the *ummah*. The Imamate is based (cf. Jafri 1979:290-291) on two fundamental principles: "*Naṣṣ*, which entails that the Imamate is a prerogative bestowed by God upon a chosen person from the family of the Prophet who before his death and with the guidance of God transfers the Imamate to another by specific designation;" and the

doctrine of *Ilm*, which means that an Imam is a divinely inspired possessor of a special sum of knowledge of religion, which can only be passed on before his death to the next Imam. In this way the Imam of the time becomes the exclusively authoritative source of knowledge in religious matters.

There are three principal Shī'a groups, essentially differentiated according to their respective interpretations regarding the Imamate. The "Five-Imam- Shī'a" (Zaydis) and the Ismā'īlīs or Seveners respectively believe in the 5th and 7th Imam. The largest Shī'a group, however, is the "Twelve Imam Shī'ism" ("Twelvers") in Iran where it has been the official religion since 1501². Approximately 90 percent of all Iranians are Twelver Shī'a, while 7 percent are Sunnī. The rest are minority religions such as the Baha'i, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Armenians and Assyrians. The Shī'a in Iran are known for their piety of protest and martyrdom, which is closely associated with the brutal death of Mohammad's grandson, Husayn ibn Alī, and a small group of supporters on Āshūra (the 10th of Muharramm) in 680 AD near Karbala. Other key features born of the oppression they suffered are a high degree of intolerance, intense emotion and passion that are regularly "ignited" by the memory of Husayn, which acts as a slogan of moral and religious fervour and upheaval (Armstrong 1999:185; Jafri 1979:174-221; US Library of Congress 2004:5; Anderson 2000:137-141).

As mentioned Twelver Imam Shī'a believe in the 12th Imam, the Imamate and that the Imam is the intermediary between man and God. This is an idea that the rest of Islam avoids by directly submitting to God, without intermediaries. The Twelver Shī'a also subscribe to the concept of the "Hidden Imam". He is the infant son of the 11th Imam who went into "occultation" (*ghāyba*) in the 9th century, leaving behind only four "interpreters" of his will. He is expected to return at the "End of Time" as the "al-Mahdi" or Islamic messiah. He will bring a new order, which will restore the purity of Islam as taught by the Prophet and the Imams. More importantly the new order will carry within itself the religio-sociopolitical aspects of the pristine Islam (Glassé 2002:422-428; Anderson 2000:137-141; Keddie 2003:7; Sachedina 1981:160).

² The Iranian Constitution (1989) accords Islam and primarily the "Twelver" school as the official religion in Iran. Articles 12 and 13 also accord "full respect" to the four Sunnī schools of law together with Zoroastrian, Christian and the Jewish religion.

While awaiting the return of the “Hidden Imam” or “al-Mahdi”, the Shī’a functions under the leadership of the *ulamā*³ (or religious leaders) of which Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei is currently the highest ranking leader. A select few, however, are Grand Ayatollahs and also “Sources of Emulation” (*marja’ -i taqlīd*), like Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The Shah forced him into exile in 1963, first to Turkey, then Iraq (Najaf) and then France from where he eventually returned in 1979 as a revolutionary leader representing the “Hidden Imam”. According to Moin (2000:199 -201), when Khomeini returned to Iran, the populace revered him as “Imam” and he was elevated overnight from being just the “representative” of the “Hidden Imam” to being possibly the “Hidden Imam” himself. This situation was misused by some of his followers attributing a status of semi-divinity to Khomeini, who in turn used this status to further his religious and political ideas, as encapsulated in his treatise *Hukumat-i Islami* (Islamic Government) in which he articulated the “guardianship of the jurisconsult” (*vilayat-i-faqih*) (cf. chapter 4). Suffice it to say that it refers to the fusion of religion and politics. Khomeini holds that there should be no separation of religion from politics and maintains that a key element in the struggle to form an Islamic state is the belief in a *vilayat-i-faqih* and the present Islamic theocracy in Iran (Zadeh s.a.:6).

As a result of their history of persecution the Shī’a have developed besides the other doctrines, the doctrine of *taqiyyah*”, which was initially developed to protect the Faith by “concealing” important religious and political views. *Taqiyyah* remains as vital today as in the past, although its relevance is presently broader than the religious field. For example, its influence on the processes and methodology employed by Iran in its negotiations with foreign powers is explored in section 3.5.2 (Jafri 1979: 298-99).

1.2.3 The multidimensionality of Iranian identity

Iran’s political identity is the product of its history and environment and can be described as multidimensional. Its people claim two complex interlocking traditions, namely one based on its ancient Persian heritage, and the other on Islam. Both traditions are competing for the “possession” of a nation (Mackey 1998:5). However, there is also a third key dimension, namely anti-imperialism, which has become particularly important

³ *Ulamā*, refers to learned men of religious law in Islam. It also means those who know, since the word from which it derives means knowledge (Akhavi 1980:6).

if not the dominant dimension in modern times. These three dimensions are interrelated and provide the context for an analysis of Iranian foreign policy and negotiation style.

Iran presents an ancient civilisation and not a country. Its prehistory dates back almost 5000 years when the first nomadic tribes moved into the region. It was unified under the Achaemenid Empire (559-330 BC) by Cyrus the Great who is known for his conquests, but preferred persuasion and compromise as methods rather than oppression and war. Empires like the Parthian and Sassanian followed with both attempting to recreate the Achaemenid Empire and restore Persia's former borders and glory. Zoroastrianism became the dominant religion, particularly during the Sassanian period (226-651 AD). The doctrine of Zoroaster, whose surviving teachings are reflected in the main sacred book of the Iranians, the *Avesta*, deals with the fight between "Good and Evil". It includes Iranian folklore and was destined to influence Islam, Christianity and Buddhism. It was revived under the Sassanians as "Mazdaism" or Zoroastrianism by the *magi* (priests) as the state church and "a rallying point" to support the ruler, who was seen as a just leader. When the king realised that religious conformity could be used to centralise authority in Persia, he and the *magi* organised Zoroastrianism as a coherent force in control of Persia's spiritual and temporal life (Mackey 1998:5-6, 34; Briant 2002:93-94; Nyrop 1978:xi-xiii; Carter 1978b:111-115; Hourani 2002:9).

Under Islam the fusion between spiritual and temporal in Iran has again become an important feature since the return of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. In fact, a number of Zoroaster's teachings are consonant with Twelver Shī'ism, but a single example will suffice here. Zoroaster propagated the advent of a world saviour (*Saoshyant*), while according to the Shī'a "End of Time" doctrine the "al-Mahdi" is expected as the Islamic messiah who will destroy Satan (Ahriman in Zoroaster's eschatology) and restore the purity of Islam. Religion, both ancient and new (Islam), and politics are thus closely connected and remain in "Janus-like" fashion the two vital dimensions of Iranian political control (Glassé 2002:493; Sachedina 1981:160).

It is also important that regardless of their own territorial conquests, the Persians never forced their ideas onto others, but rather left their *satrapes* or subject states to their own devices. On the other hand the Persians have always readily assimilated new ideas or creeds imported by incursions and invasions and have flourished as a result thereof.

While direct political control slipped away from the Persians after the Islamic conquest in 642 AD at the battle of Qadisiya, at which time Persian influence paradoxically, appears to have reached its nadir, it was Persian scholars, art, literature and the new Persian controlled royal harems that played a key role during the Golden Age of Islam. As a result of this influence, Persia eventually re-emerged from within the Islamic Empire with its own distinct Persian-Islamic identity during the rule of Shah Ismā'īl, the founder of the Safavid dynasty (1501-1732). Shī'ism too eventually split from the main *ummah* and was imposed on Persia as the new state religion in 1501 (Ramazani 1966:13; Goldschmidt 1999:69; Briant 2002:868; Mackey 1998:5-6).

Iran's political history and national identity are therefore unique in the Middle East since it is the only country that continues to uphold a conscious linkage with its pre-Islamic past. It can be clearly distinguished from the rest of the countries in the region as a non-Arab, non-Semitic country of Aryan origin. The *lingua franca* of Iran is in fact Farsi and not Arabic as in most of its neighbouring countries. Moreover, more than 85-90% of Iranian Muslims in Iran adhere to Twelver Shī'ism, to the extent that Iran is the most dominant Shī'a state in the world (Hourani, 2002:87; Tazmaz s.a.:3-4; Keddie 1998:3; Pelham 2008:204-205; 225). Azerbaijan (80%), Bahrain (70%) and Iraq (65%) are currently the other Shī'a controlled states in the region. Iran's territorial integrity too has remained relatively intact, with borders fixed and stable for 500 years. Its roots can be traced back into the distant past, and are also celebrated in old mythical writings such as the 11th century national epic, titled the *Shah-namah* (The Epic of the Kings) of Fardūsi (932-1020), which glorifies Iran's mythical past, particularly as embodied in an ideal monarchy where evil is forever at bay in a state of perpetual conflict between good and evil. It also describes the sorrow and tragedy of the Iranian peoples that happens in cyclical fashion and where their fate is always to rise from the ashes. Although the *Shah-namah* is partly mythology and partly factual history, it is firmly held to be unadulterated fact by many Iranians. All these elements, historical as well as mythical, are integrated in a seamless whole formed by Iran's joint political culture and its religious heritage, thus constituting a unique Iranian *intrinsic identity* (Fardūsi s.a; Tazmaz s.a.:5; Maloney 2002:92). This description closely conforms to the following definition of *national identity* articulated by Telhami and Barnett (2002:8):

A group of people who aspire to or have a historical homeland, share a common myth, and historical memories, have legal rights or duties for all members and have markers to distinguish themselves from others.

1.2.3.1 Aryan-Persianism

In the period prior to 1501 when Twelver Shī'ism became the official religion in Iran, the country's identity was distinctly Aryan-Persian. As noted, Iran practised Zoroastrianism and ancient cultural philosophies, while the successive "Great Kings" legitimised their right to rule based on this identity and the concepts explained. Various Islamic conquests would interrupt this process, before the modern Pahlavi dynasties (1925-1979) of Shah Reza Pahlavi and his son Mohammad Reza revived ancient Aryan-Persian ideas to strengthen their rule. The following are *selected examples* of their policies, which they implemented to reconnect Iran with its ancient culture and heritage:

- The Shah took the title "*Shahanshah Aryamehr*," which linked him with his Persian heritage as the "King of kings", the patronymic used by the Sassanian Emperors.
- He took "Pahlavi" as the name for his dynasty, since it directly relates to ancient Persian language and script.
- The adoption of an imperial calendar system in October 1976, which started with the coronation of Cyrus the Great, implying that the Pahlavi dynasty was the oldest continuous monarchy in the world, a period of over 2500 years at the time.
- The Farsi spelling also replaced Arabic words and some Arabic city names. Note: Shah Reza did not change the name of his country in the 1930s, but only asked foreigners to use the indigenous name - Iran. Foreigners wrongly called Iran "Persia", which was mainly a name for its south-western region while "Persian" was the name for its main language. (Ramazani 1966:13; Carter 1978a:65; Ayazi 2003:27-28, 30, 33, 37-38, 40-41; Keddie 1998:1-2; Keddie 2003:2).

The implementation of these policies to reinstate the "Great Persian Civilisation" was severely criticised by the clergy. However, the social impact of Shah Mohammad Reza's so-called White Revolution, which entailed a forced westernisation process to ensure that Iran would modernise and become a worthy heir to its glorious predecessors, was even

more wide-reaching. The programme included land reform, women's suffrage, secular education, the elimination of illiteracy and health reform. The enforcement in 1935 of a policy that women should unveil (remove the *chador*) and dress in Western clothing, failed dismally and contributed much to his unpopularity. The White Revolution was briefly accepted, but then rejected by the people as a result of increasing foreign influence; moreover no liberalisation of the political system took place and opposition to the governing establishment was openly suppressed. Nevertheless, opposition from particularly religious interests grew steadily through sermons, *fatwas*⁴ and processions and plays about the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, which were understood to refer to the Pahlavi tyranny. All these factors combined to prompt the 1979 Islamic revolution as a new era, and Iran's Islamic identity re-emerged (Ayazi 2003:38-40; Ansari 2003:166-178; Keddie 2003:100; 168-169).

1.2.3.2 Islamism

Islamic identity became dominant in Iran after the 1979 Islamic revolution. The principal religious leaders, particularly Ayatollah Khomeini, have rejected Iran's *Aryan-Persian* identity and ancient history as evil and an insult to the pure Islamic identity which they seek to install. However, the Iranian-Islamic identity is deeply rooted since Persians have practised Shī'a religious doctrine for centuries and the change after the 1979 revolution only led to a situation in which Shī'a Muslims accepted and proudly adhered to many aspects of their cultural heritage. The similarities between the Zoroastrian saviour (*Saoshyant*) and the role of the "*al-Mahdi*" in Shī'a religious doctrine have already been mentioned. Consequently two vastly different and apparently opposing identities have coexisted in Iran since 1979. The Twelver Shī'a religious doctrine nevertheless appears to be the dominant identity after it was imposed on Iran. It also includes Khomeini's *Hukumat-i Islami* (Islamic Government) and the Muslim sociologist Ali Shariati's ideas about the world being divided between the oppressed (*mostazafin*) and the oppressors (*mostakbarin*) and that true Islam was vested in the struggle of the oppressed. This world view appealed to Iranians and is linked to their tradition of martyrdom and sacrifice. Although Shī'ism acts as the main unifying force in Iran, it is nonetheless difficult to be

⁴ A *fatwa* is an authoritative religious or legal opinion.

entirely sure if it is part of the national or the religious character of Iran (Ayazi 2003:27, 45; Maloney 2002:99 and Keddie 1998:3).

The degree of overlap between the two identities is particularly obvious from a detailed analysis of Iran's mosaic of peoples and linguistic divisions. It has a total population of 70 million of which the main ethnic group is Persian (60%). The rest is made up of Azeri (20%), Kurds (7%), Arabs (2%), Luri (3%), Baluch (2%) and Turkmen (2%). Farsi is the official language and mother tongue of the Persians and a second language to another 15 percent. Other languages are Azeri, Turkish, and Turkic dialects (24%), Kurdish (7%), Arabic (2%), Luri (3%); Baluchi (2%) and Armenian (1%) (US Library of Congress 2006:5). Despite such diversity and the presence of distinct group identities, they nevertheless developed or adopted an overriding Iranian national identity that coexists without suppressing the other identities. For example, the small Jewish community (\pm 20 000 to 30 000 adherents of Judaism in Iran) remained in Iran after the revolution as loyal pro-Iranian nationalists (US Library of Congress 2006:6; Iran 2006:a). Their rights and political privileges are even guaranteed in Article 64 of the Iranian Constitution. Another case in point was made by the Iranian Nobel Peace laureate, Shirin Ebadi, when she proudly declared during her lecture given in Oslo on 10 December 2003 in token of accepting the Nobel Prize that she had three identities: "I am an Iranian - a descendant of Cyrus the Great. I am a Muslim."

1.2.3.3 Anti-imperialism

The "anti-imperialist vision" as a dimension of the Iranian identity is the product of Iran's historical legacy and derives from a traditional sense of the rejection Iran had to endure during the period of the "Great Game" when it was a pawn in the intense rivalry between Britain and Russia, particularly from 1801 until the end of World War I. Later this scenario changed, first as a result of Iran being embroiled in the petroleum politics of the 20th century and the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union, and more recently when it took an intractable stand in the ongoing nuclear dispute with the US. Iran's perception of rejection has manifested in the total rejection of foreign influence or Xenomaniacs. This is the translation of a Persian term *Gharbzadaha*, popularised by Jalal Al- i Ahmad in his book, *Gharbzadagi* (Xenomania), frequently read by Khomeini. It refers to everything that is infatuated with Western, especially foreign models of culture,

in both Iran's internal and foreign politics. As a consequence Iran is steadfastly defending and pursuing its national independence and autonomy (Ramazani 1966:ix; Abrahamian 1993:13; Khomeini 1981:152; Maloney 2002:95).

1.2.3.4 The institutionalisation of identity and Iranian leadership structures

With the various dimensions of Iranian identity providing context, another key element, namely "the institutionalisation of identity", is required to apply identity to policy and negotiations. Maloney (2002:93) described "institutionalisation" as the defining mechanism for asserting and maintaining authority in the modern era, while Telhami and Barnett (2002:8) linked this idea with state identity:

State identity can be understood as the corporate and officially demarcated identity linked to the state apparatus.

A detailed analysis of key Iranian formal and informal power structures and networks will form part of chapter 6 where the central roles of the ultimate leader and chief negotiator are examined in both the internal and the foreign policy processes. This will be done through backward mapping, which implies identifying the parties involved in the envisaged negotiations and the relationships, connections and social networks between the respective players prior to the respective negotiating processes (Gelfand & Cai 2004:249-252; Sebenius 2004:5). The leaders' beliefs, characteristics, style, and world view will also be explored. According to Hermann, Hermann and Hagan (1987: 309), these variables form part of the "domestic sources" of Iran's foreign policy. It is directed through the Iranian government apparatus, which identify, decide and implement foreign policy. Government subsumes a multitude of separate authorities (the "ultimate decision unit") that have the ability to commit the state's resources to focus on specific problems and make nearly irreversible decisions. The structure and dynamics of the "ultimate decision unit" help to shape the substance of Iran's foreign policy and particular negotiating style, while its cultural identity and history provide additional context. In Western democracies, presidents and cabinets are part of the power centres, but Iran is a theocracy (Islamic state) with different and sometimes unique power centres where the Islamic state is defined as "the rule of divine law over men" (Khomeini 1981:55). The primacy of religion is a crucial consideration for foreign

policy analysis and research on Iranian negotiating styles. Even after his death, Imam Khomeini's teachings – particularly the principle of the “guardianship of the jurisconsult” (*vilayat-i-faqih*) - are still closely adhered to. According to Articles 56 and 57 of the Iranian Constitution the “guardian” holds God's absolute sovereignty over the world and man. In Qur'anic terms this control is vested in the *Ull-l-amr* or “those charged with authority among you” (The Holy Qur'an, Sura IV/ 59).

The present Religious Leader and ultimate decision maker is Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. He is at the apex of the foreign policy and nuclear decision making process. The emphasis of formal and informal structures in Iran nullifies the importance of legal documents, such as a constitution, since it does not necessarily indicate precisely what the decision making process is or which individual is really responsible for decision making. For example, article 176 of the 1979 Constitution defines the President as the presiding authority of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), Iran's key defence and national security decision making structure. In reality Khamenei and his protégés have direct control of this power centre.

After the Islamic revolution the new revolutionary authorities did not dismantle the institutional legacies of the Imperial dynasty, not even the security structures, but rather reconstructed or created revolutionary and religious organizations that were parallel to those of the central government. As a result Iran's political structures have either been sidelined or are strictly supervised by religiously controlled structures such as the Guardian Council and the Supreme Expediency Council. The military-security structures are key power centres, but they too are overshadowed by two revolutionary structures, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and *basiji* (voluntary militia), which both report directly to Khamenei (Byman, Chubin, Anoushiravan & Green: 2001; Moslem 2002:11). Also vital to Iran is the Friday Prayer leadership, a key clerical institution, often used as forum to discuss Iranian foreign policy (Roshandel 2002:137). According to Imam Khomeini's prescriptions, the prayer leaders must use the Friday prayers to inform Muslims of the conditions and interests of Muslims in other countries and discuss the relations between countries and foreign interference in their countries (Zadeh s.a.:3).

1.2.4 Key elements for the analysis of Iran's negotiating style

The above background provided essential context for the analysis of Iran's negotiation style (cf. chapter 3 in which the following four key elements will be explored):

- Iran is a theocracy where no distinction is made between the religious and the temporal world. It is an Islamic Republic under the guardianship of the *vilayat-i faqih*. As a result its negotiation strategies and styles are bound to be religiously driven. In other words Iran practises a faith-based diplomacy, which sets it apart from its secular or Western counterparts.
- Importance of location: Iran has been crucial over centuries as a strategic bridgehead between the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, Russia, western Asia, the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman. Due to its location and its oil resources it is perpetually involved in big power rivalry, first about Iranian oil and currently about nuclear proliferation.
- Involvement in big power rivalry: The result of Iran's rejection of foreign interference is presently reflected in its increasingly dominant anti-imperialist identity. It is also a main justification for policies and strategies that reflect its ideas of national pride, honour, and *Gharbzadaha* (which entails that Iran steadfastly defends and pursues its national independence) in terms of its foreign policy and negotiations against the "plague of being struck by the West".
- The pervasive presence of the past: Iran is a country of two halves, Persian and Islamic with Twelver Shī'ism presently dominating. While Shī'ism has a vital impact on Iranian foreign policy structures, the mixture of ancient Persian and Shī'ism elements will continue to be present in Iranian politics, leadership structures and negotiating style. These factors include the emphasis on independence and pride; irredentism (the acquisition of territory that was once part of a country that needs to be regained); unrealism and persistent discrepancies between its objectives and capabilities; procrastination, the principles of the Imamate (*Naṣṣ* and the doctrine of *Ilm*) - as well as *Taqīyyah* or concealment and the importance of martyrdom and sacrifice.

1.3 LITERATURE SURVEY

No previous academic research could be found that has either explored the Iranian negotiating style in general, or that has compared or specifically analysed the negotiating methods employed during the 1979 hostage crisis and Iran-EU nuclear negotiations. This conclusion followed an extensive search of online sites (e.g. the UP CSIR site and Sabinet). If the main objective of the dissertation, namely “how Iranian diplomats negotiate” is researched, it is believed that a valuable contribution could be made to the study of international negotiations.

The main constraint affecting the research is the lack of accessible information from primary Iranian sources dealing particularly with negotiations. Iran is a highly controlled society and it has no system for the declassification of government documents. It also controls the Internet and uploads very little data itself. Therefore where primary Iranian sources are accessed it was mostly done indirectly. US sources are also biased because of the strained US-Iran relationship (Pollack 2004:ixx). Iran’s isolation, either self-imposed or enforced by foreign powers, adds to the problem. Despite these difficulties and language constraints it is believed that sufficient data has been collected from Iranian and foreign sources to analyse the case studies.

Primary sources addressing the hostage crisis between Iran and the US to be used include: the *Hukumat-i Islami* (Islamic Government) of the Iranian Leader Imam Khomeini; Khomeini’s address to the papal nuncio, Monsignor Bugnini, in which he “justifies” the act of the Militant Students occupying the US embassy; the Imam’s New Year’s Message and his Message to the Pilgrims in which he articulated the four conditions for the release of the US hostages (Khomeini 1981:278-285; 1980:286, 306); an interview with the Tudeh party’s secretary general Kianuri (MERIP Reports 1980:24-25) and the two commitments between Iran and the US which effected the release of the hostages (Keesing’s Contemporary Archives 1981:31083-31086).

Amongst the secondary sources are Ramazani (1966, 1975, 1980) and books dealing with US and Iranian views analysing the embassy takeover by CIA Director Turner (1991), Ebtekar (2000); Zabih (1982) and Heikal (1982), amongst others.

Because of the evolving nature of this issue, sources addressing the Iran-E3/EU nuclear negotiations appeared more recently than those dealing with the hostage crisis. Primary sources include the IISS Strategic dossier (2005), which evaluates Iran's strategic weapons programmes the EU3 and "Iran, Basic Notes: An Occasional Paper" (July 2005), which reflect the views of all the participants; key agreements between Iran and the E3/EU such as the Tehran Agreement (2003), the Paris Agreement (2004) and the IAEA Board of Governors resolutions regarding the implementation of the NPT Safeguard Agreements in Iran (GOV/2003/69 of 12 September 2003; GOV/2003/81 of 26 November 2003; GOV/2004/21 of 13 March 2004; GOV/2002/49 of 18 June 2004; GOV/2004/79 of 18 September 2004 and GOV/2004/90 of 29 November 2004).

Iran is simultaneously involved on different levels, which means that statements, interviews, threats and appeals surface from all sides - be it Iranian, the E3/EU, the individual European capitals, the US, Israel, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the UN. Few studies are unbiased and none focus on the methodology of how Iran conducts the nuclear negotiations. The sources nevertheless provide the background to the issue and can be categorised as secondary sources. A few worth mentioning are: Samii (2005a:5-9) describing the Iranian foreign policy process as applied to nuclear decision making; the International Crisis Group's (ICG) Middle East Briefing Report on Iran's Nuclear program (2004); the analysis of Bowen and Kidd (2004) on Iran's "Nuclear challenges"; and Moshaver's analyses (2003 and 2005) regarding Iran-EU relations. Since the conclusions drawn from these sources only partly address the research problem the gaps will have to be filled by inference and conjecture.

1.4 IDENTIFICATION AND DEMARCATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM: HOW DO IRANIANS NEGOTIATE?

1.4.1 Identification of the research problem

As stated above, the main research question at issue here is: "How do Iranian diplomats negotiate?" Important subquestions are the following:

- Who, during the two periods of negotiation – the hostage crisis and the nuclear discussions - constituted the "ultimate decision making unit" in Iran?
- How were the two sets of negotiations organised and what factors influenced these processes?

- How have Iranian negotiating processes and style as applied during the 1979 hostage crisis changed in comparison with the nuclear negotiations that were conducted during the period from 2003 to 2006?

1.4.2 Demarcation of the research problem

The research focuses on two critical issues. Chapter 5 deals with case study I and analyses the US hostage siege of 1979. It started on 4 November 1979 and ended on 20 January 1981 with the release of the hostages. Chapter 6 covers case study II or the Iran-E3/EU nuclear negotiations, which started in 2003 and are continuing despite the formal ending of the Iran-E3/EU negotiations announced in February 2006 when the Iran nuclear dossier was reported to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The dialogue continues with the E3/EU part of an enlarged multilateral forum (the P5+1 or the UNSC permanent members and Germany), but for present purposes the analysis is confined to the period between 2003 and 2006.

1.4.3 Key concepts

The key concepts relating to the study of Iranian negotiating style will be: negotiations; the “ultimate decision making unit”; and equilibrium (neutrality). While they will be briefly reviewed, a more comprehensive analysis will be made in chapters 2 and 4.

1.4.3.1 Negotiations

Negotiations refer to a communication process used by two or more parties in an attempt to resolve issues of mutual interest through joint action (Adair & Brett 2004:158). It is traditionally a multiphased process. Cohen (1997:67-68) divided it into five phases: preparation; beginning; middle; end and negotiation. The four prenegotiation phases are part of an integrated process, starting with preparatory work to overcome possible obstacles that prevented negotiations in the past and ending when the parties agree to start formal negotiations. Salacuse (2003:17-20) and Mitchell (1989:207, 197) respectively divided negotiations into three basic phases: *prenegotiation or tacit bargaining* (when parties determine whether they want to negotiate, then set the agenda, venue and methods of communication); conceptualisation

or face-to-face negotiations (when interests and concepts are defined on which the future deal / relationship will be based); and detail arrangement, or the implementation of the agreements. Negotiation is primarily a Western concept and has a negative meaning in other languages. “Concession” or “compromise” too is unacceptable and humiliating in the honour-based Iranian society (Cohen 1997:108). Words that mean “compromise” and “mediate” in Farsi also lack the positive meaning of their English equivalents and are rather perceived as “meddling”. For example, when UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim visited Tehran in January 1980 to “deal with the hostage crisis” his remark “I came as a mediator to work out a compromise”, quoted out of context, was a set-back for the negotiations because the Iranian people saw it as an insult and actually stoned his delegation (Fisher & Ury 1999:34-35). Since mediation and arbitration are the chosen methods, as explained in chapter 4, description of the relevant terminologies is essential: Arbitration involves judicial procedures resulting in a verdict to which the parties are committed by agreement; while mediation is a form of third-party intervention in a conflict for the purpose of resolving that conflict through negotiations. The intervention (or political process) must be accepted by the adversaries, but there is no advance commitment by the parties to accept the mediator’s ideas. A key to the understanding of mediation is that it transforms the traditional dyadic relationship into a triadic relationship, with concurrent reconversions into dyadic coalitions as exchanges take place between the parties (Touval & Zartman 1985:1-2, 10).

When analysing the phased nature of the two Iranian case studies, the negotiations differ in terms of timeframe and as processes. The hostage crisis had a clear start on 4 November 1979, ending on 20 January 1981 when an agreement was reached to release the hostages with the assistance of an Algerian mediator (Ebtekar 2000:13, 234; Pienaar & Spoelstra 1996:18). By contrast, the nuclear negotiations are ongoing and dealt with on both the bilateral and multilateral levels. Trilateral nuclear negotiations are also conducted between Iran, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the E3/EU. When the IAEA reported Iran’s “transgressions” to the UNSC in February 2006, however, the negotiations were elevated to another level where the five permanent members of the UNSC, particularly China and Russia, became key decision makers given their veto power. Although still important in terms of the UNSC, the E3/EU has become of lesser importance in the face-to-face nuclear dialogue with Iran as the US increasingly sets the pace within the UNSC to apply pressure on Tehran.

1.4.3.2 The “ultimate decision making unit”

Hermann *et al.* (1987:309-311) define the “ultimate decision making unit” as the multitude of separate authorities within a state that have the ability to commit the resources of the state to focus on a particular problem and finally authorise a decision. They also distinguish between three types of “ultimate decision making units”: the predominant leader, the single group and the multiple autonomous groups (Hermann *et al.* 1987:313-318). Using this typology, Hermann *et al.* (1987:322-323) concluded that the Iranian leadership at the time of the hostage crisis effectively took the form of *multiple autonomous groups with zero-sum relationships*. They argued that none of the respective revolutionary groups had the capacity to act on behalf of the revolutionary regime since their respective actions were always blocked by initiatives from other groups. This also applied to Ayatollah Khomeini, whose influence, despite his appearance as the predominant leader, was limited. Moin (2000) and Pollack (2004), however, perceive the reality of Khomeini’s decision making rather as the result of coordinated actions based on the ancient Iranian diplomatic tradition to use a foreign issue to enhance a leader’s internal power base.

The “ultimate decision making unit” has changed since 1979, and if the typology of Hermann *et al.* (1987) is applied to the nuclear negotiations, the present Iranian leadership can be described as being represented by a *sensitive predominant leader*. Such a leader, according to Hermann *et al.* (1987:325), primarily monitors the domestic environment and protects his position by being aware of shifting alliances and a fluid support base. He defines which groups are affected by the foreign policy problem, the nature of their reactions and seeks consensus, first amongst his closest supporters, then among the opposition, or in its absence among the factional opposition.

1.4.3.3 Equilibrium (neutrality)

Equilibrium was initially introduced as a foreign policy strategy to resist foreign interference in Iran. It reappeared over the years in many guises such as the principle of “negative equilibrium” during the 1951-53 rule of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq. To him “negative equilibrium” was a radical paradigm shift that encapsulated both the termination of British colonial rule and the consolidation of a policy in which

the great powers were equally deprived of the opportunity to assert undue influence on Iranian affairs (Mahdavi 2003a:15). Equilibrium reemerged in 1979 as expressed in the revolutionary slogan: “*Neither East, nor West, only the Islamic Republic of Iran*”, that is viewed through the prism of non-alignment (Sadri 1998:2). The US was seen as the biggest danger to the revolution because of its close relationship with the Shah and as a representative of the West. The Soviet Union (i.e. the East) with its socialist bias was viewed with less distaste, due to its lesser involvement with the Shah, while capitalism and socialism, as “materialist ideologies”, were both perceived as inclined to maintain their domination of the Third World and as inherently hostile to Islam. Consequently, it has been one of Iran’s major policy objectives to preclude all forms of political, economic, and cultural dependence on “foreign ideologies” and to rely solely on Islam (Country Study of Iran 2005; Khomeini 1980:286). As noted earlier, both neutrality and non-alignment presently form a key element of Iran’s policy of anti-imperialism.

1.5. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

1.5.1 Theoretical framework

The research will be qualitative in nature and based on a literature study. The principal theoretical framework for this dissertation is based on the two-level game metaphor developed by Putnam (1988) and Evans, Jacobson and Putnam (1993) for the analysis of international relations and domestic politics. The secondary leadership theory of Hermann *et al.* (1987) is used to analyse Iran’s “ultimate decision making unit” and leadership typologies. Both theories will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2. A contextual analysis of the factors influencing Iranian negotiating style will be discussed in chapters 3 and 4. Together these two chapters will provide guidelines for the analysis of the case studies: the hostage siege of the US embassy in Tehran in chapter 5 and the nuclear negotiations with the E3/EU in chapter 6.

Putnam’s two-level game theory proceeds from the interactive process that occurs when a national leader / chief negotiator finds himself negotiating national and international agreements simultaneously: international negotiation (*Level I*) when the leader tries to reach an agreement with other leaders; and domestic negotiation (*Level II*) when the leader tries to get the agreement ratified by his constituency. The ratification process is

the crucial theoretical link between domestic and international politics, and the respective phases on each side are closely intertwined. The two types of pressure are fundamentally different, and the constraints imposed would not be encountered if the negotiations were held in a purely national or international game. As observed in Evans *et al.* (1993:23) each country has its own “win-set”. This is defined as the set of potential agreements that would be ratified by domestic constituencies in a straight up-or-down vote against the *status quo* of “no agreement.” Three building blocks are needed to apply the two-level game metaphor for the purpose of analysing Iranian negotiating style: specifications of domestic politics (the nature of the “win-sets”); the negotiating environment; and the leader / negotiator’s preferences. As mentioned the Iranian Supreme Leader usually has total control over decision making, which nullifies the traditional ratification process. Iran’s senior nuclear negotiator in addition is closely monitored by various “decision making units” (Samii 2005a:6-7).

1.5.2 A literature study

As noted by Mouton (2001:90-95), the criteria for a literature study should be: firstly, an exhaustive coverage of the main aspects of the study and fair treatment of the relevant authors. Secondly, the data should be topical and not outdated, although older seminal works remain relevant in some fields. Thirdly, the Internet should not be the only resource and the review should be well-organised. Mouton listed six ways in which to organise a literature study: chronologically (by date of study); by school of thought; by theory and definition; by theme or construct; by hypothesis; and / or by case study and method. The nature of the present dissertation and the selected case studies, one from 1979 and the other from the present era, necessitates the use of seminal, recent works and the Internet as vital sources of information. The literature will be organised around the constructs of negotiations, leadership and equilibrium.

1.6 THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

The intended research will be divided into seven chapters:

Chapter 1 Introduction: Establishes a framework for the dissertation. It defines key terminologies such as the various definitions of the Middle East / Persian Gulf region;

the Farsi political identity and the Shi'a-Sunni divide in Islam. Constructs of negotiation, leadership and equilibrium have also been addressed as these concepts apply to Iran.

Chapter 2 The theoretical framework: Analysis of the two-level game theory of Putnam (1988) and the leadership theory of Hermann, Hermann and Hagan (1987) as principal and supplementary theories in the development of a framework for the analysis of the Iranian negotiating style in the two case studies. The role of the leader / negotiator in both international and internal negotiations, as well as the various types of ultimate decision making units and leadership typologies are examined.

Chapter 3 Iranian negotiating style: Contextual analysis of factors such as culture, religion and language that influence Iranian negotiating style. Individual negotiation methods are also discussed as they relate to these respective elements.

Chapter 4 A “Triangular dynamic interaction”: “Interaction” between the internal conditions, external environment and Iranian foreign policy methods is analysed in preparation for chapter 5 where the hostage siege is assessed with particular reference to the linkage between domestic and foreign dimensions and the development of Iran’s negotiating methodology is explained.

Chapter 5 Case Study I: Analysis of Iran’s negotiations with the US regarding the hostage siege of 1979. The aim is to establish Iranian negotiating style immediately after the revolution when revolutionary fervour was at its highest.

Chapter 6 Case Study II: Analysis of Iranian nuclear negotiations with the E3/EU from 2003 to 2006. The aim is to analyse developments in Iranian negotiating style during this period.

Chapter 7 Conclusion: Assessment of the framework for the analysis of the Iranian negotiating processes and the assumptions made from the case studies. The development of Iranian negotiating methodology as it manifested immediately after the revolution and during the nuclear negotiations will also be compared. Finally, an attempt is made to create a framework for negotiations with Iran.

CHAPTER 2

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A threefold approach is adopted in this and in the next chapter to provide the theoretical framework for the analysis of the case studies in chapters 5 and 6. The two-level game metaphor respectively propagated by Putnam (1988) and by Evans, Jacobson and Putnam (1993) will be used to analyse the synergic linkage between Iran's international relations and its internal politics. Moreover, since political leaders or negotiators also play a central role in the linkage process, the leadership theory of Hermann, Hermann and Hagan (1987) is employed as a supplementary theory to determine and analyse Iran's "ultimate decision making unit(s)" and leadership typologies. The third element of this framework, which provides a contextual analysis of the factors influencing Iranian attitudes, behaviour and negotiating methods, are discussed in chapter 3.

Putnam's two-level game metaphor forms part of the linkage theories that evolved since the 1960s. It is also part of the debate regarding the relationship between international politics and domestic politics and particularly the when, how and if it is at all possible to unravel what Hill (2003:249) describes as a perpetual entanglement. It remains an old and still unsettled debate with linkage and other theoreticians differing widely about the right approach. While terminologies might differ, most theoreticians focus on the two-level domestic-international analysis as the principal areas of their theories. Singer (1961:78, 80, 82) refers to this analysis as the international system used in conjunction with the national subsystem, while Waltz (1969) is known for his three-image analysis (cf. 2.2.2). Jervis (1976:15) distinguishes four levels of analysis: decision making, the level of the bureaucracy, the nature of the state and the working of domestic politics and the international environment, while Rosenau (1969a:2) uses a different approach based on five dimensions (cf. 2.2.1). Gourevitch (1978) follows a totally different approach and his second-image reversed analysis focuses on the twin questions of causes and consequences.

Only Rosenau (1963, 1969a, 1969b, 1984, 1998), Waltz (1969), and Gourevitch (1978 and 1992) will be discussed, however, to provide some context to the development of Putnam's model. The reasons for discussing their models are that the core theories go beyond the two-level domestic-international analysis, while Putnam too referred briefly to some of the above authors' work when he devised his own theory. However, the intention is not to make a detailed study of the evolution of the theories mentioned, or of the linkage theory. Note, too, that Putnam's two-level theory did not evolve as a "successor", but as a result of the shortcomings Putnam identified to the said theories.

2.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LINKAGE THEORY

2.2.1 James. N. Rosenau

Rosenau (1969a:2, 11) initiated the linkage theory in 1963 mainly to keep pace with a quick-changing world in which connectivity was expanding progressively. Initially, however, there was total disinterest by theoreticians and the specialists of foreign policy and internal politics in each other's work and theories (Rosenau 1969a:9). Both groups were unwilling to abandon the "comforts and confines of their jails" by introducing sets of unknown variables into their theories. Acknowledging that linkage theory would emerge spontaneously, Rosenau took the lead and produced a basic framework as a guide to the analysis of linkage.

To create a new concept and to avoid the constraints presented by the thinking of national and international specialists at the time, Rosenau used definitions and neutral terminology that could not be exclusively identified with either school. For example, he preferred the term *linkage* instead of interdependence and used it as the basic unit in his theory. He defined *linkage* as: "any recurrent sequence of behavior that originates in one system and is reacted to in another" (Rosenau 1969a:45).

He referred to the initial stage of linkage as *output* and to the final stage as *input*. He also preferred to use the terms *polity* and *external environment* respectively, when referring to

the national political system and the international system. Rosenau (1969a:45-49) furthermore identified three types of linkage processes namely *penetrative*, *reactive* and *emulative processes*, to which he added the *concept of fused linkage*.

- The *penetrative process* occurs when members of one polity serve as participants in the political process of another. A military occupation and foreign aid programmes are good examples. Where Iran is concerned, Tehran's signing of the *Treaty of Alliance* with Britain and the USSR in 1942 and later separately with the US is probably one of the best illustrations of this process. According to Ramazani (1975:45-69) as well as Farmanfarmaian and Farmanfarmaian (1999:123-130) this tripartite agreement gave permission to the said foreign countries to occupy parts of Iran, which naturally resulted in the manipulation of Iranian internal and foreign policies. However, the agreement also provided security guarantees to Iran in the post-war era, particularly against the expansionism of the USSR and Britain as the economic relationship with the US was nurtured and allowed precedence.
- The *reactive process* is the opposite of the penetrative process. The actors (members of the polity) initiating the output are not direct participants in the assigned behaviour of those who experience the input. The recurrent reactions to foreign aid programmes is an example of a reactive process involving direct outputs and inputs, while responses to elections in the US regarding the spending of this aid and other trends in Iraq, for example, show a reactive process stemming from indirect outputs and inputs.
- The *emulative process* is a special form of the reactive type and is established when the input is not only a response to the output, but essentially takes the same form as the output. It corresponds to a so-called "transmission" effect whereby political activities in one country are perceived and emulated in another, e.g. decolonisation, the rise of nationalism, democratisation and Islamisation.

- The concept of *fused linkage* arises from the possibility that certain outputs and inputs continuously reinforce each other and are best viewed as forming a reciprocal relationship. In other words, a fused linkage is conceived as a sequence in which an output cultivates an input that in turn fosters an output to the effect that they cannot be meaningfully separated.

Rosenau (1969a:49-63) developed the basis for a matrix framework, which would eventually serve as a broad guiding framework for linkage research. The key element of his matrix was 24 aspects of the polity, which he clustered together as sets of inputs-outputs. These “sets” were subdivided into actors (e.g. executive, legislative and military officials or elite groups), attitudes (e.g. ideology and political culture), institutions (the various bureaucracies and military establishment) and processes (e.g. policy making). He also enhanced the matrix by creating a minimum of 144 yield areas by multiplying the 24 sets of inputs-outputs across the matrix environment with another six experimental sub-environments, namely the contiguous, regional, racial, Cold War, resources and organisational areas. Although Rosenau acknowledged that his matrix was not a precise instrument it started the process of analysing the linkage model.

As a result of the rapid transformation of the political environment of the 1960s as well as frustration and a general loss of confidence, Rosenau constantly adapted and reformulated his theoretical thinking. Apart from the linkage theory Rosenau (1963:115; 1984:249; 1998: 152) also developed the concepts of issue areas, calculated control, political adaptation, aggregative processes, fragmentation (defined as the continuing tension between forces simultaneously promoting order and disorder), and cascading interdependence. For the purposes of this dissertation, however, Rosenau’s foreign policy analysis (1969b:42-43) is particularly important. It was based on five dimensions:

- *The individual idiosyncrasies of the decision-maker who determines and implements the foreign policies of a nation:* These variables include all the values, talents, and prior experiences that distinguish the decision-maker’s foreign policy choices or behaviours from those of another decision-maker.

- *The roles of the decision-maker:* The roles are manifest in the external behaviour that would occur irrespective of the idiosyncrasies of individual persons (role occupants). Examples are usually countries' ambassadors to the UN, or in the case of Iran, the complex roles of Dr Ali Larijani. He served concurrently from 2005 as the Iranian Religious Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's, Representative on the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) - Iran's key defence and national security decision making structure - Secretary of the SNSC, and as Iran's principal nuclear negotiator.
- *Governmental variables:* These variables refer to aspects of a government's structure that limit or enhance the foreign policy choices made by decision-makers. Rosenau uses the impact of executive-legislative relations on US foreign relations as an example to explain this variable.
- *Societal variables:* These are non-governmental aspects (i.e. major value orientations, national unity and extent of industrialisation) of a society that influence its external behaviour and policies.
- *Systemic variables:* These are non-human challenges of a society's external environment and actions that might influence the conduct of foreign policy officials. Key examples are geographic realities, culture, religion and ideology.

Rosenau used this typology for a detailed analysis of the behaviour of small, big, developed and underdeveloped countries. He combined this study with his linkage theory and also measured if the polity represents an open or closed society and whether it was penetrated or not. At the time, however, he kept his focus squarely on the state as primary actor. While it is difficult to delink international and national affairs or politics given the increasingly "porous boundaries" between the two arenas, Rosenau (1998:146) goes further than most theoreticians by coining the concept of "*globalized space*". World affairs have changed due to a "bifurcation" in the global structure, shifting authorities, the globalisation of national economies, the skills, technological, information and

communication revolution and growing turbulence resulting from conflict, poverty and the developing world (Rosenau 1998:155-168). Rosenau (1998:148) argues that while the nation-state still exists and is unlikely to vanish, its central place has been taken by “globalized space”, which he defines as a replacement of the international system and:

a terra incognita that sometimes takes the form of a market, sometimes appears as a civil society, sometimes seems to be a fledgling community, often looks like a regional network, sometimes resembles a legislative chamber, periodically is a crowded town square, occasionally is a battlefield, increasingly is traversed by an information highway and usually looks like a multiring circus in which all these - and many other - activities are unfolding simultaneously.

According to Rosenau (1998:152) the post-Cold War era has been replaced by an era of fragmentation. The inherent and continuing tension between order and disorder or fragmenting and integration of this process are closely linked and form a contradictory dynamic, which is a key feature of “globalized space”. Rosenau thus “climbed out of the box” with this unconventional approach in the analysis of the domestic-international arena. The concept of “globalized space” postdates Putnam’s theory, however, and was not available for analysis by Putnam. It is important to note, however, that Rosenau no longer views the state as the only key actor. The state under present conditions has to cope with “disparate, but formidable rivals from another world” with “globalized space” and with the challenges posed by counterparts in their own world (Rosenau (1998:159).

2.2.2 Kenneth Waltz

Waltz (1969) analysed the sources and causes of war in his book, *Man, the State and War*, and distinguished three levels of conflict, namely man as the “first image”, the nation-state as the “second image”, and the state system as the “third image.” While he saw the “first image” as the principal cause for war, his analysis of this level dealt mostly with a criticism of the behavioural scientists. His analyses of the “second image” and the “third image”, however, are more relevant in terms of the linkage theories since they

dealt respectively with the development of the nation-state and the state system, both important elements of the internal and international structure. Waltz created a typology of nation-states and concluded that the nature of a state's political institutions, its modes of production and distribution, the quality and origins of its elites and the characteristics of its population are all factors determining whether a state will be peaceful or belligerent. In terms of the state system or "third image", Waltz stressed that a clash of interests among states and the absence of a regulatory authority are the root of all conflict. He further emphasised that the policy of a state is determined by its goals and by its relations with other states. In other words, everyone's strategy depends upon everyone else's strategy. He also accentuated the interlocking nature of all three images. While the first and second images describe the forces in world politics, the third image provides a framework for world politics (Singer 1960:454-460; Waltz 1969:2, 211, 238).

2.2.3 Peter Gourevitch

In his famous analysis of the "*second image-reversed*" Gourevitch (1978:882) focused on the twin questions of causes and consequences, that is, on the issues of how internal politics and domestic structure may be consequences and not a cause of international politics. It follows that international politics are also causes and not consequences. This causality is something that Almond (1989:241) would refer to as the "circular" character of national-international interaction. Gourevitch (1978:882) did a threefold analysis, focusing on the domestic structure as a variable in explaining foreign policy, while also exploring the extent to which that structure itself derives from the exigencies of the international system. He also analysed the distinction between "strong" and "weak" states and explored the links between internal and international politics.

Gourevitch's primary focus is on the first issue and he analyses how domestic politics and policy are principally influenced by the international economic and security environments. He identifies war and trade as the two most important aspects to influence or shape political development. However, other external forces in the international environment (e.g. ideology, meddling and religion) were also seen as impacting on

politics and decisions or decision making, political regime characteristics and coalition patterns (Gourevitch 1978:882-883; Almond 1989:241). He also made an intensive study of the work of other political scientists and theoreticians with reference to concepts such as the international economy, theories of “dependencia”, core-periphery, imperialism, the liberal development school, modernisation, transnational relations, interdependence and the international state system. He came to the conclusion that the students of comparative politics treat domestic structures too much as an independent variable, thereby minimizing the interdependence between domestic structures and the international system (Gourevitch 1978:884-900).

Gourevitch (1978:900-901) returns in the second part of his analysis to the traditional question of which aspect of domestic structure best explains how a country behaves in the international environment, stressing that the only argument that would resolve this question would have to assume that domestic structure derives entirely from the international terrain. This is a “non-reductionist” approach or a reversal of Waltz’s theory, whereby Gourevitch substitutes the “second image” (the nation-state) for the “third image” (the state system). He also identifies state strength as part of a variable, which positioned “strong” states *vis-à-vis* “weak” states or state centred policy networks *vis-à-vis* “society-centred policy networks”.

Gourevitch (1978:911) finally concluded that the international system is not only a consequence of domestic politics and structures, but also a cause of them. Furthermore, international economic relations and foreign military pressures constrain domestic behaviours, from policy decisions to political forms. International relations and national politics are thus so interrelated that they should be analysed simultaneously, as a “unit”. Gourevitch (1992) endorses the point with a comprehensive analysis of a number of economic crisis periods in history and particularly how and when countries “choose” a specific policy option or a sequence of options. According to Gourevitch (1992:59-61) such choices can be explained according to five theories: the particular structure of a national economy in relation to the international economy; the characteristics of associational interest groups (their size, extent of membership, organisational

characteristics and relationships to parties); the structure of the state – its centralisation and concentration of its authorities and the characteristics of the bureaucracy; the nature of its economic ideology; and finally the rationale to explain that economic policy choices are completely constrained by international forces. According to Gourevitch all five variables are required to explain outcomes. Gourevitch's works are of particular importance given his emphasis on the interaction of the economy, society, politics and international politics, and they resonate compellingly with previous theories regarding the interrelationships between international relations and domestic politics.

2.3 ROBERT PUTNAM'S TWO-LEVEL GAME MODEL

2.3.1 The development of a conceptual framework

Putnam (1988:427) too posed the question regarding the entanglement of domestic politics with international relations and initially concluded that it is actually “fruitless” to debate whether domestic politics really determine international relations or the reverse. In his search for theory, which would explain international negotiation, Putnam (1988:430) described both Waltz's “second image” theory and Gourevitch's “second-image reversed” theory as insufficient. They only offered “partial equilibrium” analyses, but failed to clarify how the domestic politics of countries became entangled via international negotiation. Rosenau's linkage research was also perceived as being too narrowly focused on conflict behaviour. Putnam therefore proposed the development of “general equilibrium” theories and formulated a conceptual framework to explain how diplomacy (negotiation) and domestic politics interact.

Although Putnam's (1988:433) two-level game metaphor appears to be unique, he based parts of his theory on the work of Walton and McKersie (1965), two labour negotiators specialising in labour and management relationship, whose behavioural theory also applied to international conflict and cooperation. Walton and McKersie perceived labour negotiations as an example of social negotiations and described it as containing at the same time a number of conflicting and collaborative elements. Labour negotiations

illustrate how to defend self-interest while engaged in joint problem-solving since it complicates the bargaining process. Attitudes, feelings and the relationship between the parties are viewed as unique, continuing and long-term, providing a mechanism to link successive negotiations. Most important in terms of Putnam's theory, however, is the fact that negotiations involve complex "social units" in which the constituent members are not only interested in what goes on at the bargaining table, but also have some influence on the negotiators (Walton & McKersie 1965:1-3).

Walton and McKersie (1965:4-5) formulated four systems of activity, which form the basis of their analytical framework of labour negotiations, namely:

- Distributive bargaining, which is bargaining in the strictest form or an intention to resolve conflicts of interest.
- Integrative bargaining refers to the system of activities which is instrumental to the attainment of objectives which are not in conflict with those of the other party, and which can thus be integrated to a certain degree.
- Attitudinal structuring or the system of activities instrumental to the attainment of desired relationship patterns between the respective parties.
- Intra-organisational bargaining or the system of activities which brings the expectations of the principals into alignment with those of the chief negotiator.

While distributive and integrative bargaining are both joint decision making processes, attitudinal structuring is a socio-emotional, interpersonal process designed to change attitudes and relationships. All three play a crucial role in the reconciliation process between the union and the company. In contrast, intraorganisational bargaining is a key element in terms of labour bargaining (Walton & McKersie 1965:5-6). This element in particular has also been adopted as a central focus by Putnam, and the chief negotiator has become the principal link in his interactive bargaining process.

2.3.1.1 Putnam's two-level game: an interactive bargaining process

Putnam (1988:434) describes the politics of international negotiations in general terms as a two-level game:

At the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the government to adopt favourable positions and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups. At the international level, national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments. Neither of the two games can be ignored by central decision-makers, so long as their countries remain interdependent, yet sovereign.

To ease analysis, Putnam portrayed this two-level game metaphor as an interactive bargaining process, with *Level I* comprising negotiations on an international level and *Level II* discussions on the national or domestic level. Statesmen or national leaders (henceforth referred to as chief negotiators) and the ratification process fulfils a key role in this bargaining process. The chief negotiator, on each side, is actively involved in negotiations on both game boards / tables. Their main task at *Level I* is to compose tentative agreements, which will have to be ratified at *Level II* (Putnam 1988:434, 436). Putnam's two-level interactive bargaining process is illustrated in *Figure 2.1*. It reflects the theoretical link between *Level I* and *Level II*, the principal role of the chief negotiator, the domestic constituents as identified by Putnam, and the ratification process.

Although all these elements will be explored, it is impossible to clearly de-link them from each other, with the result that an overlap between the two principal elements is inevitable. While the ratification process and the role of the chief negotiator are the two key elements, a number of other strategies and processes, such as win-sets and "synergistic issue linkage" also form an intrinsic part of the comprehensive two-stage interactive bargaining process across *Level I* and *Level II*.

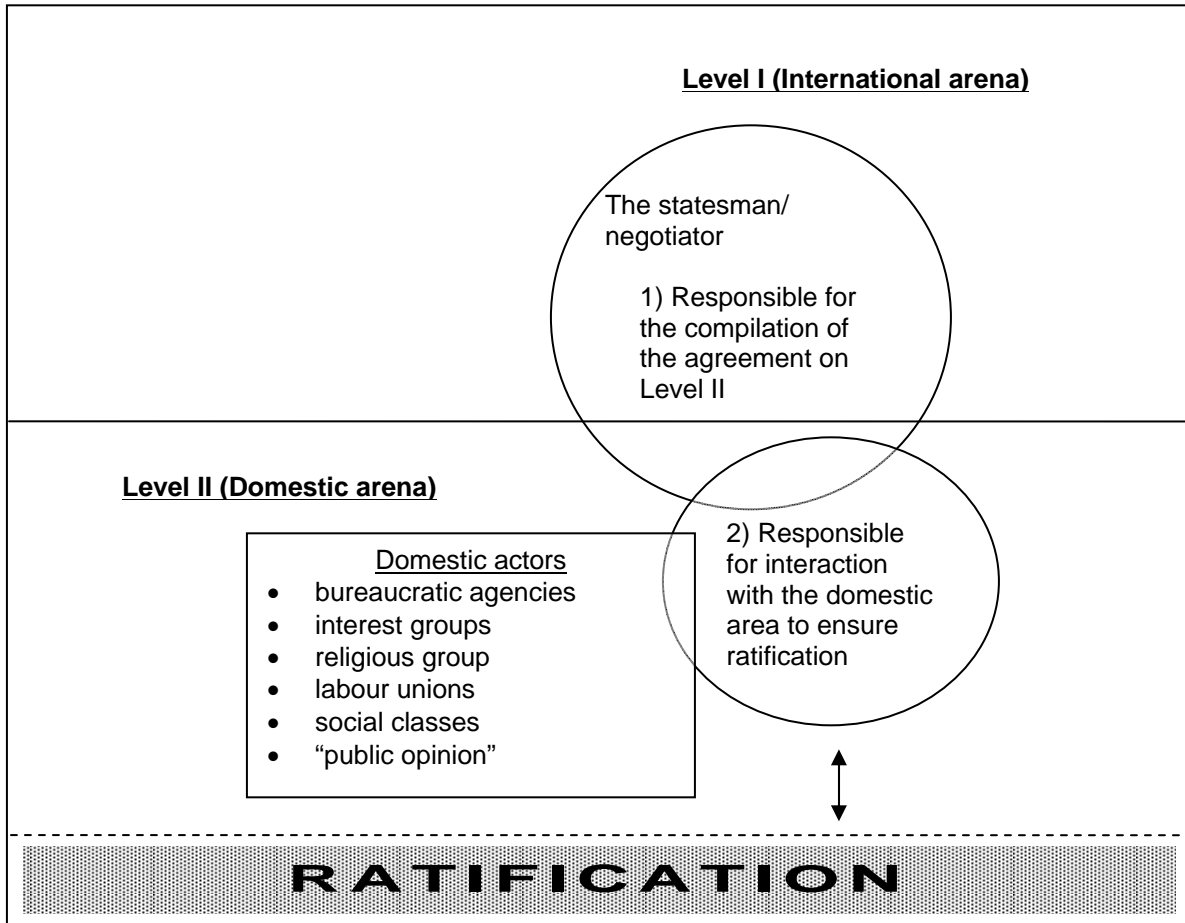


Figure 2.1: Putnam's two-level interactive bargaining process

a) The ratification process

The ratification process primarily takes place at *Level II* and is the theoretical link between *Level I* and *Level II*. It influences negotiation positions on both sides of the "game" before and during the *Level I* negotiations and is a prerequisite for international agreements (Putnam 1988:436). It forms an intrinsic part of the chief negotiator's activities, but will be discussed separately where possible in an attempt to explore and clarify certain procedures and constraints. To illustrate the symbiotic relationship between ratification and the chief negotiator, cognisance needs to be taken that the chief negotiator also consults and coordinates the different domestic opinions at *Level II* in order to reach a unified domestic view that can serve as terms of reference in

international negotiations at *Level I*. The influence of domestic groups / public opinion remains a key element during the *Level I* negotiation process on negotiators on both sides and their bargaining positions since there is always the vital requirement of ratification. As these discussions proceed and new issues appear, the chief negotiators need the opinions and advice of their domestic constituents in order to make sure that the negotiated agreement actually will be ratified at the end of the *Level II* process. Given the interactive nature of the ratification process it is also important to consider constantly the “expectation of rejection” at *Level II* since it will negatively affect the negotiations at *Level I* (Putnam 1988:436; Moravcsik 1993: 23). It might even result in the termination of the negotiations without any formal action at *Level II*, regardless of the support a possible agreement might have garnered on both sides of the table.

An example, relevant to the Iran-US hostage issue in 1979, was when key Iranian negotiators realised that the Iranian Religious Leader Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (*vilayat-i faqih*), could not be influenced by internal sources. The idea was then mooted of using outside sources or individuals with reputations of being in opposition to the Shah as well as having anti-American sentiments. According to the strategy, the Iranian government would request the UN to investigate the crimes of the Shah and the US in Iran, despite US objections, so as to allow Iran to hail the investigation as a victory and provide it with an exit from the impasse. The Secretary General of the UN, Kurt Waldheim, regrettably announced this “breakthrough” prematurely to the media, denying Iran the chance to claim victory. The strategy collapsed when it became public and thus liable to *de facto* “ratification” at *Level II* in both the US and Iran. The hostages remained in Iran, while the leak also led to riots in Tehran during Waldheim’s visit in January 1980 (Fisher & Ury 1999:34-35; Zabih 1982a: 53-54).

Putnam (1988:436-437) described the essence of the ratification process as a formal voting procedure at *Level II*, such as the two-thirds vote requirement in the US Senate. In more general terms, however, it can refer to any decision making process at *Level II* that is technically required for the implementation or endorsement of a *Level I* agreement,

whether it be the result of formal or informal negotiations. While the actors mentioned by Putnam as participants at *Level II* in *Figure 2.1* (bureaucratic agencies, interest groups, labour unions, social classes and “public opinion”) are broad categories, they do reflect the character of democracies. He nonetheless also acknowledges that the ratification process need not necessarily be democratic, thus leaving room for the use of the process in less democratic and even theocratic environments like Iran, in which case it would be appropriate to add religious groups to the list of constituents. Putnam’s only stipulation is a common denominator for the counting of the votes in any ratification process.

According to Putnam (1988:437) the only formal constraint on the ratification process is that it must be ratified by both sides. A preliminary *Level I* agreement cannot be amended at *Level II* without reopening the *Level I* negotiations. Negotiations can simply be voted up or down since any modification is viewed as a rejection unless it is approved by both parties to the agreement. Moravcsik (1993:25) explored this issue further and stressed that statesman / negotiators may at times alter the outcomes of the ratification process by shaping or reshaping the formal and informal ratification procedures, for example through changes in voting rules, veto, issue-linkage, agenda-setting, enforcement of party discipline or side payments. The most radical method however, is seen as the announcement of comprehensive social and institutional reforms since it will radically change the domestic constraints and the total *Level II* environment. Two additional concepts used to manipulate domestic constraints are the size of the win-set and “synergistic issue linkage”. These concepts will be discussed as part of the win-set.

i) The concept of the win-set: a strategy of negotiation

Putnam (1988:437) defines a win-set as a set of potential agreements or possible negotiating outcomes that would be ratified by domestic constituencies in a straight up-or-down vote against the *status quo* of “no agreement.” Since domestic ratification is required at *Level II*, a win-set is in fact also a domestic constraint. Putnam borrowed the concept of a win-set from the work of Shepsle and Weingast (1987), particularly the key issue of committee power and conference politics, as well as the *ex post veto* (a key

enforcement mechanism used by committees to maintain their dominance as veto groups). According to Shepsle and Weingast (1987:86) “committee power resides in the rules governing the sequence of proposing, amending, and especially of vetoing in the legislative process.”

The win-set is a key instrument of negotiating that reminds strongly of what Fisher and Ury (1999:104) defined as the *Best Alternative to a Negotiation Agreement (BATNA)*. They view BATNA as a vital element in negotiation and the only standard that can serve as protection against unfavourable terms and against rejecting terms that are potentially favourable. The said authors emphasise that every possible solution should be explored, including what will happen if no negotiations take place and also to consider your opponents’ BATNA.

A key element of Putnam’s theory is his application of the win-set as a strategy of negotiation. In this regard it is mainly the “size” of the win-set that is emphasised. Putnam (1988:437-438, 440) and Iida (1993:405) have advanced a two-fold hypothesis concerning the win-set as a strategy of negotiations:

Hypothesis 1: Larger win-sets make *Level I* agreement more likely

Hypothesis 2: The smaller the win-set, the greater the risk of failure in negotiations.

- The size of the win-set

A general precondition for an international agreement is that there has to be an *overlap* between the win-sets of the opposing chief negotiators. The larger the win-sets at *Level II*, the more likely it is that they will overlap and will result in an agreement. A large win-set gives the chief negotiator a large amount of negotiating room. The smaller the win-sets at *Level II*, the less likely it is that they will overlap and the prospect of an international agreement will disappear (Putnam 1988:437-438).

- The relative size of the win-set

The relative size of the win-set is also important in that it affects the distribution of joint gains from the negotiation. If the domestic win-set of a chief negotiator is much broader than the other chief negotiator's win-set (and this is known to the negotiators around the table), the chief negotiator might be manipulated or "pushed around" by other *Level I* negotiators to formulate an agreement, which might be more advantageous to weaker states since they sometimes have less problems in terms of a future ratification process than a stronger country. Conversely, a small domestic win-set may be a bargaining advantage and the opposing negotiator(s) might find that there is little room for flexibility and that they need to accept the offer as it stands (Putnam 1988:440; Iida 1993:405).

- Changing the size of the win-set

The chief negotiator is also able to use his autonomy to change the size of the domestic win-set. Although the preferences of domestic groups are assumed to be constant in Putnam's model, the chief negotiator might, through his role as agenda setter, put forward issues in such a way that they appeal to domestic constituencies that would normally be unwilling to accept the issue in question. In doing so he would make use of a tactic Putnam refers to as "synergistic issue linkage". In practical terms the chief negotiator achieves ratification by linking "unpopular" provisions, previously outside the win-set, to more popular provisions. This is not a way of "...changing the preferences of any domestic constituents, but rather [a way of] creating new policy options ... that were previously beyond domestic control (Putnam 1988:447; Moravcsik 1993: 25).

- ii) The determinants of the win-set

Putnam (1988) deals with these issues in cursory fashion, identifying three determinants that influence the size of the win-set:

- The distribution of power, preferences and possible coalitions among Level II constituents

Putnam emphasises the need for a theory of domestic politics when analysing the close correlation between the type of international negotiations required and the relevant issue to be negotiated at any given time. He also stresses that the lower the cost of no-agreement to constituents, the smaller the win-set. If the issue of ratification is measured against the proposed agreement, it often happens that no-agreement turns out to be a continuation of the *status quo*. In some cases, however, no-agreement may worsen the situation. The evaluation of no-agreement may in some cases be the only major disagreement among the *Level II* constituents because their interests are mostly homogeneous. There are occasions, however, when the interests or preferences of the constituents are heterogeneous, for example when an international agreement encounters domestic opposition. Consider in this regard the instance where in 1919 the US Congress rejected the Treaty of Versailles because of differences of opinion amongst its members regarding the treatment of the defeated powers. A key task of the chief negotiator is thus to balance the homogenous and heterogeneous interests against each other (Putnam 1988:442-443). On rare occasions coercive bargaining is also used. At first Putnam excludes the use of threats, but then changed his model to include threats as an instrument, while also emphasising that it should always be possible to ratify an agreement (Moravcsik 1993:29).

It is important to note that support for international agreements is probably greater in smaller, dependent countries with more open economies, compared to self-sufficient countries like the US, for whose citizens the cost of no-agreement is generally lower. States with smaller win-sets should make fewer international agreements and drive harder bargains in those that they do make. Furthermore, the composition of the active *Level II* constituency and hence the character of its win-set also varies in accordance with the amount of politicisation of the issue. Moreover, the chief negotiator has the ability or right to create additional or new policy options through

“synergistic issue linkage” to overturn the outcome of the initial negotiations or the “size of the constituents’ win-sets (Putnam 1988:443, 445, 447).

- The influence of Level II institutions

Putnam (1988:448) also argues that ratification procedures affect the size of the win-set. For example, the win-set will be smaller, in the case of a simple majority than when a two-thirds vote is required. Furthermore, a unique and unfortunate characteristic of democracies is that because of the effectiveness of the veto power of a small group, many important agreements have been rejected and many have never even been considered for ratification. The type of institution in a country also impacts directly on the size of the win-set and might impose a tighter constraint as in the case, of the US’s separation of powers. This increases the bargaining power of, in this case a US negotiator, but it also reduces the scope for international cooperation. This situation enhances the possibility of *involuntary defection*, defined as when domestic groups subvert or veto an agreement supported by the statesman or chief negotiator. *Voluntary defection* refers to a situation where a state led by a statesman or chief negotiator rejects ratification of an agreement. Both types of defection form part of the ratification process (Moravcsik 1993:28; Putnam 1988:438).

While it is important to take the roles of formal institutions into account, it is crucial to stress that not all ratification processes are formalised. Putnam (1988:448) cites the Japanese inclination to seek the broadest possible domestic consensus as an example. This theory appears to be even more relevant in the case of present-day Iran, where a plethora of formal and informal institutions form part of the Iranian decision making units or leadership system (*nazam*), an issue that will be analysed in chapter 6.

- The strategies of Level I negotiators

Each *Level I* negotiator has a direct interest in maximising his opponent’s win-set, but always with respect to his own win-set. It must be remembered that an overlap is

required for a successful agreement and that the negotiator's bargaining power is greater when a win-set is relatively small. When a chief negotiator has a large win-set he can demonstrate his abilities to his constituents at home (*Level II*), but then runs the risk of obstructing the process at *Level I* and also jeopardises eventual ratification. Various trade-offs may be used, such as financial threats, backing to build or sustain the popularity of the opposing chief negotiator, and periodic cooperation by the opposing chief negotiators to draft agreements that would be certain of ratification (Putnam 1988:450-451; Walton & McKersie 1965:319).

b) The role of the chief negotiator

The chief negotiator is the second element of Putnam's two-level game metaphor and is viewed by Putnam (1988:456) as the only formal link between the national and the international levels. The chief negotiator is the principal strategic actor or negotiator between *Level I* and *Level II*, although they might be represented by foreign ministers, advisers, representatives and other diplomats. He / she have a double role, most crucially to reconcile dilemmas stemming from conflict at two levels: differing aspirations about issues and differing expectations about behaviour, as noted by Walton and Mckersie (1965:6). In terms of Putnam's two-level game metaphor (his) functions are principally to compose an agreement at *Level I*, and secondly to consult and coordinate domestic opinions at *Level II* in order to reach a unified domestic view that can serve as terms of reference in international negotiations at *Level I*. The chief negotiator's central position gives him the opportunity to act independently and employ different strategies within the boundaries of what Putnam terms the domestic win-set. The influence of domestic opinion on negotiators and their bargaining positions on both sides remains a key element during the *Level I* negotiation process since there is always the vital requirement of ratification at *Level II*. The chief negotiator thus also plays a key role in terms of the ratification process (Putnam 1988:434-437; Moravcsik 1993:23).

In his analysis of the role of the chief negotiator, Putnam (1988:456) emphasises that he has initially assumed, for the sake of analysis, that the negotiator has no independent

policy views, but merely acts as an honest broker or agent on behalf of his constituents. However, when following the logic of the *principal-agent model* - a paradigm that comes into play whenever one person (the agent) acts on behalf of another (the principal) - he concludes that negotiators are likely to promote their own interests. These might be a narrow self-serving search for popularity, be it in pursuing the negotiators' own concept of "national interest" or an attempt to shift the balance of forces at *Level II* in favour of domestic policies, which they need to support the negotiations at the international *Level I* (Putnam 1988:457; Zeckhauser 1991:2). These interests or preferences might be different from those of his constituents. It becomes critical when the theory of the principal-agent model is followed. According to Bernheim and Whinston (1986:923-924) the actions and preferences of a particular agent affects everyone, including the principals, and might end in conflict. The situation is known as "common agency," of which there are two categories:

- *Delegated common agency* refers to a situation when several parties voluntarily or independently bestow the right to make certain decisions upon a single agent. This type of arrangement is mostly prevalent in the trade area.
- *Intrinsic common agency* arises when an individual is "naturally" empowered with the authority to make particular decisions affecting other parties, who may in turn attempt to overturn that decision. Planning problems and government bodies pursuing a narrow legislative mandate are prominent examples.

Putnam also stresses that the strength of a chief negotiator lies in his credibility or his ability to strike deals at *Level I* and to deliver the agreement to his constituents on *Level II*. This ability to balance demands *vis á vis* concessions have been pivotal to many successful or failed agreements (Putnam 1988:439, 440). The chief negotiator is therefore the central strategic actor in international negotiations, and according to Moravcsik (1993:17) his strategies will continue to "reflect a simultaneous double-edged calculation of constraints and opportunities on both the domestic and international boards."

2.3.2 An evaluation of Putnam's two-level game model

Putnam's two-level game metaphor principally deals with international bargaining. It has elevated the statesman / chief negotiator to the role of a principal actor, which has given renewed importance to Waltz's "*first-image theory*" - the principal role of the individual. The chief negotiator's most distinctive departure from other theories, however, is that he is at once involved on both the domestic and international levels (Moravcsik 1993:16, 17). While it is important to note that Putnam uses only a two-level model, he simultaneously emphasised that multilevel interactions are possible and happen frequently when required (Putnam 1988:449).

Putnam (1988:460) highlights several key features, which emphasise the main link between *Level I* activities (diplomacy / negotiations), and *Level II* or domestic politics:

- The possible use of "synergistic issue linkage", in which strategic moves at one game-table create new or additional policy options (at *Level I*) and facilitate unexpected coalitions at *Level II*.
- The important distinction between voluntary and involuntary defection from international agreements.
- The contrast between issues on which domestic interests are homogeneous, simply placing doves and hawks in opposition to each other, and issues on which domestic interests are heterogeneous, thus creating domestic cleavage and a situation which actually may enhance international cooperation.
- The paradox of institutional arrangements, which strengthen chief negotiators at *Level II* but weaken their bargaining positions at *Level I*, or *vice versa*.
- The important role of win-sets as a negotiating strategy.
- The divergence of interests between a statesman or chief negotiator and those on whose behalf he is negotiating, and his fixed investment in domestic politics.

Constraints and win-sets are two issues that form key elements of Putnam's theory. Iida (1993:418) in particular tested these hypotheses of Putnam by using the importance of

uncertainty as a measurement. According to Iida (1993:410) the surest way to introduce uncertainty is to assume an asymmetry of information between negotiators. An example of such asymmetry is when domestic approval is gained through a hidden process such as a closed meeting (e.g. a cabinet meeting). While one can assume that the chief negotiator of the country should have complete information about such meetings (or its outcomes), it is also reasonable to assume that his opposing negotiator should not be privy to that information. Iida (1993:416) also makes a distinction between domestic and international asymmetric information to see if they have different effects on international agreements. He comes to the conclusion that when international asymmetric information about domestic constraints apply, the bargaining power of the domestically constrained negotiator is enhanced for the most part, while successful agreement and ratification are not endangered except for a delay in agreement. However, under domestic international asymmetric information where the constrained negotiators themselves are uncertain about their own constraints, domestic constraints make successful international agreements difficult by imposing “involuntary defection” (Iida 1993:416-417). While Iida tests only these hypotheses he also questions other parts of Putnam’s theory, such as the influence of incomplete information on negotiation behaviour. Iida (1993:418) nonetheless concludes that Putnam’s model is:

A serious challenge to the conventional wisdom that it is possible to construct a parsimonious and general theory on the impact of domestic politics on international negotiations, and [that] the hypotheses he advanced seemed parsimonious and perhaps testable.

2.4. THE LEADERSHIP THEORY OF HERMANN, HERMANN AND HAGAN

2.4.1 The conceptual framework

The supplementary theory to Putnam’s model is the leadership typology of Hermann, Hermann and Hagan (1987). This research deals with leadership and foreign policy-making and focuses on powerful individuals, competing bureaucratic organisations and small groups. It is also known as the “decision unit approach”. This type of research is

not new, but already dates back to the 1970s (Hermann & Hermann 1989:362). Hermann *et al.* (1987) was selected as supplementary theory because an analysis of leadership creates a linkage between the theories of Hermann *et al.* (1987) and Putnam (1988). Since policy making has several key elements (e.g. the role of the leader and the process) this linkage is clearly illustrated when the two theories are analysed. Putnam's interactive bargaining process provides theory for the analysis of the role of the leader or negotiator (at Level I as well as Level II), while the decision making process is analysed according to the three types of decision making units identified by Hermann *et al.* (1987), Hermann and Hermann (1989:363-364) and Hagan, Everts, Fukui and Stempel (2001:170). These theories are applicable to both the embassy siege in post-revolutionary Iran in 1979 and the nuclear impasse with the E3/EU in present-day Iran, which will respectively be discussed as case studies in chapters 5 and 6.

The primary focus of the theory of Hermann *et al.* (1987) is a classification of decision units and how it aids analysis of a government's behaviour in terms of foreign policy. Hermann *et al.* (1987:309) and Hermann and Hermann (1989:362) describe decision units as being represented by different entities including prime ministers, presidents, politburo's, cabinets, coalitions and parliaments. Since all these actors could be at the apex of foreign policy making, Hermann *et al.* (1987:311) describe decision units and specifically the "ultimate decision making unit" as a group of actors with the ability to commit government resources to foreign affairs and to prevent others from overtly reversing their decisions or positions. Since Hermann *et al.* (1987:310-311) realise that decisions do not always result from similar processes and that contingency approaches may be required, they create a model to illustrate how three different types of decision units can affect a government's foreign policies or behaviour under specific conditions.

Prior to a discussion of these respective decision units, cognisance should be taken that models of foreign policy decision making in general have a distinctly US bias because of the way US Middle Eastern study centres are structured and have been copied internationally. This issue is reviewed in detail by Kramer (2001:12-13, 21, 87), who concludes that despite the enormous growth of these centres, much of their research

product reflects self-interest, ideological distortions, a romantic mystification, a religious bias and a great deal of poor scholarship. Due to the volume and technical nature of their assessments there are also frequent failures to make crucial data comprehensible to the policymaker. Therefore events in the Middle East have regularly surprised the Middle Eastern “specialists”, leading to frequent assessment failures of which the Iranian revolution was the most spectacular. Hagan (1993:23-65, 204) reported a similar US bias in his reference to the underreporting of key foreign policy issues or the overemphasis of dramatic, particularly conflict-related, issues in Third World countries by the US and Western media.

Using older data and a slightly different approach, Iqbal (1992:17-18), Kemicha (1996), and Irani (1999) also share this perception of a pro-US bias in the development and practice of international political theory and register critical awareness that Western theoreticians and academics used to ignore non-Western, specifically Islamic, sources regarding intercultural negotiations, diplomacy and international law, or failed to adequately credit Islamic sources that were used as the basis of the early works, for example, on the development of the laws of war. A key criticism is the Western ignorance of the crucial roles that well-known Islamic mediation techniques such as conciliation *solh* / *sulh* (respectively in Farsi and Arabic) can play in international negotiation (cf. chapter 3 for discussion). These techniques have developed over centuries and have as sources, amongst others, the Qur’an and the Majalla, or Ottoman Code. While the usual reasons such as inadequate access and insufficient language skills could partly explain the Western ignorance, research by Vaziri (1993:1, 5, 11, 15) question the traditional approach of Western orientalism, particularly with regard to Iran, and questions national and racial stereotyping, which forms the foundation of Western orientalism, as the key reason for the present international prejudice against Iran. As a result of this clear pro-US/Western bias, “blind spots” exist regarding the decision making processes of non-Western countries. Al-e Ahmad (1982:72-73) even took this argument a step further by describing Western orientalism as “a parasitic outgrowth of imperialism” and as one of the ugliest symptoms of “westitis” (*gharbzadegi* or foreign influence), which will be discussed in chapter 3.

2.4.2 The decision making approach: conceptualising the control variables

The following three types of decision units are the key elements of the leadership model proposed by Hermann *et al.* (1987):

:

- The predominant leader: A single individual with the power to make the ultimate choices and to stifle opposition.
- The single group: A set of interacting individuals, who have the ability to make decisions and gain compliance.
- Multiple autonomous actors: Members of different groups or coalitions of which none has the ability to decide and enforce compliance on others (Hermann *et al.* 1987:311-312; Hermann & Hermann 1989:364).

Despite the existence of these three types of decision making units and the notion that foreign policy decisions should correspond to one of them, it needs to be stressed that an ultimate decision making unit might prevail in most countries in terms of *all* the foreign policy decisions. In countries falling outside this majority the units vary according to the importance of the decisions. However, if the decision making unit dealing with key problems is on the lower levels of government, it specifically runs the risk that its decisions might be overturned or reversed by higher units that form the ultimate decision making unit in a country (Hermann *et al.* 1987:312; Hermann & Hermann 1989:363).

The presentation in *Figure 2.2* of what Hermann *et al.* (1987:312) and Hermann and Hermann (1989:364-365) refer to as the “decision calculus” will serve as the basis for the analysis of the respective ultimate decision unit types. It should be noted, however, that a “decision calculus” or decision tree can never be completely finalised. Hence, it is important to balance all inputs and take cognisance of what was included and what had to be left out. The best would be to find a balance between realism, complexity and transparency (Raiffa 1991:341, 342, 356). In the case of Hermann *et al.* (1987) the model is based on control variables, alternative conditions and status to ascertain the different decision making processes and the nature of governments’ foreign policy behaviour.

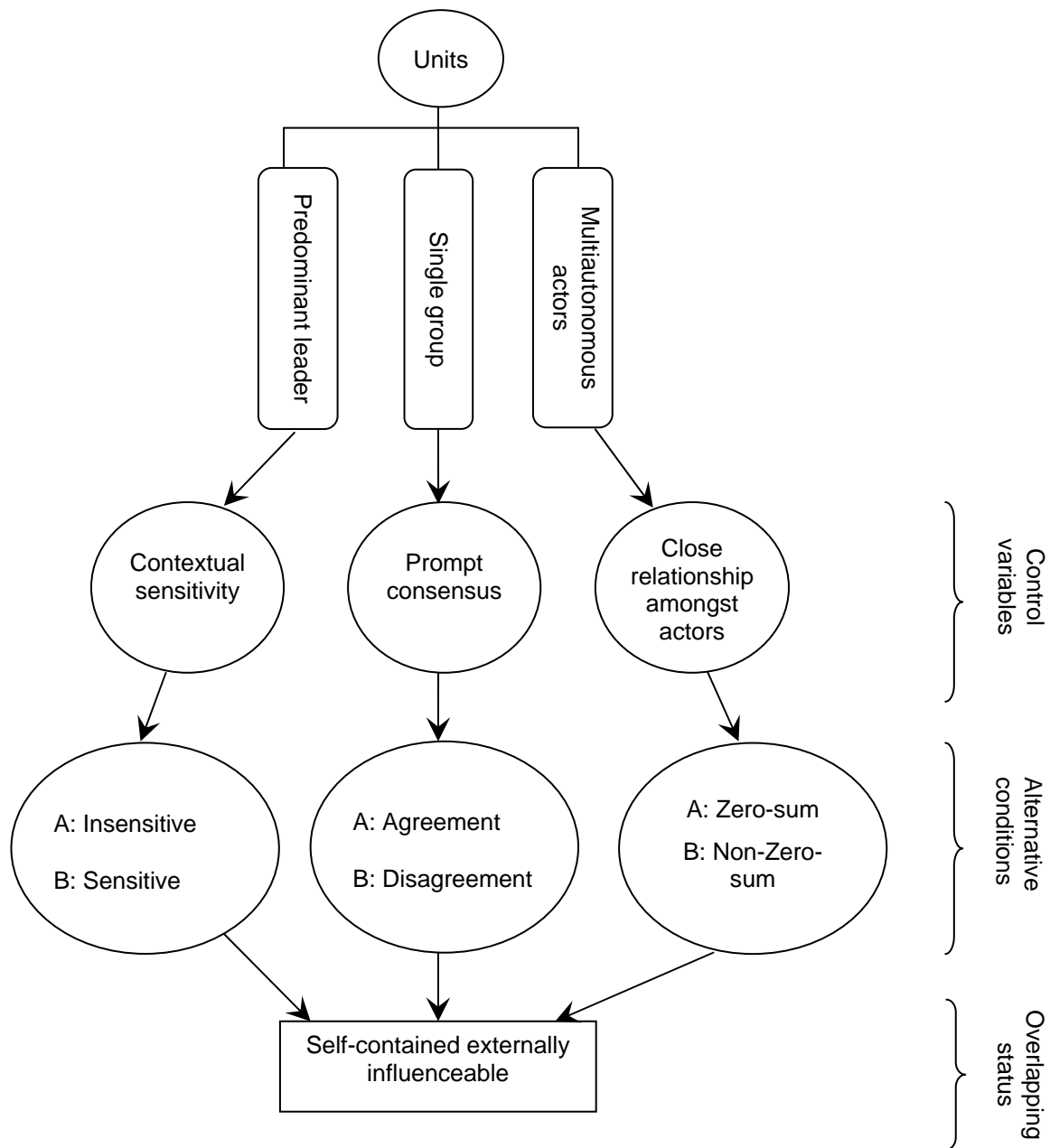


Figure 2.2: Key control variables by type of decision unit

Sources: Adapted from Hermann, M.G., Hermann C.F & Hagan, J.D., 1987. "How decision-making shapes foreign policy behaviour." In New directions in the study of foreign policy by C.F. Hermann et al. (ed).

Each of the ultimate decision making units functions, according to Hermann and Hermann (1989:364-365), under certain alternative conditions that determine and influence the unit's direct impact, and the extent of the impact on final policy as well as on the factors outside the unit, which must be taken into account during the decision making process. These factors are the control variables for each unit as well as the alternative conditions, labelled (A) or (B), that indicate the origin of the decision - and the decision making process. The control variable (A) refers to the fact that the internal dynamics of the unit shape the decision, which means that the decision making process is contained in the unit. In contrast, control variable (B) indicates the circumstances under which the unit would be susceptible to external pressure on its decision making processes. As a result some of the decision units are likely to be self-contained and others more open to external influences. The alternative conditions lead to different decision making processes and decisions and thus influence the policy behaviour of governments.

A key question that needs to be addressed with respect to the predominant leader, single groups and multiple autonomous actors or coalitions of actors, identified by Hermann *et al.* (1987), Hermann and Hermann (1989), Hermann (2001) and Hagan (1993), as the three definitive types of decision making units is: what motivates a government to make certain foreign policy decisions, and how does it select a course of action (e.g. the type of decision making unit for a particular situation?) The answers to these questions are critical for the decision unit approach and are explained in *Figure 2.3*. This decision making framework encompasses three elements, namely inputs, decision unit dynamics and outputs. The inputs represent the stimuli from both the domestic and international environments to which the units respond. The decision unit dynamics in turn correspond largely to the control variables and alternative conditions mentioned above. Outputs are differentiated in two types, namely the outcomes of the decision process itself or the "decision outcomes" and the actual foreign policy actions that a government takes (Hermann 2001:52, 64, 65, 68).

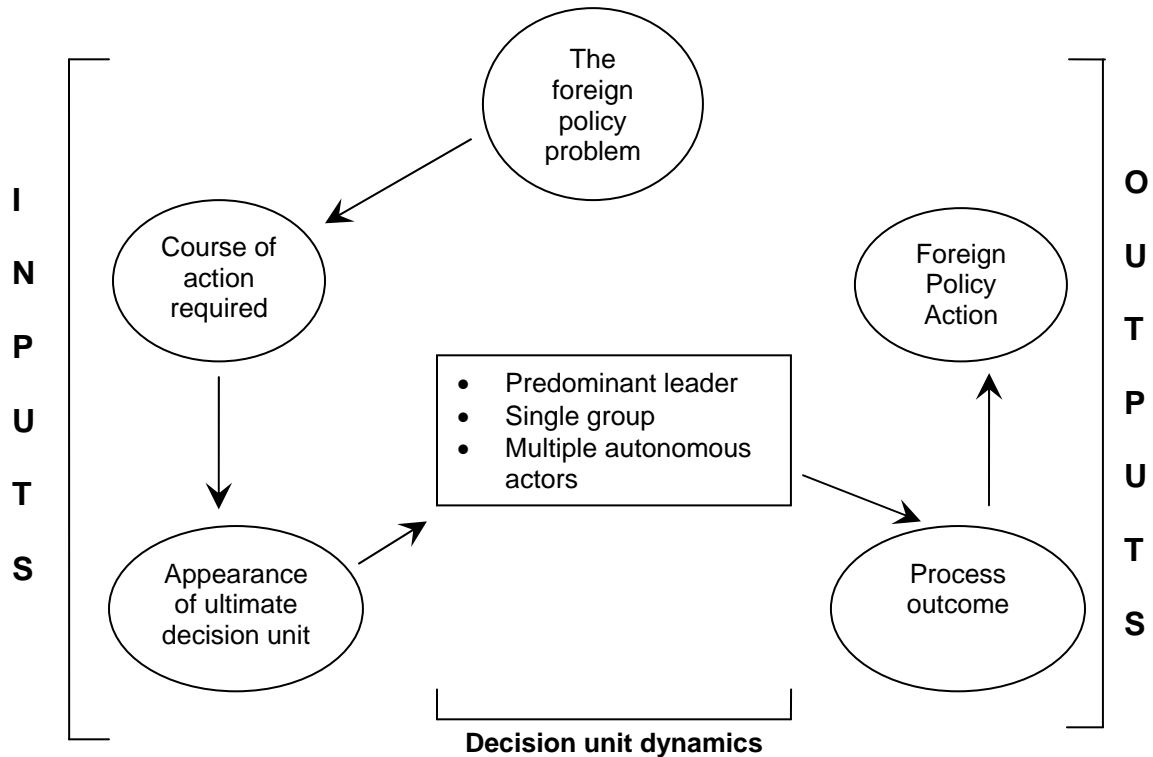


Figure 2.3: The decision unit framework

Source: Adapted from Hermann, M.G. 2001. How Decision Units shape foreign policy : A theoretical framework. International Studies Review, Vol 3(2), 52.

2.4.3 Three types of ultimate decision making units

2.4.3.1 The predominant leader

According to Hermann *et al.* (1987), Hermann and Hermann (1989) and MG Hermann, Preston, Korany and Shaw (2001), a predominant leader becomes the ultimate decision unit when a single individual has the power to make choices for a government. Under such conditions those with dissenting opinions would either join the leader out of respect or fear of reprisal. If alternative opinions are allowed, they carry no weight because the predominant leader's views would be the only views that are decisive and he would be the only individual able to make authoritative decisions. In light of the definition of an ultimate decision making unit, a country or decision making unit is likely to have a predominant leader if the regime or government has one individual in its leadership who is authorised by a constitution, law or general practice to commit or withhold resources

with regard to the making of foreign policy. While the issue of control over resources is therefore the key determining whether a country should fall into this category, it should be emphasised that countries in which a predominant leader is the ultimate decision unit, range from democracies like the US to monarchies such as Saudi Arabia and totalitarian dictatorships like the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK / North Korea). However, Iran is an example of a country where the ultimate decision making unit is a predominant leader where one person, the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, is at the apex of a hierarchical religio-government structure and at once also in control of Iranian foreign and nuclear policy (MG Hermann *et al.* 2001:84; Samii 2005a:5-9).

In light of the key elements (cf. *Figure 2.2*), the critical control variables in this decision unit type are the personal characteristics of the predominant leader, which shape his initial reactions and determine whether and how he will view advice from others, react to information and respond to his external environment when making foreign policy decisions. They will also determine how he assesses political risks generally. Another critical element is the adequacy (or inadequacy) of knowledge of the predominant leader's orientation to foreign affairs, that is views on the whole about how governments should act in the foreign policy environment. An orientation is informed by four types of personal characteristics, namely beliefs, motives, decision style and interpersonal style, which in turn define the predominant leader's conception of his country's role in the world. Although these characteristics are of vital importance when leaders and leadership are analysed, they will only be reviewed briefly since the key focus remains the predominant leader's responsiveness to advice and information from the environment (MG Hermann 1978:49, 57; Hermann 1980:8; Hermann *et al.* 1987: 313; Hermann 1986:173; Hermann & Hermann 1989:365).

Beliefs refer to a predominant leader's world view and could be general, for example, referring to his perception that he has the ability to control events in his life, or more specifically, his notion that he can control or shape the political events of his country. Nationalism and the belief in one's ability to control events are examples of this type of personal characteristics, while the need for control or power is the main *motive* for the

predominant leader's actions, together with his need for affiliation and approval. *Decision style* refers to a preferred way or method of decision making. Its elements comprise, amongst others, confidence, openness to new information, complexity in structuring and processing information, preference for certain levels of risk, preference to compromise, preference for an optimising as opposed to a satisfying mode of decision making, and preference for a planning as opposed to just an activity approach to decision making. Interpersonal style refers to how the predominant leader deals with policy makers. Two interpersonal style characteristics, namely paranoia (excessive suspiciousness) and Machiavellianism (unscrupulous manipulative behaviour) are often found in leaders with a warlike disposition, like Hitler. These two traits will be revisited when the issue of the insensitive predominant leader is addressed. In closing it is important to emphasise that all four types of personal features directly affect both the style and the content of foreign policy (MG Hermann 1978:59-60, Hermann 1980:8-10; Hermann 1986:174-177).

According to MG Hermann (1978:57) and Hermann (1980: 11, 13-14, 23), three additional variables impact on the consistency of the relationship between the following characteristics and foreign policy. These include the predominant leader's interest in foreign policy, his training or previous political experience, and the way he relates to his environment, in other words, the way he reacts under pressure. Interest in foreign policy is a motivating force and enhances the effect of the predominant leader's characteristics on this component of government policy. Interest may vary from being a "passion", topically driven or in the case of leaders whose commitment is more domestic and thus limited to crises meetings and leaders' summits. The predominant leader with a high interest in foreign issues would want to be kept informed continuously and might even prefer to take direct control of the foreign affairs portfolio. Farrell (1969:191-192) stresses that such a leader, while acknowledging the importance of good foreign relations, may prefer to assert his personal authority and circumvent the foreign bureaucracy, instead favouring "kitchen cabinets" or special advisers. A predominant leader who is lacking in interest or passion in foreign issues is likely to delegate this authority in its entirety to other people, only making use of spokespersons and limiting his appearances

to summits, for example. Training and experience too, are key elements since their absence constrain a predominant leader when he has to formulate policy. Lack of training means that the leader has to rely only on his natural predispositions. The experience or the set of behaviour patterns that he should be able to draw on is limited or non-existent with the result that the foreign policy he chooses to formulate is narrow and rigid. Precedence is also given to rhetoric, which frequently leads to shifts in his country's foreign policy environment. On the other hand the trained leader is better prepared to match a strategy to a specific issue and target country. Given his wider repertoire it is more likely that the behaviour of a trained leader will be less predictable than that of his less experienced colleague. How the predominant leader relates to his environment (or reacts under pressure) is the final variable and indicates the extent to which an individual is responsive to incoming stimuli from objects in the environment in which he operates.

a) The sensitive predominant leader

A sensitive predominant leader is receptive to information and responsive to the environment. However, a clear distinction should be made between predominant leaders who are pragmatists and those who tend to be goal-driven. The pragmatist tends to prioritise responsiveness to context, but appears relatively ill at ease in his domestic environment and tends to recruit associates who will reflect or support his personal views and beliefs. The contextually responsive predominant leader furthermore seeks to maintain extensive information-gathering networks as well as regular interaction in order to keep abreast of changes in the interests and views of the important foreign and domestic constituencies before foreign policies are formulated. The responsive predominant leader monitors and immediately deals with political disagreements or opponents. His preferred methods are centred on compromise, although policies of cooptation, restraint and suppression are also entertained. Moreover, without the full support of his constituency the responsive predominant leader is less likely than the goal-driven predominant leader to waste resources, take risks and involve his country in conflict. In contrast, goal-driven predominant leaders are relatively unrestrained in the activities they urge on their governments, and are generally motivated by specific goals

and the creation of unambiguous policy positions and doctrines relating to matters such as military security or Arab nationalism. In contrasting these two types of predominant leaders it is possible to ascertain how to explain the actions and policies of governments and primarily what options the leaders are likely to advise their government to take. To conclude:

- If a leader is contextually responsive his behaviour is distinctly inclined to be pragmatic and situation driven.
- If a leader is contextually goal-driven his behaviour is distinctly inclined to be focused on his own beliefs, attitudes, principles and passions.

An indication of how governments are likely to shape their foreign policy and implement it can be gained by defining the variables that motivate leaders. However, knowledge of political setting loses importance while information about a leader's policy priorities becomes vital. The degree of sensitivity is thus the key variable in determining how a predominant leader will respond when he becomes the ultimate decision unit responsible for the formulation of foreign policy (MG Hermann 1978:57; Hermann *et al.* 1987:314, 325-330; Hermann & Hermann 1989:365-366; Hermann & Kegley 1995:521-522; Hermann *et al.* 2001:87-89).

b) The insensitive predominant leader

Besides the political structure or system a predominant leader's characteristics and personality are the only clue to whether he will be a sensitive or insensitive leader. Insensitive predominant leaders have strong convictions about the world which they use as lenses in selecting and interpreting information, with the inevitable result that their personal ideas and beliefs are reflected in their foreign policy decision making. Insensitive predominant leaders are insensitive to their environment and impose their personal characteristics on the foreign policy environment. Given their unwillingness to change and the rigidity of their beliefs, insensitive predominant leaders are mostly found in autocratic countries. In the literature insensitive predominant leaders have been called "crusaders", "ideologues" or autocratic leaders. Examples are numerous, but one country

that probably fits the case on all three counts is North Korea, given the high levels of paranoia and Machiavellianism or unscrupulous manipulation that exemplifies Pyongyang's behaviour (MG Hermann 1978:57; Hermann *et al* 1987:319; Hermann & Hermann 1989:365-366).

2.4.3.2 The single group

The single group is another decision unit type, described by Hermann *et al.* (1987:315) and Hermann and Hermann (1989:366) as “a small unit or group of people who interact directly with one another to collectively reach a decision”.

Group size is virtually limitless, ranging from one or two persons to parliament-size. Although all the participants in a single unit have to be invested with the power (i.e. authorised) to make authoritative commitments, the single group does not have to be a formal or legal body. It must only have the *de facto* ability to commit resources without another unit interfering in its decision or attempting to reverse or modify the single unit's decision. While single units formulate the decision, it is not required that they must implement the decisions. The British cabinet and the Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party remain the best examples of single-group decision units (CF Hermann, Stein, Sundelius & Walker 2001:133-134).

Hermann *et al.* (1987) and Hermann and Hermann (1989) distinguish prompt consensus or agreement and continuing disagreement as the two alternative opposition conditions in the decision tree of key control variables analysed in *Figure 2.2*. However, on closer examination of CF Hermann *et al.* (2001:138), it became clear that they have added another variable and now distinguish the following three different ways or conditions that single groups can deal with internal disagreements or conflict:

- Concurrence – producing a tendency to avoid group conflict.
- Unanimity – producing a tendency to resolve group conflict.
- Plurality - producing a tendency to accept group conflict.

a) Concurrence

Concurrence or the tendency to avoid group conflict is in essence similar to prompt consensus or agreement, mentioned in Hermann *et al.* (1987:315) and Hermann and Hermann (1989:307) as an alternative condition. Concurrence is attained when substantial agreement is reached speedily without external influences or constraints. Support is also readily available since the concurrence model or condition requires the overriding loyalty of all members, with the result that members put a high value on their standing in the unit and on its continuing existence and well-being, which makes the unit a cohesive structure and the members willing to support each other's views and dispositions regarding the formulation of prompt consensual decisions. While conflict is avoided, quick decisions are prone to certain weaknesses, the main disadvantage being that urgency precludes serious deliberation with the result that decision making tends to be ill-judged (CF Hermann, *et al.* 2001:140, 142,148).

CF Hermann *et al.* (2001:143, 145) also offer two “mediating variables” as part of their model, arguing that units with strong leaders are likely to encourage or prefer multiple options instead of quick consensus. They allow dissent, and are also likely to permit integrative solutions such as compromises and trade-offs.

b) Unanimity

According to CF Hermann *et al.* (2001:148-150) and Hermann *et al.* (1987:315) the unanimity model or condition acknowledges conflict or disagreement as a fundamental part of the policy making process. In contrast to the concurrence model, members of the unanimity model are *not* members of the unit, but belong instead to outside agencies and institutions. This “sense of belonging” or an “outside identity” is one of two key characteristics of this model. Because they represent an outside interest, the members' loyalty is not with the unanimity unit. The unit also lacks cohesion because of the members' lack of concern about unit activities and the impact of external influences. The second characteristic refers to the substantial difference in levels and dimensions between

the participating members. Being from different agencies the members' status, expertise and seniority might differ, but no single individual is allowed to decide alone. While all members are required to support the final decision, they can veto the proposal. Due to the veto, members are forced to consider the views of all their fellow-members. To avoid a possible deadlock - usually the result of strategies when consensus has been sought - integrative solutions such as compromises might be used to avoid conflict.

CF Hermann *et al.* (2001:150) also offered two “mediating variables”, namely the degree of interpersonal respect that the outside members have for each other, regardless of the agency they might belong to, and the presence of a broker. A “brokering role” is a set of activities that one or more persons in a unit might undertake with a view to finding a solution. Before a person is accepted as broker he will have to be continuously involved in such activities. It is not a formal or legal position, however, nor is it related to being the chair of a single group-decision unit.

c) Plurality

A third perspective on conflict in groups / units is the plurality model or condition, which is a relatively new addition to the theory formulated in Hermann *et al.* (1987) as well as in Hermann and Hermann (1989). It acknowledges that disagreements and group conflict are likely, that an acceptable solution (in the time available) might not be possible, or might only be achieved at substantial cost. The plurality model accepts that solutions will not be possible for all problems and to the satisfaction of all the members. It also allows for proportional decision making despite some opposition. It therefore frequently happens that, depending on circumstances, units may attain a plurality instead of a majority, particularly when some, not all, of the members have been granted veto power (CF Hermann *et al.* 2001:153-161).

2.4.3.3 Multiple autonomous actors

Multiple autonomous actors are the final decision unit type. The terminology describing this concept has continuously changed over the years before the present concept was clarified and agreed to. CF Hermann (1978:81), for example, used the term “autonomous group”, while Hermann *et al.* (1987) refer throughout their work to multiple autonomous groups, a slight “extension” of the usage by Charles F Hermann.. The most recent clarification was reflected in Hermann and Hermann (1989:364) who broadened the points of reference after realising the conceptual narrowness of “groups”. Consequently, they decided to include entities that comprise individuals, organisations and groups, which led to a change in label from multiple autonomous groups to multiple autonomous actors. Only Hagan *et al.* (2001:69) would add some additional meaning to the concept, with their references to coalitions. Nonetheless, even Hagan *et al.* (2001) stayed close to the broad theoretical concept of multiple autonomous actors. While this clarification process had been underway, however, the content of this decision unit type has stayed largely unchanged.

Hermann *et al.* (1987:316), Hermann and Hermann (1989:367-368) and Hagan *et al.* (2001:169-171) defined the ultimate decision unit type as multiple autonomous actors (two or more) separate entities with independent authority structures, none with the ability to commit government resources without the agreement of all or at least some groups. Multiple autonomous actors have two identifying characteristics: the aforementioned fragmentation of the political authority within the decision unit, and the influence that each actor’s constituency can have on members of the decision unit. Fragmentation, however, also refers to the process of deadlocks, the result of the sharp political cleavages that may occur as a result of the following factors: a formal, constitutionally defined veto power; threats to terminate a ruling coalition; and withholding part of the resources necessary for action or the approval thereof. In turn, the symbiotic relationship between the various actors’ constituencies subsists in how the power and activities of the decision unit are constrained by the constituency. It emphasised that when the decision unit comprises multiple autonomous actors, its

members can only commit the decision unit after consulting with their constituency. Hermann (1986:182) also describes this as a coalignment process where the actor attempts to match the goals and interests of the decision unit with the expectations and needs of the various entities within the constituency. Key instruments used to effect this interaction include networking and coalition building, bargaining, persuasion patronage and trade-offs. This close interaction is similar to the ratification process discussed as part of Putnam's two-level game metaphor (Putnam 1988:436).

Multiple autonomous actors as decision units are widespread and occur according to Hermann *et al.* (1987:316-317), Hermann and Hermann (1989:368) and Hagan *et al.* (2001:170-173) across a variety of institutional settings. However, the various institutional settings and the roles of the multiple autonomous actors contained within the settings, will not be discussed since the example most applicable to Iran, namely the dispersal of power across factions and institutions in an authoritarian regime context, will form the basis of the case study in chapter 6. The object here is only to indicate the prevalence of the multiple autonomous actors as decision units across all institutional settings, including:

- Parliamentary democracies (with multiparty cabinets), as in Italy and Israel.
- Presidential democracies with opposing legislative and executive branches (sometimes in France during its cohabitation periods as well as in the US when the two Houses of Congress are controlled by different parties).
- Authoritarian regimes where the power is dispersed across factions and / or institutions (for example Iranian decision making or lack thereof during the hostage crisis, and nuclear negotiations - see chapters 5 and 6).
- Decentralised settings in which bureaucratic actors gain authority to deal collectively with key policy issues, include: the influential South Korean economic powerhouses or *chaebols*, the state corporations of the People's Republic of China such as NORINCO and other structures within the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who for example

have the sole right to export arms and also control the sale of sensitive nuclear and missile equipment (Zhao 1996:94-96; Salacuse 2003:128).

Hermann *et al.* (1987:317-318, 322), Hermann and Hermann (1989:368-369) and Hagan *et al.* (2001:170) emphasise in conclusion that for a set of multiple autonomous actors to be classified as the ultimate decision unit, the decision unit cannot involve any predominant leader or single group as a units among themselves. Furthermore, when multiple autonomous actors form the ultimate decision unit, their foreign policy behaviour must result from an agreement fashioned between the sets of multiple autonomous actors involved. When these sets of actors fail to reach an agreement, a deadlock results since the definition of the multiple autonomous actors as decision making units stresses the inability to act alone on behalf of the government. A deadlock is never automatic, however, and its occurrence will be determined by the interaction and relationship amongst the respective actors and entities. Since actors recognise each other's right to exercise power, they have developed procedures and "rules of the game" in due course to regulate even processes like a deadlock. Two types of relationships or conditions as explained in *Figure 2.2* are prevalent, namely zero-sum and non-zero-sum relationships:

- Zero-sum relationships: In these relations the various multiple autonomous actors have failed to reach any agreement and therefore try to deny one another from attaining power by any means possible. Under these conditions, multiple autonomous actors are almost totally constrained where foreign policy is concerned. They become self-contained units, fighting only for power and authority and are closed to external influence.
- Non-zero-sum relationships: In these relations there is always a basis for agreement between the various multiple autonomous actors. Consequently their behaviour in turn will be influenced by the actors' bargaining process with one another. The multiple autonomous actors are also externally influenceable decision units who have responded positively to their environment.

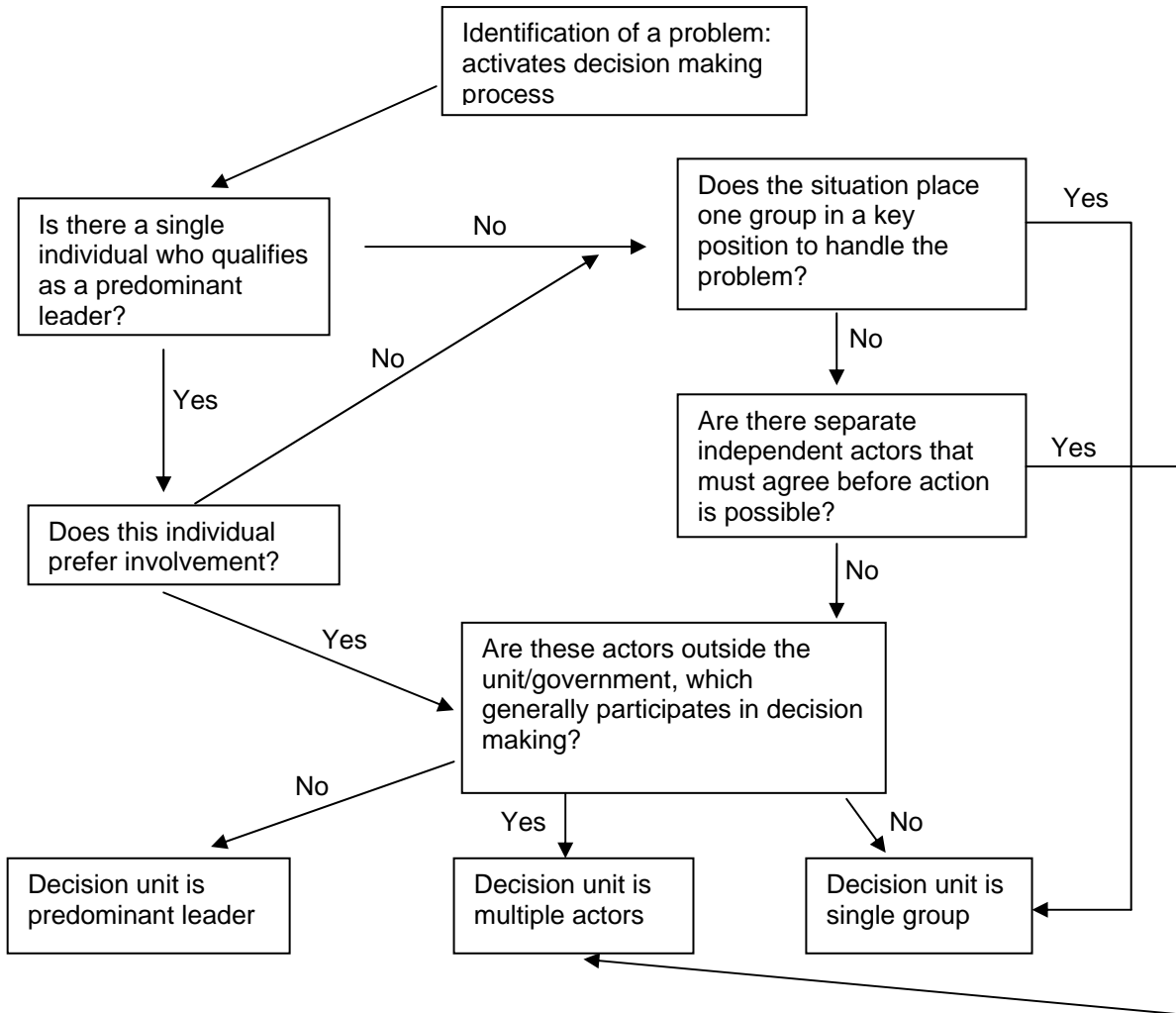


Figure 2.4: An illustration of the factors involved in determining the authoritative decision making unit

Source : Hermann, M.G. 2001. How decision-making units shape foreign policy: A theoretical framework. International Studies Review, Vol 3(2), 58.

2.4.4 A final distinction between the three decision making units

The main difference between the three decision making units - namely whether the leader is a single individual, a multiple group of actors or a single group forms the basis of the decision making tree (cf. *Figure 2.4*). The key lies in the influence (or not) of external consultancy and the nature and extent of difference between the approaches determining how they respectively control decision making: For instance, as long as the *predominant leader* remains responsible for the ultimate decision making and does not delegate that responsibility to his advisers, the decision unit remains a predominant leader. The decision unit is a *single unit* if the actors in a group can form and change their positions regarding an issue without outside consultation. Alternatively, a *multiple autonomous decision making unit* is functioning when actors from multiple agencies participate within a unit and represent the said agencies' views rather than the view of the decision unit. The unit is thus influenced by external factors (Hermann *et al.* 2001:134).

2.5 CONCLUSION

The chapter has outlined two theories, namely the two-level game metaphor of Putnam (1988) and in Evans *et al.* (1993) and the leadership theory of Hermann *et al.* (1987). These theories comprise the following:

- Putnam's theory deals with a two-level interactive bargaining process, where the negotiator plays a key role at both the international and the domestic level.
- Hermann *et al.* provide a leadership model comprising three types of decision-making units, namely the predominant leader, single-group and the multi-autonomous actors. The discussion also includes an analysis of leadership characteristics, the environmental and / or institutional setting required for each type, the possible decision and leadership styles linked to each type and, most significantly, the key differences between the types, which centres on the amount of control over decision making.

The framework for the analysis of the case studies is based on these theories. It must nevertheless be emphasised that individually the theories of Putnam and of Hermann *et al.* are exclusively concerned with the analysis of specific issues or elements of a country's activities, which means that there is a major overlap between the theories, with the result that they have to be applied jointly in performing the analysis process. This combined application will be applied to the case studies in chapters 5 and 6. Note in this regard that the theories or elements will be deployed non-sequentially. For example, elements of the theory of Hermann *et al.* are predominantly applicable to the relatively unstructured setting of the events covered in chapter 5 (the US hostage crisis), while Putnam's two-level interactive bargaining process is more specifically applicable to the nuclear negotiations discussed in chapter 6. As noted in the introduction, the analysis of Iranian negotiating methods and related issues is the third focus area, which is central to the entire discussion of Iranian negotiating style.

Despite the differences in terms of application, content, timeframes, and focus between the two theories (cf. Putnam 1988; Hermann *et al.* 1987), both are supplementary theories which provide the following broad themes that will be explored in the case studies:

- Structural analysis: Here the object is to analyse Iran's international and internal power structures during both periods, and to ascertain, judging by policy formulation as the end product, the factors and personnel influencing negotiation and the real decision makers.
- Analysis of the decision unit: The object is to define the type of state and leader that asserts ultimate authority, and most importantly the extent to which decision making defers to the said authority. The further objective is to ascertain whether the foreign policy decision is made on one, two or multiple levels.
- Leadership style: At issue are the respective constraints, personal characteristics and other influences (domestic and foreign) that could impact on a leader / statesman / chief negotiator.
- The application of Persian / Iranian negotiation methods since it is the central theme of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 3

A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING IRANIAN NEGOTIATING STYLE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 provides a contextual analysis of the factors influencing Iranian negotiating style and methods as applied to the case studies in chapters 5 and 6. It is the intention of this chapter to explore these factors since they form an integral part of and influence the Iranian “national character”. These factors will be “unpacked” in a systematic fashion so as to provide broad guidelines that can be used as part of a framework for the analysis of the case studies that will follow. Chapter 3 also “links” with the two preceding chapters, where part of the framework for the analysis of the case studies is examined. This chapter expands on the brief reference made in chapter 1 to factors such as location, religion, Iranian involvement in big-power rivalry, the omnipresence of Iran’s past, and how these factors either directly or indirectly influence Iranian negotiating style. Particular attention is paid to factors incorporated under the pervasive influence of culture and religion, which are two complementary themes that run through Iran’s “national character”. As chapter 3 deals with Iranian negotiating methods and style it also supplements chapter 2, which explores the theory of Putnam (1988) on interactive bargaining, and the three types of decision making units analysed by Hermann *et al.* (1987). To sum up then, the key dimensions of the policy process discussed here are: interactive bargaining (negotiating); the functioning of the decision making units, and Iranian negotiating style and methods.

3.2 IRAN’S “NATIONAL CHARACTER”: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Apart from noting that culture and religion as constant interwoven themes exert a major shaping influence on it, Iranian “national character” remains difficult to define. Inkeles (1997:214) observes that there are as many definitions of national character as there are theorists. His attempt at a definition of “national character” is therefore initially quite general, referring to “relatively enduring personality characteristics and patterns that are

modal among the adult members of society”. Inkeles (1997:214-218) also refers to other meanings attached to a people’s character, such as folk character, national or racial character, or popular psychology, or the sum total of all values, institutions, cultural traditions and the history of a people. These are nonetheless only useful in popular discourse since the relation between the various elements cannot be measured scientifically. Inkeles, furthermore, distinguishes five types of national character, namely as institutional patterns, actionable approach, racial psychology, cultural theme and a fusion of the institutional pattern, cultural theme, and actionable approach. Since Iran is a country where politics, mythology, religion and culture have fused, analysis of its national character falls squarely within the cultural thematic approach. The emphasis is thus not on political and economic institutions, but on the family, friendship, the community, values, attitudes, philosophy of life and religion of Iran. It is what Inkeles (1997:215) describes as a country’s spirit or *Folkgeist*. This approach relates to Banuazizi’s (1977:237) description of national character as a relatively enduring constellation of psychological predispositions, motives and values of members of a society, which they share by virtue of their common historical experience, culture, and institutionalised patterns of social existence. Iran’s national character will not be easy to measure as stipulated by Inkeles. Yet given this cultural approach the intention is not to measure the related elements, but on identifying key concepts which influence Iranian negotiating style.

To paraphrase Hunter (1990:7-8), countries are largely products of their past, their collective memory, and the sum of their aggregate experience. These factors shape Iran’s vision of the future and its national culture and should be read together with section 1.2.3 on the multidimensionality of Iranian identity. Four comprehensive elements will be explored as part of the analysis of Iran, namely culture (its territorial zone, self-image and world view), communication and language, religion, and the importance of cyclical leadership patterns in Iran. Although communication and language are intrinsically part of culture, it is believed that a separate discussion is required - given the importance of language in Iran – of the status and the position of language, with particular reference to negotiations. All the elements are intertwined and they are only delinked for the purposes

of analysis. Furthermore, each discussion will include references to Iranian behaviour, attitudes, actions and negotiating concepts originating from the element under discussion.

3.3 CULTURE

Culture (*farhang* in Farsi) is a 19th century European construct that has become so prevalent that it unavoidably conditions discussions of Islamic civilisations in a European or even a contemporary Farsi and Arabic context (Nasr 2003:34). It can be said that culture is similar to national character, but it should be borne in mind that there are as many definitions of culture as there are international political theorists, theoretical schools and approaches. Harris, Moran and Moran (2004:4), representing the behavioural school, describe culture as a complex system of interrelated parts. They also note that culture “gives people a sense of who they are, of belonging to, of how they should behave and what they should be doing. Culture impacts on behaviour, morale, productivity, and include value patterns, attitudes and action”.

Harris *et al.* (2004:5-12) and Behnam (1986:4) broadened this accumulation of ideas and separately added: a sense of self and space, language and communication, dress and habits, foods and feeding habits, relationships (e.g. the kinship system), values and norms, beliefs and attitudes, religion, learning processes and practices, knowledge, art, morals, customs, laws and myths as elements. Swidler (1986:273) believes that there is also an “alternative” analysis of culture, which comprises three steps: (a) an image of culture as a “tool kit” of symbols, stories, rituals and world views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems; (b) a method to analyse cultural effects, where it focuses on “strategies of action”, and (c) it sees culture not in defining the ends of action, but in providing cultural components that are used to devise strategies of action.

3.3.1 Iran’s territorial or spatial zone

Traditionally *Iranshahr*, as Iran is described in Islamic sources, referred to a geographic land area and not to national identity. The term Iran thus initially lacked political content

and was not intended to have any. It only gradually gained political substance under the rule of the Safavid, Zand and Qajar dynasties and culminated in 1930 under the Pahlavi dynasty when Iran became the official name of a country. In contrast to Europe, for example, the creation of a nation-state in Iran did not require any territorial consolidation, since the land was there and it was just a matter of time and effort to convert the imaginary boundary (comprising the existing sociopolitical entity with its various psychological, mythical and historical echoes) into a common territorial Iranian identity for the people (Vaziri 1993:4, 175). Territory and identity therefore became inextricably linked as the process of territorial demarcation and the realisation of “international boundaries” through wars and subsequent peace treaties in the nineteenth century helped shape the growing sense of territorial identity for Iranians. According to Atabaki (2005:27):

Shaping boundaries focused attention on territory as the source of Iranian, as opposed to Persian, identity. It promoted land and geography as compelling criteria for Iranian-ness. The ‘closed’ frontier assembled peoples from varying ethnic background under the unequivocal rule of [a] sovereign for the first time. ...[By] the end of the [19th] century new treaties and great-power politics had led to a redefinition of geographical authority and ...an arbitrary delineation of cultural boundaries. The closing of the frontier went hand in hand with an attempt at centralization by the government. The imperial court ...finally recognized that the center’s survival depended on the cooperation of the periphery. As the monarch’s domains diminished, Iranians voiced their calls for nationhood.

Iranian politics and foreign policy were since the 19th century characterised by an absolutist monarchical leadership, with the tendency to adopt objectives beyond the means of the country. The means most often preferred was war, whether motivated by religious dogmatism, irredentism and expansionism, or the desire to safeguard or restore the independence of Iran. The country gained political cohesiveness as it settled within approximately its present-day borders as a semi-landlocked country encircled by the Middle Eastern countries, Russia, and western Asia, with the Persian Gulf and the Strait of

Hormuz as its only outlet to the sea (Ramazani 1966:22). Due to its environment, its ethnic and religious barriers, Iran would, however remain apart from the Arab world and Turkey.

Iranian identity and political thinking continue to develop and remain dominated by religion. It was restricted to familiar themes such as mythology, metaphysics, mysticism and the vital question of the Prophet's succession (Vaziri 1993:175). The return of the Hidden Imam and issues such as martyrdom too would only become a prominent part of their lifestyle with the ascendancy of Shī'a Islam, first in 1501 and then after the 1979 revolution. Due to changes in Iran's internal environment, however, Sheikholeslami (2003:154) argued that there are few overt manifestations based on either faith or nation in contemporary Iran. Although a generalised religiosity remains, it is a piety devoid of its earlier collective symbolism or political messianism. The affluent in Iran instead are rather dabbling in classical Persian mysticism, Asian philosophies and "package type tours" to Mecca. Consequently tension is increasing between the affluent and the clerical rulers who view such behaviour as contrary to the official doctrinal principles and as endangering the survival of the Islamic Republic. These tendencies of independence and separateness directly influence the vital role of religion in Iran, the Iranian's self-image or world view and its attitudes towards the region and the outside world, particularly the West.

3.3.2 The Iranian self-image and world view

The discussion of Iran's world view will be three-tiered, focusing on Iran's relations, its views and attitudes towards the region, the West, and Iran's perception of itself as an Islamic country.

3.3.2.1 The regional view

Iran's regional view is dominated by its Iranian (Aryan) identity. It is according to Tazmaz (s.a.:3-4) a non-Arab, non-Semitic and Farsi speaking country, while all Muslims in Iran furthermore adhere to *Ithnā'asharī-Shī'ism* (Twelver Shī'ism), making it the only Shī'a state in the world. Due to the Sunnī-Shīa religious schism within Islam and being

surrounded by Arab speaking and Sunnī oriented countries, constant tension exists between the Persian / Iranian and the Islamic identities in the Middle East. Iran's self-image appears almost "Janus-like" with Persian and Shī'a images coexisting. Although most of these issues are addressed in chapter 1 several have also a direct bearing on Iran's regional view. On the one level, the Persian image encapsulates immense pride in Iran's noble "Aryan" origin, and its "aesthetic" culture and language, and the fact that Iranians once belonged to a settled civilisation, in contrast to what the Iranians perceived as their "primitive" nomadic Arabic neighbours. Moreover, for Iranians all that was great in the Islamic and Arabic culture is actually perceived as being of Persian origin. The Iranian self-image also embodies the Shīa-Islamic side, characterised by a strong sense of inferiority regarding power, perceptions of being oppressed, conquered and humiliated by outside forces, as well as a clear identification with the oppressed and with martyrdom. This is the direct result of the schism within Islam after the death of Mohammad when Imam Alī failed to succeed as Caliph and the resulting humiliation, trickery, defeat and death of his son Husayn (Bar 2004:i, 5, 16; Beeman 1986:69).

These self-contradictory images also have much to do with two traditionally cultural dimensions in Iranian society. They encompass the internal (*baten*) and external (*zاهر*) elements. *Baten* refers to the inner core of a person's feelings and emotions, an area that is safe from the outside world (e.g. the centre of social peace in a household or family). It is the space where events are predictable and is therefore the source of positive traits such as compassion, generosity and trust in God. In contrast the external world (*zاهر*) is an unpredictable and corrupt space of worldly influences. It is a realm of controlled behaviour where politeness, proper conversation, expression and one's true feelings must be held in check. While one might judge the existence of the *zاهر* on moral terms one must know how to operate in this realm since it acts as buffer to the *baten*. The saying, *zاهر-ra- hefz kon!*, (protect external appearances!) is widely heard and heeded, since by maintaining one's behaviour danger can be avoided and the *baten* can be controlled and protected. Regrettably, the *zاهر* is also the source of all the negative qualities of Perso-Iranian culture: suspicion, cynicism, pessimism, defeatism, opportunism, hypocrisy and insincerity (Beeman 1986:11; Bar 2004:5; Mashayekhi 2006:551).

Beeman (1986:70-71, 208-209) furthermore emphasises that during the run-up to the 1979 revolution Imam Khomeini used this *baten-zaher* interplay with great effect to identify the revolution with the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, which represents the pure inner core of the *baten*. Khomeini skilfully linked and elevated Imam Husayn's struggle with the revolutionary struggle of Iran against the Shah and his corrupt external supporters. This was done via *ta'zyeh* (Iranian passion plays), whose main object traditionally was the reenactment of the massacres of Mohammad's grandson, Husayn ibn Alī, and a small group of supporters near Karbala in 680 AD on Āshūra, the 10th of Muharramm (Moin 2000:16-17; Keddie 2003:171-172; Mackey 1998:201). Effectively Khomeini was engaged in a fight between an Iranian *baten* and a foreign *zaher*, the US, with the Shah acting as a tyrant, an agent of Western (US) imperialism and Jewish Zionism (Takeyh 2006a:16). Two issues were emphasised, namely that by overthrowing the Shah, Iranian society could purify itself so that Iran, in the rhetoric of the revolution, could become a pure *baten* after the exclusion of the external *zaher* elements, like Western thinking, cultural values, and mores. Iran thus redefined itself and the Shah became part of the impure external intrusion, which assured his expulsion. Khomeini's inflexible stance towards the US as the enemy on any matter, like the release of the US hostages, is an example of how Khomeini protected the inner truth, faith or pure *baten*.

Despite the presence of all these conflicting elements that form Iran's identity and self-image, the dominating element remains the twin Iranian-Shī'a images of *national superiority* and *subjugation*. At present Iran projects this image of superiority, pride and chauvinism towards its Arabic neighbours, naturally with the result that Iran's present regional policies have proved relatively unsuccessful. For example, Iran's attempts to emphasise a shared history, language and culture with countries such as Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, have been rejected by these and other Central Asian and Caucasian countries. The divisions caused by Persia's "subjugation" of these countries during imperial times run too deep (Herzig 2004:510-511).

3.3.2.2 Iranian attitudes towards the West

The second tier encapsulates Iranian attitudes towards foreigners and is one of *distrust* and *rejection* attributable to or justified on the grounds of the long tradition of foreign encroachment and exploitation in Iran. Iranians rejected the perception, generally held in the 19th century, that they need protection from more advanced peoples and nations to solve their problems, or as described by Banuazizi (1977:220), the yearning for a “benevolent American”. Frequent foreign attacks and invasions over the centuries and particularly the constant interventions by foreign powers such as Turkey, Britain, France, Russia and later the US have further strengthened the Iranians’ innate belief that they have the right to offer determined resistance to and close ranks against attempts by foreign powers to subjugate, dominate or influence Iran in any way. Consequently, a deep anti-Western attitude or *xenomania* permeates Iranian society as it denounces its opponents as “*Gharbzadaha / Westoxicated*” or contaminated with Western diseases or foreign and particularly Western culture. This rejectionist view was articulated in 1961/62 by Jalal al-e Ahmad (1982:10), an Iranian leftist intellectual, and his book, while banned by the imperial authorities, was unofficially circulated and discussed, also by Khomeini. His exploitation theme was largely based on the traditional suppression of Iran by the foreign powers and particularly their control of Iranian resources in what became known as the “capitulations”. It started a “Third Worldist” discourse, which was vital in the creation of a secular leftist-religious alliance and the success of the 1979 revolution. This “policy” together with Iran’s interventionist past has led to an entrenched anti-imperialist identity and the accentuation of attitudes such as individualism, mistrust and a tendency to believe in conspiracy theories and the adoption of political animosity towards foreigners, mainly the US. However, it is also important to acknowledge for the sake of context that Iran also continues to adopt policies (e.g. its nuclear policy) that are calculated to justify and reflect its ideas of national pride and honour (Khomeini 1981:38, 152; Iran 2006b:74; Abrahamian 1993:13; Lambton 1957).

a) Individualism

Bar (2004:10-11), Beeman (1986:69) and Behnam (1986:98-99) regard individualism or “egoism” as the most dominant personality trait of Iranians, probably attributable to Iran’s geographic conditions, centuries of invasion and oppressive rule, the prevalence of unstable governments over the years, and more particularly the philosophy of dualism, a major theme in Iranian culture. A multifaceted Iranian individualism resulted from this unique socio-cultural milieu as Iranians are considered to harbour self-contradictory traits, being simultaneously resourceful, clever and able to overcome extreme difficulties, as well as fear of betrayal and distrust. This fear of betrayal and distrust proceeds from an assumption that everybody is primarily in pursuit of personal interest. While the premise appears to be a rather universal tendency, Iran has, according to Takeyh (2006a:4), taken it to the extreme due to its past and the current contradicting elements in its foreign policy where Islamic ideology, national interest and factional politics are in constant conflict. Iranian society is thus a colourful blend of conflicting tendencies and has produced a variety of authority patterns, including external submission to superiors, coinciding with internal rejections of authority and simultaneously a hesitancy to take action unless ordered, or more specifically, a conspicuous absence of individual initiative. A similar conclusion was reached by Gable (cf. Banuazizi 1977:224), who defines “Persian individualism” as lacking a strong emphasis on personal integrity; an absence of a belief in freedom; and a weak emphasis on responsibility, initiative and independence. This analysis illustrates why Iranian society is permeated by a fear of betrayal and a sense of insecurity and distrust. These attitudes have been at the heart of policies of isolation and inflexibility and are further strengthened as a consequence of the Iranians’ singular focus on the family unit as the single surviving source of security, cooperation and trust.

b) Lack of trust and easy acceptance of conspiracy theories

Beeman (1986:32) notes that lack of trust is a dominant element of Iranian individualism and states that Iranians distrust “the motives of other Iranians, their families, their children, and most likely themselves, at least partially because they are unable to control the

environment and places within it.” Mashayekhi (2006:551) sees mistrust as a major policy orientation in Iran, which is closely linked with the internal (*baten*) and external (*zاهر*) interplay described above. As such, it is part of the dichotomous or Manichean world view inherent in Iranian culture, which contrasts good and evil as depicted in the teachings of Zoroaster on the perpetual conflict between “good and evil“ as discussed in chapter 1. Bar (2004:11) views mistrust as an attitude that has a determining influence on domestic authority structures and on the behaviour of leaders and foreign powers. According to Beeman (1986:32-33), this attitude or characteristic is a feature of a complex communication code (almost comparable to a cipher). However, mistrust as a concept, like other loaded words such as “negotiation”, is difficult to translate from Farsi into English. It is more like a form of general wariness that also specifically manifests in various and concurrent love-hate relationships that pervade Iranian society. Individuals in Iran, in other words, apparently “love” their relatives yet “distrust” them at the same time. These attitudes are nonetheless not constant, resulting in a situation where the respective statuses are attained not because of a general affection or dislike, but rather because of specific events that had either good or bad effects. Due to such perpetual oscillation it can be assumed that Iran’s traditional and continuing struggle to survive impacts on its interpersonal relationships, national psyche and foreign relations. Based on such analyses, Bar (2004:11) describes Iranians as generally pessimistic, insecure and suspicious. To defend Iran, mainly against foreigners, it evolved a defensive communication technique, called *zeraengi* (cf. 3.4.2), which Beeman (1986:9) describes as the skilful use of communication to control or manipulate message interpretation.

Among other countries, the US in particular finds this dualism in the Iranian character unsettling and difficult to interpret. In fact, as a consequence of foreign dominance in Iran over the centuries, Iranians proceed from an entrenched position that foreign powers have cheated it out of its proper place among the nations, with the result that it is inevitable to display political animosity towards foreigners. Due to the previously mentioned love-hate relationship and the *baten-zاهر* interplay, Iran’s attitudes toward foreign countries are complex and multi-layered. Iranians almost seem to be paranoid since they always expect the worst and tend to suspect others’ intentions. As noted, Iranians are particularly

susceptible to conspiracy theories as a result of the influences of foreign powers, particularly the US and Britain, religion (Zoroastrianism and its successor faiths, Bahai) as well as Zionism on Iran. As a result Iran views this collective group as key agents of “a conspiracy of global forces intent on destroying Islam”. Britain and the US respectively are key focuses of Iran’s conspiracy theories, due to their historical interventions, their present actions to implement “regime change”, their involvement in the present nuclear issue, and their roles in the 1953 *coup d’état* (Bar 2004:12, 14). Although Iran’s abhorrence of Zionism is closely tied to the Palestinian issue and the existence of the State of Israel in the Middle East since 1948, Zionism has been a traditional focus of Khomeini since the 1920s. Khomeini gained the impression during the Russian revolution that Lenin and his supporters, acting at the behest of world Zionism, were intent on creating a world Jewish government that would destroy Islam (Hoveyda 2003:7).

3.3.2.3 Iran’s Islamic world view

Iran’s Islamic world view is multilayered or polarised. The first layer reflects Iran’s view of the world as a division between the oppressed (*mostzafin*) and the oppressors (*mostakbarin*). According to Rahnema and Nomani (1996:71-90), the Shī’a ideological subsystems (proposed by a number of key Iranian intellectuals and contemporaries of Khomeini), Ayatollah Mortaza Motahhari, Ali Shariati and Mehdi Bazargan, the Iranian leadership was deeply divided before and after the revolution. There was no cultural homogeneity in Iran. This view is supported by Mahdavi (2003b:24-25) and Sheikholeslami (2003:149), both of whom argue that instead of a unified Shī’a Islamic culture or system, various “chunks” of culture, each with its own history and social bases, existed prior to the revolution. These overlapping cultures include Khomeinism, Shariati’s Islamic leftist ideology, Motahhari’s historical materialism, and Bazargan’s liberal-democratic Islam. Two additional cultures involved in the revolution were the socialism and nationalism of the respective guerrilla and nationalist-democratic groups. Khomeinism prevailed for reasons such as his charisma, which was on par with Mao and Lenin, and his willingness to accommodate and adopt the policies of others for his own purposes on realising that his policies, such as the *vilayat-i faqih*, were less attractive to the masses

than the anti-absolutist theories of revolutionaries such as Shariati. Moreover, after Shariati's imprisonment and death in 1978, Khomeini had a free hand to actively and selectively fuse - if only for the brief revolutionary period - aspects of Islamic culture and imagery such as the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, cultural idioms like *baten-zaher*, and opposing ideas that appealed to both the traditional and modern social groups. He freely exploited class antagonisms in Iran, even copying the Marxist vernacular of the wealthy and the dispossessed, previously the exclusive domain of secular leftists and Shariati, as he created a multiparty opposition against the Shah before the revolution (Mahdavi 2003b: 26-27; Sheikholeslami 2003:150; Beeman 1986:208-209).

The major reason why the secular left in Iran abandoned their revolutionary mission and accepted Khomeini's religious leadership, was because of the joint and overlapping objective to overthrow the Shah's government, viewed in the Iranian mindset as being one with corruption, intervention by the US in particular and foreigners in general. Any discussion that questioned the composition, hierarchy and leadership of the opposition forces was perceived as counter-revolutionary (Sheikholeslami 2003:151). Khomeini's association with the *mostzafin* (oppressed) during the initial period of the revolution was also the main reason why the Iranian Communist Party (*Tudeh*), while promoting Soviet interests, was prepared to follow Khomeini's line and accepted a secondary role in advancing the revolution. As a result the *Tudeh* became irrelevant after the revolution, when various opposition parties even cooperated with the clergy in annihilating each other before they too were eliminated (Sheikholeslami 2003:151; Sheikholeslami 2000:107). While Zabih (1982a:116) concurs with this analysis, he also provides some detail regarding the methods used. Khomeini applied the age-old Persian tactics and practices of "consolidating one's powerbase by dividing one's enemies" used by Shah Reza Khan in the 1920s, Premier Mossadeq in the 1950s and the deposed Shah in the 1970s. He also used "the foreign link threat" for the purpose of either breaking the resistance of adversaries or keeping a watchful eye on "the enemies of the revolution", while "counter-revolution" was used as linking concept to combine the old and new strategies in a configuration calculated to meet the new revolutionary circumstances (Zabih 1982a:24).

Khomeini's usage and discarding of ideologies and methods with a view to eliminating his opponents clearly illustrate his interest in gaining power. According to Abrahamian (1993:26-27; 47-48), Khomeini's views and even his interpretation changed from the 1970s onwards. Khomeini initially depicted the world and Iranian society as deeply divided into two warring classes (*tabaqat*): the *mostzafin* (oppressed people) against the *mostakbarin* (oppressors); the *foqara* (poor) against the *sarvatmandan* (rich); and furthermore the *mellat-e mos-tazaf* (oppressed nation) against the *hokumat-shaytan* (Satan's government); the *tabaqeh-e payin* (lower class) against the *tabaqeh-e bala* (upper class) and so forth. Khomeini used the term *mostzafin* sparingly and then only in the Qur'anic sense to denote the people as "meek", weak, or "humble". A number of Suras address this "weakness" such as Sura IV/75, which refers to the "ill-treated and oppressed", while similarly part of Sura XXVII/5 reads:

And We wished to be
Gracious to those who were
Being depressed in the land,
To make them leaders (in faith)

In the period before and just after the revolution (1970-1982) Khomeinism became an "ideologised" account of tradition or a "culture in action", according to Abrahamian (1993: 47-48). Khomeini depicted the *mostzafin* as angry oppressed masses, using almost the same language as Shariati and his followers to infuse meaning into the word. In addition he increasingly identified the *mostzafin* (oppressed) with the *tabaqeh-e payin* (lower class) who have to struggle with the *tabaqeh-e bala* (upper class). The *mostzafin* (oppressed) always remained an integral part of his thought and he even called on them to gather under the banner of Islam and eject the wicked rulers from their lands in his final testament (Khomeini 1983:21). Superimposing this class argument onto the foreign milieu, Khomeini argued that the *mostakbarin* (oppressors) always had favoured an unjust, satanic and tyrannical government. Khomeini made two distinctions in Islam: Pure Mohammedan Islam, which he defended because in theory and practice it belongs to, defends and serves the impoverished of the world, the *mostzafin*, who have been oppressed throughout

history. Opposed to Pure Mohammedan Islam is American Islam, which belongs to, defends and is in the service of the capitalists, the *mostakbarin* (oppressors), care-free, well-to-do, opportunists, hypocrites and fortune-seekers. This analysis was similar to Shariati's typology. Khomeini had only renamed Shariati's monotheistic "Islam of Ali" as Pure Mohammedan Islam and his polytheistic Islam or "Islam of the Safavids" as American Islam (Rahnema & Nomani's (1996:77-78).

The second layer relates to Khomeini's vision regarding the creation of an authentic "*Pax Islamica*". It is directly linked to the *mostzafin-mostakbarin* dichotomy discussed above and was intended to be created gradually. The Iranian revolution was the first step, in a process driven by the *mostzafin* (oppressed) to free them from the *mostakbarin* (oppressors). Yet, this perpetual earthly struggle is only provisional since the full and final "*Pax Islamica*" can only begin after the occultation of the 12th Imam and the return of the Mahdi. Since Muslims view the world as consisting of two parts, namely the "House of Islam" (*Dār al-Islām*) or the "realm of peace and belief" and the "House of War" (*Dār al-Harb*) the "realm of war and disbelief", the return of the Mahdi would end this division and result in the absorption of these remnants. The *Sharia* would be restored, and all state boundaries dissolved as the universal Islamic community unites to form an Islamic world government (George 1996:82; Hunter 1990:37).

George (1996: 82-83) and Stempel (2000:50) also stress that only after this spiritual culmination can and will the revolution be exported to the rest of the world, not through the *jihad* of the sword, but the *jihad* of the tongue, that is to say by peaceful means such as propaganda. Additionally, Khomeini demonised the "Satanic" *mostakbarin* (oppressors), for example by characterising the US as "the Great Satan", imagery which the US attempted to counter through their portrayal of Iran, and other countries perceived as enemies to the US, as being part of the "axis of evil." This unfortunately does not have the same impact as the Iranian imagery. While Khomeini viewed the world as divided into those who followed the "right path", the "path of God and belief", and those who follow the "corrupt path", the "path of Satan and disbelief", his *mostzafin-mostakbarin* distinction is not a purely Islamic versus non-Islamic division, but also a division into two opposing

blocs, one comprising *all* the rich, the powerful and the superpowers who are exploiting the oppressed, as well as non-oppressed members of the Islamic world and the Third World. His view of oppression is Qur'anic and has three elements, namely political oppression, socio-economic oppression and a combination of deprivation and exploitation. Khomeini's polarised view can also be linked to Iran's pre-Islamic history, dominated by the teachings of Zoroaster who identified two perpetually contending forces in the cosmic world, namely *Ahura Mazda* or the Creator, representing goodness and light and its opposite *Ahriman* or the Destroyer (Mackey 1998:16).

The third and final layer is Khomeini's reaction to the realities of the East-West ideological division of the world. Khomeini's world view differs from that of Al-e Ahmad (1982:4), for whom the purpose of East-West is economic with the East referring to the "hungry" countries and West to the "well-fed" countries. This economic distinction is not critically at odds with Khomeini's *mostzafin-mostakbarin* classification. According to Hunter (1990:37), however, Khomeini's division is not a matter of economics in the first place, but rather a division between countries that follow and support the US (the capitalist line in the West) and countries that follow and support the Soviet line. In Khomeini's view the Non-Aligned countries were a fraud and had no place in the world. Only Iran was viewed as truly independent. Iran nonetheless joined the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Havana in September 1979 because other Iranian Islamic leaders saw it as an important vehicle to reach out to the rest of the Third World (The Non-Aligned Countries 1982:798). It also became "acceptable" to Khomeini since he came to identify non-alignment with self-reliance and the traditional stance of "equidistance" or Premier Mossadeq's policies of "*Negative Equilibrium*", as well as the more recent "Third Worldism". Prime Minister Mossadeq, because of his opposition to the Shah, was even posthumously "assimilated" in the period before the revolution as his nationalist ideas and Shī'ism were fused to advance the revolution. However, his role, to be briefly contextualised in chapter 4, was carefully omitted afterwards by Iranian ideologues, with the emergence of a politicised Iran. His self-reliant policy was formative in the idea of the NAM, while his "oil nationalisation" policy of 1950 influenced Third World economic nationalism (Hunter 1990:172, 29; Chelkowski & Dabashi 1999:94, 255-256; Sadri 1998:5-6).

The revolutionary leaders furthermore assumed that non-alignment would meet the foreign policy goals of Iran as an Islamic and Third World country, in accordance with the slogan “*Neither West nor East but only the Islamic Republic*”, since a preference for either camp would be incompatible with the Iranian religious, cultural and historical context. Moreover, an alliance with one bloc would restrict policy options in establishing and maintaining beneficial ties with states from opposing blocs or with certain developing countries. As noted by Sadri (1998:2), the purpose of Iran’s declaration of non-alignment was to achieve autonomy in foreign policy making and end Iran's dependence on one ideological bloc, avoid direct involvement in the US-Soviet rivalry and to improve its ties with all nations except Israel and South Africa. Although the central foreign policy focuses remain unchanged, Iran has - due to the new bipolar world - shifted its policies away from global ideological divisions to take advantage of natural economic and political rivalry among the great powers. It has diversified its trade partners, sources of international investments and diplomatic supporters at the UN and elsewhere. In general Iran attempts to enhance its policy maneuverability, and to reduce its reliance on any foreign power for economic, diplomatic, political, or military requirements (Sadri 1998:12-13). Iranian policies have been blocked by US initiatives since 2006, particularly by increasingly comprehensive sanctions packages to isolate Iran at the UNSC. Iran has, however, shown an adaptability as it reacts in pragmatic fashion to *Realpolitik*. Iranians may rant and rave about the injustices meted out to them, but they nevertheless will judge threats and opportunities soberly and realistically before responding to them (Bar 2004:14).

3.4 COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

3.4.1 “High-context and low-context” culture

As a rule cultures, with particular reference to conditions governing communication, can be categorised as either “high-context” or “low-context”. “High-context” communication cultures place the emphasis on context. It is also an indirect method that requires considerable familiarity with cultural meaning as conveyed by the words and contexts in a language. In contrast communication in “low-context” cultures is direct and embedded

in words or acts requiring no special familiarity with contexts (Adair & Brett 2004:161-162; Harris *et al.* 2004:44). Communication and language thus form integral parts of the negotiation-cultural nexus in Iran.

While Western cultures tend to be individualistic or independent, Eastern cultures have a propensity to be interdependent or collectivist. Adair and Brett (2004:159-160) postulated that a resource-distribution framework is relevant and necessary for negotiations in a Western cultural context, while Eastern cultures are more likely to think of negotiation in terms of relationships. Iran is, according to Bar (2004:27), part of the Middle Eastern “high-context” communication cultures, due to for example the Iranians’ use of a “flowery” language such as Farsi and linguistic ambiguities. Their verbal communication is also highly context-referenced, while societal issues such as honour, rational considerations and pragmatism are also reflected. Despite grouping Iran with the “high-context” cultures for the said reasons, Bar nonetheless contends that Iran is in fact closer to the “low-context” Western cultures than to other Middle Eastern “high-context” cultures in the Arabic world and Asia. However, a comparative study of communication cultures falls outside the demarcated focus of this study.

At this juncture the principal focus will be on the Farsi language as a key to understanding Iranian social and political institutions (statuses) and particularly the dynamic of interpersonal behaviour. As Beeman (1986:1) notes “it is through the intricacies of face-to-face interaction that power is negotiated, alliances are made, action is made incumbent on individuals, and choices of strategy are decided.” Since Iranians place Farsi on a pedestal, it is perceived as the soul of the nation’s identity, even more than the land or Islam as the religion. As such, no linguistic utterance is perceived as just casually made or listened to by Farsi speakers. The language, the context and the message are always loaded with meaning, hidden or otherwise (Bar 2004:28; Beeman 1986:2-3). To address this issue in more detail, two broad themes will be discussed, namely the importance of language as an instrument in negotiations, and the use of *zeraengi* (mentioned above) as part of a special linguistic system.

3.4.2 The importance of language as an instrument in negotiations

Cohen (2001:72) defines language as a vehicle of current meaning, the living archive of a civilisation and the repository of past customs and attitudes. As such, words denote a specific meaning either in terms of past or present associations. This also applies to loaded terms such as “negotiation”. The “English” definition of negotiation encompasses all forms of communication, bargaining and debate, while cooperation is desirable and outcomes involve concessions and compromise (Cohen 2001:78-79).

In contrast, Middle Eastern countries use a totally different negotiation paradigm. According to Cohen (2001:79-82), their political and economic arenas are approached differently, while the type of representation and terminologies are also unlike those used in the West. In Arabic, for example, two separate terms, *mufāwadat* and *musāwadama*, are used synonymously to denote forms of negotiations, but whereas *mufāwadat* refers to political “negotiation”, “debate” or “conference,” *musāwadama* is an economic term referring to bargaining over goods in the market place. This *mufāwadat-musāwadama* dichotomy also relates to Farsi where the term *mozákereh* applies to discussions at the “political” level and *čāne zadan* or *mo’male-ye bāzāri* to economic discussions or bargaining. Bargaining or haggling has its roots in the bazaar and is a way of life in Iran. It almost certainly influences *mozákereh*. The difference between the two levels implies not only political and economic distinctions, but also diverse social statuses and behaviour, both issues that will be addressed shortly.

Terminologies such as compromise and concession, an intrinsic part of the “English approach” to negotiation, do not exist in Farsi, although Farsi terms for agreement, like reconciliation might imply something similar and Iranians are aware that disputes can be settled. However, the English “spirit of compromise” is meaningless in Middle Eastern languages since it is equated with surrender (Cohen 2001:81-82). Despite the absence of these concepts, there nonetheless exist within Farsi language and tradition a number of ideas which they share with their Islamic-Arabic neighbours. *Haqq* (*hāqq* in Arabic) is one of the 99 names of Allah (*Al Haqq*), meaning “The Truth”, which is known to every

Muslim. It also denotes “duty”, “righteousness” and “justice” and reflects the fact that justice is from God. It is thus impossible and repugnant to compromise on this sacrosanct position, which leads to regular evocation of *haqq* as a justification for a given position. Apart from being a supreme value, *haqq* also refers to the sacred national rights and resources of the Iranians, earlier usurped by the foreign powers, a key issue that has had a formative influence on Iran’s national identity throughout its history (Cohen 2001:83-84).

In conclusion, it should be emphasised that a comprehensive knowledge of Farsi is required if one aims to be successful when negotiating with Iran. Each word has a different nuance or meaning according to context, as can be seen from the Iranian conception of peace as non-aggression, *mosálemat ámiz* in Farsi (*salām* in Arabic) and peace as reconciliation or *solh* in Farsi (*sulh* in Arabic). For example, *mosálemat ámiz* (peace as non-aggression) in Farsi is “peaceful coexistence” or “cold peace” and implies a situation without war and the existence of formal diplomatic relations, without economic advantages or cordiality. *Solh* in contrast refers to peace in its most comprehensive sense (Cohen 2001:84-85).

3.4.3 The use of special linguistic codes or systems such as *zeraengi*

Bar (2004:28) notes that Farsi is replete with linguistic and social complexities, rich in allusions, metaphors and folk sayings, which require “decoding”. The ambiguities mentioned earlier are therefore not only accepted as part of the language, but admired and even carried over in their discourse with foreigners. Due to these ambiguities Iranians have created a communication system that is based on the assumptions that a message cannot be interpreted according to a single set of principles, hence a skilful interpreter will never settle for a final interpretation of any message. *Zeraengi* is a key example of this Iranian practice. *Zeraengi* also conforms to the Shī’a doctrine of *taqiyyah*, which means to shield or guard oneself. This principle will be discussed in more detail in section 3.5.2. *Zeraengi*, described by Beeman (1986:27-28) as “cleverness” or “wiliness”, is an important element in Iran’s communication system. He based this on the premise of uncertainty, e.g. that if it is accepted that the relationship between the message form (what is actually said) and the

message content (what the message is about) cannot be interpreted by a single set of criteria, tension is created between the initiator and the interpreter (receiver) of the message. In socio-linguistic terms *zeraengi* can thus be defined as: “.... an operation on the part of an adroit operator that involves thwarting direct interpretation of his own actions or deliberately leading others to erroneous interpretation of those actions, while being able to successfully interpret the actions of others (Beeman 1986:27).

In other words, a person who is *zeraeng* may try to create a bias on the part of others to interpret the “coded” elements in communication in a particular way, by influencing or manipulating perceptions of the relevant situational elements (Beeman 1986:27). This “discourse manipulation”, deception or blackmail is considered a pivotal principle beyond dispute in Iran, particularly if the expectation exists that the opposing party will be clever as well to contribute to the general sense of mistrust and unwillingness to accept things at face value (Bar 2004:29). It is used by Iranian interpreters, who manipulate both the translation and the dialogue to the advantage of Iranian negotiators.

3.5 RELIGION

The importance of religion is a key element in Iranian society, illustrated abundantly throughout the above discussion of culture. It became a dominant force as a result of the Islamic revolution in 1979 when it moved out of the Iranian internal milieu into the international arena in terms of international political theory and diplomacy. The world came suddenly “face-to-face” with religion as the missing and (often) ignored dimension of statecraft (Stempel 2000:1; Johnston 2003:3-4). Religion was until that point addressed as part of other major categories or theories dealing with societies, institutions, terrorism and civilisations, and was usually characterised in the negative sense as being militant, radical and fundamentalist (Fox & Sandler 2004:9).

Religion is difficult to define, but Schmidt (1988:11) describes it as: “a human seeking and responding to what is experienced as holy”. This definition is sufficiently vague to include both theistic and non-theistic conceptions of the divine. For the purpose of this analysis the

concept of religion is not specifically defined. It suffices to acknowledge Fox and Sandler's view (2004:2) that a multifaceted religion exists and that it influences people's behaviour. While they describe religion's influence on world view and identity they also refer to religion as a means of securing legitimacy and as an element of formal institutions that influences the political process. The changes in the wake of the revolution of 1979 led to the installation of a theocracy, that is, a religious or Islamic state (cf. further discussion in chapter 4), in which secular and religious life are blended in line with the principle that "religion and state" are one. This principle of indivisibility was supported by the Prophet Mohammad, who was simultaneously the spiritual and political leader to his followers (cf. Eickelmann & Piscatori 1996:46), and the Qur'anic adjuration in Sura IV/59 urging the believers "to obey the Apostle and those charged with Authority amongst you."

Although the *Qur'an* and *hadith* are the traditional key sources of Islamic law or *Sharia* the reigning Islamic ideology or conceptual framework in Iran is Imam Khomeini's guardianship of the *vilayat-i faqih*. The debate surrounding this issue will be addressed as part of chapter 4 since it was an intrinsic part of the power struggle between the revolutionary leadership that ensued in the period after the revolution and during the US embassy siege. Additional focuses will be the *vilayat-i faqih's* initial intention to "export the revolution" beyond Iran's borders and to extend its rule over the total *ummah*, as outlined in Article 3 of the Iranian Constitution⁵, as well as a structural analysis of the new Islamic institutions that were formed as part of the provisional process in the creation of the *Pax Islamica*. The new revolutionary government was thus enabled in this fashion to gain legitimacy and to formalise its internal and foreign policies. Iran's present pragmatism, however, has softened its former most extremist revolutionary intentions. Spreading its religious beliefs beyond its borders periodically manifests in instances of religious terrorism, which Iran has justified as part of its holy imperative and a reaction to the threats to Iranian religious identity. Iranian society also reflects a linkage between religion and culture as well as the indivisibility of religion and the state. Although these linkages are mentioned by many theoreticians, such as Enayat (1982), it should be noted

⁵ The Constitution refers to "the expansion and strengthening of Islamic brotherhood and public cooperation among all the people" and "framing the foreign policy of the country on the basis of Islamic criteria, fraternal commitment to all Muslims, and unsparing support to the *mostzafin*..."

that Fox and Sandler ((2004:177) emphasise that the association of Islam with autocracy in the Middle East is rooted in culture rather than religion. Iranian negotiation strategies and styles, however, are not only influenced by Islam, but driven by culture and religion.

Iran has an array of defensive / offensive negotiation methods which it applies consistently and which form an inherent part of Twelver Shī'ism in Iran. These methods include *ijtihad*, which functions on a spiritual level as it deals with legal innovations and the three religious techniques of *taqiyyah* or *kitman*, *tanfih* and *khod'eh*. While writers such as Schultz and Beitler (2004) describe these Islamic religious concepts as “techniques of deception”, others such as Gordon (1977) portray them as patterns of behaviour that are acceptable within the limits of Iranian mores and primarily used by minorities in Iran.

3.5.1 *Ijtihad*

Momen (1985:186) and Akhavi (1980:x) define *ijtihad* as the process of independently arriving at judgement on points of religious law using reason and the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). These innovative strategic religious decisions, also referred to as “cost-benefit analysis”, are usually made by senior Shī'a scholars (*mutahid*) who are also *marja'-i taqlid* (the source of emulation⁶). They take into account the public interest (*maslahat*) or necessity (*darurat*) as one of the sources of law along with the traditional sources of *Qur'an* and Sunnah (practice), hadith (sayings), *ijmā* (consensus) *et cetera*. In other words, personal interpretation of the *Qur'an* is the key descriptive element and not only legal precedent, as in the case of the Sunnī. The aim of *ijtihad* is the uncovering, through knowledge of the transmitted sources, through rational process as well as knowledge of what the Imams would have decided in any given legal case. Although it might look as if *ijtihad* provides considerable latitude for innovative thinking, the contrary has happened since one cannot nor dare not stray from the path laid down by the Imams. This constraint is encompassed in the concurrent path of *ihtiyat* (prudence and caution), which severely limits independent thinking or action. Consequently differences of opinion have presented a problem to the religious leaders (*ulamā*). They have dealt with this

⁶ One who is qualified by learning to be followed in all points of religious practice and law.

problem in quite a creative way by ruling that if the truth only lies within two opposing positions and if this could not be addressed successfully by applying the techniques of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, then it would be obligatory for the Hidden Imam to manifest himself and give a decision. If he does not manifest himself the truth must lie with both parties, and as long as the Hidden Imam remains in occultation the Shī'a community can be sure that it has produced no ruling that is in error. Any decision to which the Shī'a community subscribes by consensus must include the opinion of the Hidden Imam and is therefore correct. *Ijtihad* is thus the process whereby various opinions are considered until a final consensus that is deemed to be the truth, is arrived at (Bar 2004:15; Momen 1985:186).

Traditionally the Supreme Religious Leader in Iran is *marja'-i taqlid*. Khomeini has this status, but the present leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, lacks similar religious qualifications and authority. Nonetheless, Khamenei, like Khomeini, actively subscribes to the concept of the *vilayat-i faqih* and is perceived to be God and the "Hidden Imam's representative on earth". In this way *ijtihad* becomes an intrinsic part of any negotiation process since the *vilayat-i faqih* is the final arbiter for all earthly decisions.

3.5.2 *Taqiyyah* and *kitmān*

Taqiyyah (taghieh) and *kitmān* (ketman) are the same method, with *taqiyyah* as the religious principle and *kitmān* as the term used in current language. Most analysts, e.g. Taheri (1985, 2004) and Enayat (1982) concur, with this "definition" or usage, whereas (Hoveyda 2003:88) has reversed the application, defining *taqiyyah* as the current and *kitmān* as the religious term. However, after an analysis of the information this dissertation too will apply *taqiyyah* as the religious principle and *kitmān* for current language.

Etymologically, *taqiyyah* derives from the root *waqa, yaqī* in Arabic, which means to shield or to guard oneself. There is thus nothing to the term to justify its standard translation in English either as "dissimulation" or "expedient concealment" although both acts may be necessary to guard against physical and mental harm on account of a particular belief counter to that held by the majority (Enayat 1982:175). The Shī'a need for

taqiyyah is based on their position as a religious and persecuted Islamic minority and can be traced to pronouncements by respectively the 5th Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (d.114/732) and his son the 6th Imam Ja'far al-Şādiq (d.148/765) during a period of relentless persecution by the authorities, whether Umayyad or Abbasid. Consequently, al-Bāqir in particular, came to believe that the best guarantee for the survival of Shī'ism lay not in taking up arms, but in preserving and propagating the Shī'a heritage. The doctrine of *taqiyyah* was thus fashioned as an instrument to safeguard the faithful and protect their lives, while keeping alive the Shī'a claim to the spiritual primacy and leadership of the Islamic community. The 6th Imam, al-Şādiq, even confirmed the imperative need for *taqiyyah*, raising it to the point of identifying it with the essence of religion itself: "He who has no *taqiyyah*, has no religion" (Kohlberg 1975:396; Jafri 1979:298; Keddie 1963:51-52; Wilber 1981:121; Enayat 1982:176).

While in practical terms the *taqiyyah* tradition in Islam only began at the time of al-Bāqir, it does have pre-Islamic roots, as can be seen from Jewish Antiquities (Josephus: Book II, Chapter 6) and Esther, the Biblical Book relating the Persian-Jewish story of Esther who concealed her identity as a Jewess and even lied to her husband King Ahasuerus⁷ when she risked her life and position as Queen to safeguard her people from a planned massacre. The King allowed Esther to intercede and the Jewish people to defend them: "And many of the people of the land pretended to be Jews, for they feared what the Jews might do to them". (The Living Bible, Esther Chapter 8/17). While the Biblical text points to the King's feelings for Esther, the interplay between the King, Esther and her uncle Mordecai, also convey the impression that *taqiyyah* was allowed by minorities (Gordon 1977: 192).

Although other oppressed minorities and sects thus also practiced *taqiyyah*, it has become almost solely associated with Shī'ism. As a result every classical work on Shī'a jurisprudence also mentions *taqiyyah*. The rules justifying *taqiyyah* rest mainly on three *Qur'anic* suras: Sura III/28 a general warning; Sura XL/40, a verse about a man who hides his faith and then questions the wisdom of killing a man; and the most relevant Sura XVI/106 where man is "allowed" to deny his faith with his mouth, but not with his heart.

⁷ Cyrus was his Persian name, while Artaxerxes was the Greek equivalent.

The background and reasons for this doctrine have been indicated, but the question remains: what exactly is *taqiyyah*? In terms of the religious approach it is clear that linkage exists between the concept and the negotiation process. This is based on Enayat's discussion (1982:177-178) of the modernists' categorisation of *taqiyyah*:

- Enforced (*ikrāhiyyah*): Refers to acts in compliance with the instructions of an oppressor that are essential to save one's life.
- Precautionary (*khawfiyyah*): It consists of the performance of acts or rituals according to *fatwas* (religious ruling) of Sunnī religious leaders and countries.
- Symbiotic (*mudārātī*): A code of coexistence with the Sunnī majority and involvement in their social and ritual assembly for maintaining Islamic unity.
- The arcane (*kitmāniyyah*): This form of *taqiyyah* consists of the action of concealing one's faith or ideology (probably also a negotiation stance), the number or strength of one's coreligionists and the clandestine activity for promoting the religious goals in times of weakness and lack of preparation for overt action. It is an almost literal interpretation of Sura XVI/106 mentioned above.

According to Gordon (1977:192) *taqiyyah* / *kitmān* is not merely a religious principle, but also a social institution cutting across denominational lines in Iran. *Kitmān* is an old practice that permeates Iranian society to the extent that Hoveyda (2003:89-90) even describes how former Prime Minister Mossadeq danced with joy in his room calling gleefully "Haven't I tricked him! Haven't I tricked him!" after a meeting with the then Shah Reza Pahlavi in the 1960s. To define *taqiyyah* is difficult, but Taheri (1985:110, 232) probably came closest when he described it as "double dealing" or the "pursuit of two different objectives at the same time." Like Mossadeq, Khomeini too applied this method skilfully as can be seen from the following examples: his initial promises of freedom of expression to his widely divergent supporters (e.g. the communist, ethnic and religious minorities) of his multi-party opposition, who were persuaded in this way to support Khomeini's line before the revolution; his promise that women would have equal rights in a future Iranian society, and his projection of a pragmatic face to the West, concealing from them his most radical views on Islam and statehood, even alluding to potential

investment opportunities. Khomeini's strategy was flawless and his domestic and foreign supporters were caught off-guard when he ignored all his previous promises and began a systematic elimination of his coalition partners. An even bigger surprise was his rejection just after the revolution of "all political groups", stating: "We want Allah's government" (Hoveyda 2003:90).

From a Western viewpoint *taqiyyah* and *kitmān* are perceived as two different methods with *taqiyyah* defined as "precautionary dissimulation" or keeping one's innermost convictions secret, while *kitmān* "constitutes a mental reservation or concealment of malevolent intentions." While the same *Qur'anic* suras are referred to as above, Western writers perceived these methods in the modern idiom as being part of Al Qaeda operations and generally as vital tools for Islamic terrorists. In addition they linked these methods with terrorist methodology, including outwitting the enemy by diversion; role playing as victims; manipulating ambiguities (official views of countries on issues like terrorism and Palestinian "martyrdom operations"); tactical denial, and exploiting for example, the perceived contradictions in Islam. The notion of Islam as a peaceful religion is exploited to confuse laymen in light of the dissonant fact that *jihad* actions are taken (Schultz & Beitler 2004:3-4; CI-CE-CT 2002:2-4). These views are still too simplistic, however, bordering on being just anti-Islamic or anti-Iranian. The following examples might suffice to clarify any remaining questions as to illustrate what *taqiyyah* is and how Iran used it in terms of the nuclear negotiations:

Example 1: At the end of 2003 Iran and the E3/EU (Britain, France and Germany) agreed that Iran would suspend its uranium enrichment programme. The E3/EU went jubilantly home after a promise from the then senior nuclear negotiator and Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, Hojjatoleslam Hassan Rohani. What the E3/EU did not realise was that his "promise" did not have the backing of either the Iranian Cabinet or the Majlis (Consultative Assembly). It was therefore never approved. This was *kitmān* at work: the religious leadership avoided a clash with the UN, while simultaneously demanding additional finance from the E3/EU (Taheri 2004:2).

Example 2: At issue is President Ahmadinejad’s promise made in Tehran on 28 October 2005 on Al Qods Day to “cleanse Israel off the map...” To Ahmadinejad’s surprise, his words, often repeated later, raised an international outcry. The reaction was unexpected because similar events had been held since 1982, for example, as recently 2004, when former president Khatami held an event with the theme: “A World without America”, naturally with the object of considering ways and means to defeat and destroy the US. There was no international outcry at the time because the West accepted that a radical Khomeinist type government should be allowed a certain amount of rhetorical latitude and because the Iranian leaders’ criticism was cryptic and in the obscure language of *taqiyyah* and *kitmān*. Khomeini was the spiritual leader, from whom such oblique references could be expected, but Ahmadinejad’s statement, despite being a declared objective of Iran and a paraphrase of Khomeini’s views, was unexpectedly straightforward. Moreover, he ignored *taqiyyah* and *kitmān*, which led to the noted reaction from the international community and the creation of internal institutions in Iran to prevent Ahmadinejad from acting arbitrarily in terms of foreign policy (cf. chapter 6; Samii:2005b; Taheri 2005a).

3.5.3 *Tanfih* or *Tanfieh*

Taheri (1985:109, 233) explains that *tanfih* is a strategy of aloofness that entails one is “judiciously doing nothing”. In a world of constant movement everyone is a doer and those who choose to do nothing can maintain their position and ignore the perpetual turmoil around them. The doers are bound to make mistakes, undoing themselves in the end. The troubled world will eventually have spent its energies returning to the point of tranquillity. The key message is that a given country must wait, doing nothing until it becomes the centre of gravity by default. By employing this indirect and static tactic, Iran intends to “weaken the enemy’s position” and taking the sting out of (its) potential enemies” (Selected Glossary of Islamic, Islamist & Related Terms s.a.:23).

3.5.4 *Khod'eh*

Khod'eh refers to the historic Shī'a tradition of tricking one's enemy in order to benefit from them. The frequent use of half-truths instead of direct lies is a well-known *khod'eh* tactic. Examples frequently used are Khomeini's many pledges regarding female equality and the promise of freedom of expression for all in Iran. He was not lying, in the strictest sense, since he always qualified his statements with references of doing so in "accordance with Islam" or "on the basis of the Qur'an" (Taheri 1985:164, 233). A number of other bogus oaths also exist that do not mean lying, but are often used, including chants such as "by my family" or protestations invoking the name of bogus Prophets (Bar 2004:34).

3.6 CYCLICAL LEADERSHIP PATTERNS IN IRAN

In conclusion it is essential to emphasise that Iran traditionally rejects foreign domination and subjugation where its foreign and internal policies are concerned. In terms of the latter, this trend is particularly illustrated by two dichotomous trends in the Iranian national character, namely authoritarianism and anti-authoritarianism, which either coexist in seeming harmony or have been in direct conflict with each other, since the creation of the Persian Empire (Behnam 1986:9). According to Behnam (1986:10), authoritarianism in Iran involves submission and obedience to authority and acceptance and belief in strong leadership. Ramazani (1966:vii) agrees with Behnam that the authoritarian culture system is partly attributable to the hierarchical system of the absolute monarchy that prevailed for centuries in Iran, and partly to the dominant role played by religion. Ramazani (1966:32) qualifies the role of religion, however, emphasising that the lack of strong leadership and political cohesion in Iran before 1800 was compounded by the decline of Shī'ism at the time. Anti-authoritarianism in turn refers to change and various cyclical events in Iran's history, mainly in the 19th and 20th century, when economic or political interest groups felt sufficiently threatened to intervene e.g. during the constitutional revolution of 1905-10, the oil nationalisation of the 1950s and the 1979 Islamic revolution (Behnam 1986:11).

Despite these perpetual changes, Iran nevertheless accepted what Bar (2004:22) describes as new “despotic regimes” immediately after each revolt. Iran’s repetitive actions raise the question: Why does a society repeatedly and blindly submit to such regimes after strenuous effort to rid themselves of the oppression? There could be numerous reasons, but the most plausible argument appears to be the one offered by Hoveyda (2003:54-55; 60-64), who contends that each of the transformations mentioned above, including the coronation and abdication of Reza Shah and the *coup d’état* that brought the Mossadeq government down, was no more than a “palace revolution” of no particular consequence, and therefore readily acceptable to the masses. The “repetition compulsion” is based on Iran’s mythological past, discussed in chapter 1 and section 4.3.3 where its history of revolt is explored. Despite such painful episodes, Iranians just accept all outcomes as God’s will and repeat the cycle. This behaviour could be the result of a constant search for order and tranquillity under heaven as depicted in Iranian mythology. Bar (2004:22-23) is probably correct in his characterisation of Iran as “a short-term society caught in a cyclical pattern of arbitrary and despotic rule: social uncertainty → growing discontent → chaos → willingness to accept any new regime in order to put an end to the chaos → new despotic and arbitrary rule”.

Revolutionary change is therefore accepted not as a sin against heavenly ordained rulers, nor as an intrinsically good expression of the will of the people, but rather as a “necessary evil *in extremis*” (Bar 2004:23). Reviewing the clerical rule in modern Iran, Sariolghalam (2003:76) even suggested that the Iranians “owed a period of rule to the clerics” who over the past three centuries have been an essential element of Iranian politics.

3.6.1 Key leadership groups in Iran

Since the 1979 revolution various groups have been pivotal to developments in Iranian society in general and in particular in overlapping leadership groups at different hierarchical levels. The roles of the main groups, namely the *ulamā* and the *bazaaris*, will be reviewed only briefly since both played key roles in the 1979 revolution, and they will be discussed in further detail in chapter 4. The role of the family will also be explored as a

factor that influences the issues of status, hierarchy and etiquette, all of which are key elements in Iranian society and in international negotiations conducted by Iran.

3.6.1.1 The historical alliance between the *ulamā* and the *bazaar*

Ahmad Ashraf, a keen observer of Iranian history (cf. Moslem 2002:55), describes the “bazaar and mosque as inseparable twins”, that have served for centuries as the primary centres of public life in urban Iran. The two institutions are even located in close proximity to each other, and mosques and shrines have traditionally provided *bast* or protection to those seeking refuge from harassment or arrest by the authorities (Masse 1938:405; Kaplan 1996:29). This symbiotic relationship is visible on all levels: on the personal-societal level where lineage and kinship have tied the *ulamā* to most of the major *bazaari* families, and politically through the key role this alliance has played in all the major transformations from 1905 to 1979. This relationship also provides the “alliance” with access to the new political leadership because lineage divided people into categories of *khodi* (insider, or “one of us”) and *gheir-e- khodi* (outsider) (Bar 2004:23). An excellent example of this symbiosis is the role played during the 1979 revolution by a *bazaari*, Mohsen Rafiqdust, who was Khomeini’s driver and bodyguard on his return from France, then became the Minister Responsible for the Revolutionary Guard, and presently controls the biggest *bonyad* (economic conglomerate), the *Bonyad –e Mostazafan* (Foundation of the Oppressed) in Iran (Moin 2000:201; Kaplan 1996:28; Kaplan 1997:199 -205).

The traditional *ulamā-bazaari* alliance gained new impetus just prior to the revolution as pressure mounted from the Pahlavi government for increased economic and trade reforms during the White Revolution. Their fear that they would lose their privileged position and the fact that revolutionary Islam became the *bazaaris*’ religious idiom also changed the *bazaaris* into receptive economic and social resource centres for the revolution. The *ulamā-bazaari* alliance survived and remained a viable element after the revolution. This alliance has now been elevated to a higher level as the *bazaaris* enhanced their economic position and political role by becoming not only the power behind the throne, but increasingly in direct possession of these positions. The *ulamā* too improved their position

as the political fortunes of the respective reformist and conservatist factions ebbed or flowed. The *nezam* (system), especially the intelligence, judicial and interior ministries, are in addition pervaded by alumni from the Haqani Seminary at Qom who are primarily controlled by protégés of key individuals in the *ulamā-bazaari* alliance (Ayazi 2003:50; Behnam 1986:129; Bar 2004:23; De Bellaigue 2002:4).

3.6.1.2 The role of the family and societal groups

Lineage and kinship are key elements of Iranian national identity, hence it is important to note that the extended family is a prominent feature of Iranian society, and that all these overlapping networks provide mechanisms for social mobility, access to political and economic circles, and protection from the unpredictable behaviour of the government, as well as acceptance into its ranks. Favours are also not only bestowed on families or friends, but also between “circles of families and friends (Bar 2004:24). To clarify these interactions and behavioural patterns, three types of institution, practice and etiquette procedure will be reviewed, namely *dowreh*, *partibazi* and *tae’arof*.

a) *Dowreh*

As noted by Beeman (1986:44-45), *dowreh* or “circle” refers to persons bound together due to a common life experience. It is an “institutionalised circle of inmates” that currently has significant political influence. An example is the *Jamīyat-i Isargaran-i Inqilab-i Islami* (the Islamic Revolution Devotees Society) or *Isargaran*, a new but key faction in the leadership core under Ahmadinejad, comprising mostly those war veterans known to have “given selflessly to sacred causes” like the Iran-Iraq War. They form part of Ahmadinejad’s *dowreh* and are Iran’s second revolutionary generation (Samii 2005(c):54-55; Farhi 2004:115). *Dowreh* is also a key communication channel since both the formal and informal circles tend to overlap, resulting in messages being rapidly disseminated throughout the country (Beeman 1986:46).

b) *Partibazi*

Beeman (1986:45-61) defines *parti* or *partibazi* as “the institution of inside connections” with persons in the position of granting favours or marshalling power on one’s behalf. Where *dowreh* is the institutionalisation of relationships, *partibazi* refers to the behaviour between the persons in those relationships. The closest English term to it is probably “lobbying”. However, *partibazi* in Iran deals with positioning to further individual interests by approaching persons with the power to grant the privileges, for example for licences or employment. Of key importance is that the vital link in this chain of obligations is most often between perceived equals, individuals who have some absolute claim on another person through bonds of either family or friendship. Since requests from subordinates are rarely granted and requests by a perceived equal must be granted, or seem to be granted, it is crucial in Iran to gain knowledge about social linkages. Yet, if the relations between superior and subordinate involve communication, then the communication will give expression to a hierarchical difference or an instance of *tae’arof*.

c) *Tae’arof*

Beeman (1976:312; 1986:57) defines *tae’arof* as “the active, ritualized realization of different status in interaction”, which emphasises and preserves the integrity of culturally defined status roles throughout Iranian society. Behnam (1986: 98) further describes *tae’arof* as an elaborate code of social relations (or a system of courtesies, ceremonies and formal expressions of courtesy, hospitality and kindness), which pays respect and deference to persons in authority. In another context a senior Iranian politician has described the *tae’arof* system as: “...a hidden reality, a hypocrisy that keeps the peace. It protects the dignity of the other. Architects don’t build glass houses in Iran. If you don’t speak of everything so openly, it’s better. Being able to keep a secret even if you have to mislead is considered a sign of maturity. It’s Persian wisdom. We don’t have to be ideal people. Everybody lies. Let’s be good liars” (Sciolino 2000:35).

The dichotomous relationship between superior and subordinate is the key element according to Beeman (1986:51, 59), in the *tae'arof* system, with material rewards flowing from high to low status and material tribute from low to high. Actions flowing from high to low are interpreted as favours, while actions flowing from low to high are interpreted as service. It is a time-consuming process, with the three stages of *tae'arof* alluding to deference upwards, rendering to superiors their tribute in an act of service and bestowing on inferiors a reward for an act of favour. *Tae'arof* is always practised between individuals, who are perceived as non-equals, in contrast to *partibazi*, where the exchange is between perceived equals. It is not practiced on foreigners who do not know the rules of the system (Beeman 1986: 60; Bar 2004: 36).

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter is essential as a precursor for the forthcoming case studies, which will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6. It deals in-depth with culture and religion as the two key features shaping and informing Iranian society. Persian / Iranian negotiation methods such as *taqiyyah* or *kitman*, *tanfih* and *khod'eh* are reviewed in some detail since the intention is to determine the extent to which these methods apply in the case studies. While the theories of Putnam (1988) and Hermann *et al.* (1987) address different but equally essential elements of the foreign-policy making process, chapter 3 in fact not only poses, but also partly answers the most crucial question raised in chapter 1: How do Iranians negotiate?

CHAPTER 4

“TRIANGULAR DYNAMIC INTERACTION”⁸: A CONTEXT FOR THE 1979 US HOSTAGE CRISIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this chapter is to contextualise the hostage crisis by examining the external and the internal factors (cf. chapter 5) influencing it. The takeover of the US embassy by Militant Students and the ensuing hostage crisis did not happen in a vacuum, but was the traumatic legacy of foreign intervention since the 1800s and particularly the 1953 *coup d'état*. The hostage crisis precipitated the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and initiated a political re-alignment in the Middle East, with the “Imposed War” or 8-year long Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), as the first phase. The international upheaval thus mirrors the chaos and anarchy of the Iranian internal environment.

Another issue that will be reemphasised throughout chapter 4 is the complex linkages between and cyclical nature of the various popular challenges to established authority in Iran during the 20th century. Zabih (1982b:154) explains how foreign involvement set the scene for and precipitated events leading to the 1979 Iranian revolution, and how each failure to overthrow the political establishment merely radicalised later attempts. Ramazani (1980:444) identified three cycles of revolution, namely the constitutional revolution (1905-1910); Prime Minister Muhammad Mossadeq’s oil nationalisation crisis between 1951 and 1953, which ended in the *coup d'état* and the 1979 revolution. Katouzian (1981:234) added to these cycles by also identifying a decade of dictatorship between the 1953 *coup* and the 1963 riots, a period of “petrolic pseudo-modernist despotism”, which reached its peak with the oil revolution of 1973 / 74 and then culminated in 1979 as the Iranian revolution. This chronological overview illustrates foreign involvement and intervention in Iran, which explains its loathing of countries such as Britain and the US and provides, from an Iranian point of view, the justification

⁸ “Triangular dynamic interaction” is used by Ramazani (1966: vii) to describe the “interaction” between internal conditions, external environment and policy methods of Iranian foreign policy.

for the hostage taking in 1979. The events share two characteristics: a close linkage between Iran's internal and foreign policies, which, prior to the Mossadeq-era, used to be exemplified by unqualified backing by the Majlis or elite of the government in any confrontation with a foreign power. All the events furthermore reflect a growing alienation from the ruling monarchy and perceived foreign domination. Iranian opposition to foreign domination and the monarchy were key factors in all three revolutions. Russia and Britain respectively were the principal targets in 1905 and in the 1950s, with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) as additional target as it was seen as an instrument of British exploitation. The US became the key target just prior to 1979 as a result of its support for the Shah's repressive policies (Zabih 1982b:36).

This chapter provides preparatory background and emphasises the direct linkage between the internal and foreign politics of countries (argued in chapters 1 and 3), while also explaining concepts and events with a direct bearing on the hostage crisis and the development of Iran's negotiating methodology. The analysis is twofold: it starts with an exploration of key foreign interventions in Iranian politics, namely British involvement in Iran; US-British involvement in Iran as precursor to the 1953 *coup d'état* and the event itself. The events provide vital contextual background to the 1979 revolution, which will be discussed as part of the internal dimension. Other key foci are the institutionalisation process and primarily the creation of the theocratic model by Khomeini. The embassy siege is integral to the internal dimension but has been delinked for purposes of analysis and is discussed as case study I in chapter 5.

4.2 THE FOREIGN DIMENSION

4.2.1 Two key interventions

Foreign powers have throughout the 1800s interacted mainly with despotic but weak Persian / Iranian leaders who ruled over a country that had long slipped beyond their control. To keep the myth of the *Shāhinshāh* (the King of Kings) alive and to guarantee their hold on power, the monarch or Shahs had systematically mortgaged the Iranian

economy since 1863 through continuous concessions to foreign countries. The most outrageous concession was granted in 1872 to Baron Julius Reuter, which gave him the “sole responsibility for Iran’s economic and industrial development for a period of 70 years” (Ramazani 1966:66-67; 1988:200). Ramazani (1966:66-67) also observes in this regard that Lord Curzon, British Foreign Secretary at the time, described the situation as “the most extraordinary surrender of the entire industrial resources of [a] country.” If the multitude of Iranian “capitulations” is assessed as a whole, it becomes obvious that the squandering of Iran’s economic resources was the result of both the Shah’s greed and continuous foreign pressure exerted by Britain, Russia, and later the US, who exploited Iran economically as well as politically in different ways. This observation is supported by the well-known Iranian writer and ideologue, Al-e Ahmad (1982:18-19), who asserted that Iran’s subservient relationship with the West resulted when Iran lost its competitive edge due to the undermining influence of foreign intervention and rivalry. Consequently, the West began to control Iran’s politics and oil resources. It stands to reason, therefore, that besides the political impact, this Western intervention would have administered a severe shock to the Iranian body politic on a cultural-psychological level. The symmetry in the *baten-zaher* interplay (cf. chapter 3.3.2.1) was effectively lost due to the invasion by the *zaher* (the West or corrupt external world) of the *baten* (the realm of Iran’s pure and stable inner world). A reversal was only effected after the 1979 revolution when Iranian society threw off the foreign yoke and regained its Iranian-Shīa image of superiority under the rubric of *ulamā* control.

The foreign powers’ strategies or style of negotiation reflected a duality, namely disclaiming interference in Iran’s domestic politics and, concurrently, launching a blatant assault on Iran’s economic resources. According to Bill (1988:4), the foreign powers’ customary methodology comprised blunt pressure, bribery, influence peddling and promises of support to gain control of Iran’s economic and political environment. While Iran’s independence was constantly threatened, however, neither Britain nor Russia gained clear ascendancy in the Anglo-Russian rivalry. Iran was thus reduced to a weak state through the “capitulations”, which led to the increasing development of various diplomatic techniques to compensate for its lack of military prowess. These techniques

are alluded to throughout the dissertation and include: equilibrium; third-power diplomacy; playing one rival power off against another; procrastination; multilateral diplomacy and regionalism (Ramazani 1966:308-309).

4.2.1.1 British involvement in Iran

British involvement in Iran dates back to the mid-19th century and is intrinsically part of the Anglo-Russian rivalry for control in Iran. British involvement generally mirrored Russian activities and interests. Both countries were searching for new economic and trade opportunities, markets, and new resources. All these and more were found in abundance in Iran. Britain also perceived its presence in Iran as part of a strategy to counter Russian endeavours to undermine British interests in India. For the same reason Britain had to keep control of the Persian Gulf. However, when Germany, prior to World War I, started with its “big navy policy”, British and Russian interests coincided and they started to cooperate for the sake of their greater interests. Yet, while Britain perceived the Persian problem solely from the point of view of the defence of India, Russia used the *rapprochement* as an opportunity to divide Iran and intervene in its domestic affairs. After the first oil discoveries and strikes in 1904, the oil issue became the key source of tension as foreign interests in Iran expanded (Ramazani 1966: 63-67, 89, 90, 120; Farmanfarmaian & Farmanfarmaian 1999:56).

The Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1904 (intended to clarify relations between Britain and Russia regarding their involvement in Persia (Iran), Afghanistan and Tibet) divided Iran into Russian, British and Neutral Zones of influence (Ramazani 1966:92). However, both countries agreed to respect Iran’s independence and sovereignty, a mutual “desire”, which Keddie (2003:34) describes as the most important factor that sustained Iran’s formal independence. Yet, the implementation of this undertaking was little more than a paper exercise and often farcical. On the foreign level, neither Russia nor Britain would allow the other to take more territory in Iran, or to turn Iran into a protectorate. Iran’s domestic initiatives too, were constrained since it did not dare to act contrary to Anglo-Russian interests and had to make sure that it had at least the support of one of the foreign

powers. Iran followed this policy from the early 1800s and only changed it at the end of the 19th century when the reformist Prime Minister, Amīr Kabīr, adopted the policy of equilibrium (neutrality) to counter the Anglo-Russian rivalry. Ramazani (1966:64-65) defines equilibrium as a negotiating technique, which refers to:

....impartiality of political conduct, that when obliged by circumstances to yield in one direction [a monarch] at once sought to redress the balance by a corresponding concession in the other.

The policy of equilibrium was a forerunner to Mossadeq's concept of negative equilibrium, as he has labelled all foreign interventions in Iran, and the latter's plea for "even-handedness" would eventually be reformulated to become what is presently known as non-alignment (Zabih 1982b:88, 92; Ramazani 1975:207). Iran was too weak, however, to implement equilibrium because it failed to deny the increasing demands of the rival powers or their subjects for excessive economic or commercial concessions and diplomatic privileges (Ramazani 1966:65). In 1901, due to the incessant pressure for more and more economic concessions a British citizen William K. D'Arcy, secured a 60-year concession for oil exploration in Iran. It was one of the most excessive economic concessions ever to be granted to a foreigner in Iran, even surpassing the Reuters concessions, because of the impact it had on Iranian foreign policy, particularly on its relations with Britain. Since the discovery of oil happened in the period just prior to World War I at the time of the British Navy's conversion from coal-powered to oil-driven ships, Persian oil suddenly gained immense strategic importance to Britain, linking Iranian oil resources and British requirements inextricably in the British mindset. To paraphrase the sentiment expressed in this regard by Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the British Admiralty, declared that Britain should be the producer, independent owner and at least controller of a proportional percentage of the oil it requires (Zahrani 2002:2; Ramazani 1966:120-121; 123; Farmanfarmaian & Farmanfarmaian 1999:89).

By effectively revoking the original agreement between the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC)⁹, later the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) and the Iranian government the British government acquired 51 percent of the shares in the AIOC. Britain took control of a private company without consulting the Iranian government. Both the AIOC and the Iranian government were forced to accept this new reality regardless of the AIOC ever signing an agreement with Britain in the first place (Farmanfarmaian & Farmanfarmaian 1999:70, 89; Ramazani 1966:123). The British increased their involvement along these lines in the next years, and although some modifications were made in the 1930s to redress the obvious advantages of total British control, Iran was at the time still receiving only 16 percent of the profits. Tension increased when Iran realised the one-sided nature of the oil contract and that Britain only favoured political and economic reforms which facilitated its trade and the rights of British and other foreigners in Iran; moreover that Britain (the West in general) opposed the nationalists and reformers when they became a political factor. As a result the AIOC was targeted as an extension of British policy or *vice versa* as the distinctions between the foreign and internal dimensions blurred and the AIOC became a symbol of foreign opposition to the national struggle for sociopolitical change, an issue which will be reviewed shortly (Zabih 1982b:7; Keddie 2003:35).

4.2.1.2 US involvement in Iran: trilateral interaction

In this section US involvement will be assessed to examine the trilateral interaction it had with Iran - with both the Shah and the nationalist leaders - and with Britain as the key imperial stakeholder in Iran. To understand the 1979 revolution and the ensuing US Embassy siege it is essential to analyse precursor events such as the 1953 *coup d'état* in Iran. Specific issues that will be explored include: the vital importance of the oil issue; how the US and Britain modified their policy positions from being totally dissimilar to a situation of close cooperation; how Iran exploited these policy differences as well as the influence of the Cold War, and the perceived communist threat purportedly initiating the decision to overthrow the Mossadeq government.

⁹ The Anglo-Persian Oil Company's (APOC) name was changed in 1935 to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) when Reza Shah changed the name of the country to Iran.

In the period extending from the first contact with Iran in 1830 until 1979, US involvement in Iran changed radically from relative aloofness to overbearing prescriptiveness. Initial contact was non-governmental and limited to missionary and humanitarian work. The initial US-Iranian contact in Iran reflected, according to Bill (1988:15-16), a “humanitarianism heavily tinged with ethnocentric strains of superiority and proselytization”. The first American missionaries in Azerbaijan and elsewhere revealed a sense of inborn superiority and concomitant arrogance as they focused on the conversion of the “savage Mohammedans”. Iranians nonetheless admire the benevolence of the Americans, particularly the selfless dedication of the missionaries and the contributions of numerous individuals and the US Peace Corps towards enhancing Iranian societal systems such as health and education. Given Iran’s “martyrdom myth”, the Iranians also came to honour the role played by the young American teacher, Howard Baskerville, on the side of the anti-Shah forces in Tabriz in 1909. Although Baskerville’s militia was not primarily successful and he was killed early in the fighting, the story of his selfless heroism spread throughout Iran. He became part of a legend and would be seen in dreams of the pious holding the reins of the white stallion ridden by the Hidden Imam, whose return would fill the universe with justice and peace (Taheri 1988:7-8).

Due to its isolationist policies, the US involvement in Iran was at the time totally overshadowed by the British-Russian rivalry and the US’s own policy of avoiding entanglement in any theatre of European conflict. The US and Iran subsequently only exchanged diplomatic representation in 1883 (Bill 1988:15-17). Iranian policies and particularly its negotiating style also changed as it interacted with the US between the two world wars. Traditionally Iran followed a policy of neutrality or equilibrium (cf. 4.2.1.1), but induced a change in this approach when it initiated a diplomatic campaign in the 1920s to make the US part of a new “third-power policy”. The US was perceived as a “counterweight” to the continuing British-Soviet influence in Iran. This diplomatic approach was again altered in 1941 during World War II when the US was invited into an alliance with Iran. It followed the “forced” abdication of Reza Shah and his replacement by his son, Mohammad Reza, after the Anglo-Russian invasion of Iran. This was the beginning of “positive nationalism” or the positive equilibrium doctrine under which the

Shah abandoned all support for nationalisation and the control aspects of the oil dispute and rather aimed for ownership, mediation and wider alignment with the West (Saikal 1980:98; Ramazani 1966:298; 1975:260). The Shah realised that the war had breached the US's isolationist policies and used invitations for military training (via the respective US Military and Advisory Missions such as ARMISH-MAAG¹⁰) and economic, especially oil concessions to deepen US involvement in Iran, thus making Iran a proxy of the US.

Britain and the Soviet Union were alarmed at the penetration of the Iranian oil sector by US oil companies when these had also been granted comprehensive oil concessions in 1943. A complex three-level rivalry ensued where the US's drive to gain extensive oil concessions in Iran was obstructed by both Britain and the Soviet Union. US economic interests in Iran became increasingly intertwined with its political / ideological and strategic objectives and were matched by a similar Soviet drive to gain oil concessions in the northern regions of Iran. Britain, the only country with a large oil concession, obstructed both its rivals in a general attempt to restrain all other foreigners from gaining access to the Iranian oil fields. While Russia failed to claim northern Iran, an intense rivalry also played out between American companies such as the Standard Vacuum Oil Company and the Sinclair Oil Company as opposed to British Royal Dutch Shell for oil concessions in Baluchistan. However, due to political instability in Iran and a campaign (led by Dr Muhammad Mossadeq, the future Prime Minister who would nationalise Iran's oil resources in the 1950s) in the *Majlis* to keep the development of oil concessions in Iranian hands, the US companies abandoned the oil concessions already granted to them by the Iranian government and shifted their attention to the development of their fields in Saudi Arabia. The Iranian government's opposition to the US presence arose from their discovery that the US companies had yielded to British pressure and agreed to demands by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) to be included in the US concessions. Despite US-British rivalry, therefore, the AIOC increasingly formed part of the alliance acting

¹⁰ The first US-Iran military agreement was signed in 1943 as the US Military Mission to the Iranian Gendarmerie (GENMISH) and remained in force until 1976. A 2nd US Army Mission Headquarters (ARMISH) was created in 1947 and consolidated in 1956 as the Military Advisory Group (MAAG), which remained until the 1979 Revolution (Ramazani 1982a: 14).

against Soviet interests in Iran. This participation was extended when Britain and the US joined forces to overthrow the Mossadeq government (Ramazani 1982b:4, 8; Ramazani 1966:203-211; Bill 1988:28, 30-31; Ramazani 1975:29, 97-108).

Before the alliance was formed, Britain and the US were diametrically opposed to each other in terms of policy, world view and decision making style in their dealings with Iran. Britain was comparatively speaking the long established and experienced power in Iran. It also projected a focused policy, implemented by a high number of well-trained personnel who were mainly Iranologists and linguists with a proficiency in Farsi, Arabic or Turkic. For example, Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary at the time of the *coup*, was competent in both Farsi and Arabic and intimately acquainted with Iranian history and culture. Britain also had unequalled networks for intelligence and information collection in Iran. Moreover, Britain regarded the US involvement in Iran as too idealistic and naïve. The US in turn viewed Britain as arrogant and its policies in Iran as manipulative. In retrospect both assessments appear to be at least partly correct in light of the events that were yet to unfold. US policies in Iran at the time were mostly ill-informed, confused, idealistic and driven by competing policy centres in the US. Key amongst them were the State Department, the ARMISH-MAAG and the White House who preferred using informal advisers and informal channels as major elements of the US-Iran foreign policy decision making structure. Thus the internal US divisions were cleverly exploited by Britain and Iran (both the Shah and the nationalists) who adopted policies that reinforced and deepened the Anglo-US rivalry (Bill 1988:28, 41-46, 49, 84).

This situation changed, however, with the election in 1951 of Prime Minister Mossadeq and his National Front (NF). The NF was a complex organisation composed of the religious hierarchy, *bazaaris*, nationalist political parties, trade unions, intellectuals, communist splinter groups, and of key importance in the context of the *coup d' état*, the *Tudeh* or Iranian Communist Party. The composition of this loose alliance in fact mirrors the multiparty opposition, which Imam Khomeini created prior to the 1979 revolution. Moreover, the two movements, despite the different timelines, also resembled each other in terms of objectives which, to paraphrase Zabih (1982b:49-51), were to be the best

representative of the oppressed lower and middle classes in the struggle for Iran's political and economic liberation. According to Gasiorowski (1987:262) Mossadeq focused all his attention on the realisation of these two objectives. In the Iranian vernacular specific reference was made to his desire to increase Iran's control over its oil industry, controlled at the time by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) and to ensure the transfer of political power from the Royal Court (Shah) to the Majlis.

Bill (1988:56), Ramazani (1982b:12) and Mahdavi (2003a:11) note that Mossadeq vehemently opposed all foreign interference and intervention in Iran throughout his political career. He was a nationalist who wanted a free and independent Iran where the Shah should "rule rather than reign under the Iranian Constitution". Consequently, he was criticised and respectively labelled by the Iranian opposition as an Anglophile; by Russia as a servant of American imperialism, and as a communist by Britain. Thus his initiatives to fend off interference and foster Iranian independence brought him into direct confrontation with Britain and the US on the foreign level as well as with the Shah's machinations from inside Iran. The Shah and Mossadeq did agree, however, on broad strategy in terms of vital foreign objectives such as Iran's diplomatic struggle to end the Soviet occupation of Azerbaijan in May 1946. The Azerbaijan case or the "Iran Question" was also the first complaint that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) had to deal with after its establishment. Iranian strategy consisted in deploying multilateral negotiations at the UNSC as well as bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union. Despite their general agreement, however, both leaders differed sharply about allowing British involvement in Iran to continue (Ramazani 1982b:9-10; Ramazani 1975:108-143). The Shah was opposed to any destabilisation of Iran and wanted to accept the British oil agreements, even if these were to Iran's disadvantage. In contrast, Mossadeq and the NF believed that with the Soviets finally removed from Iran, it was time to address Iran's grievances against the AIOC as a first step to removing British influence (Zabih 1982b:28).

Mossadeq's appointment as Prime Minister and the enactment of the legislation providing for nationalisation of the oil industry in March 1951 happened simultaneously. This issue

adversely influenced his political life and was the key reason for the British involvement in the 1953 *coup d'état*. According to Gasiorowski (1987:262-263) the British strategy against Iran was three-fold: firstly, legal manoeuvres, particularly involving appeals to the International Court, the UN and the US to mediate, given a British refusal to negotiate directly with Mossadeq. Secondly, the imposition of economic sanctions and a military blockade and finally covert means, which directly led to the 1953 *coup d'état*. (cf. 4.2.2). Mossadeq was quite successful in dealing with Britain on the diplomatic level, even scoring a major victory at the UNSC in October 1951 when the latter voted to indefinitely postpone debate on the Iranian issue. Mossadeq thus proved that it was possible to have an argument in the UN that everybody loses. In fact he established for the first time the principle of total loss (Kinzer 2003:127). The Mossadeq government's biggest problem, however, was British (and later international) economic sanctions, the British naval blockade and the interception of ships carrying Iranian oil to neutral destinations like Italy and Japan. The British threat to take countries to court for buying, selling or transporting "stolen" Iranian oil, made it impossible for Iran to sell its oil in the cartel-controlled world market, effectively brought Iran's oil industry to a halt. Moreover, the closure of the Abidan refinery (the biggest in Iran) and the refusal of the Eisenhower administration to intercede and provide Iran with financial aid, virtually bankrupted Iran and made it impossible for Tehran to negotiate on an equal footing with Britain and the Western oil companies (Ramazani 1982b:21-22; Ambrose 1984:109).

The US traditionally had no significant economic interests in Iran, and in accordance with the Anglo-US strategy it was Britain rather than the US which would defend Iran in the event of a Soviet invasion (Gasiorowski 1987:267). As US involvement in Iran grew throughout the 1940s it was drawn into the complexities of Iran's internal politics. Consequently Anglo-American policies in Iran changed from positions of opposition to cooperation as the US increasingly followed the more experienced British. The US lost its positive image and was increasingly criticised for its support of the Shah's "monarchical authoritarianism". Despite the Shah's growing unpopularity and the fact that growing US support for such a despotic government contradicted the democratic principles of the US, it nonetheless felt more at ease with the Shah than with nationalist

leaders such as Mossadeq. The US perceived Mossadeq as unpredictable, too radical, and in many ways too anachronistic for their taste (Bill 1988:16, 49-50).

Generally, views about Mossadeq were ambivalent, varying from portrayals of him as the “Iranian George Washington” to being an elderly lunatic bent on handing his country over to Communism (Kinzer 2003:132). Andrew (1996) also observes that similar remarks were made about Ayatollah Khomeini during the 1979 revolution and the hostage siege. According to Bill (1988:53-55), Mossadeq’s opponents tended to ignore the principles he stood for and misjudged his nationalism. He was instead denigrated as a “pint-size trouble maker”. There was a predilection to joke about his physical characteristics - his age, bearing and dress, manner of speech, etiquette and mannerisms. The Western countries did not realise that he was using a variation of *ta’zyeh* (Iranian passion plays referred to in chapter 3) as a negotiating technique to project to the international community the image of a weak Iran being bullied by a foreign oppressor. His habits to cry in public and of receiving important visitors at home, while in bed wearing pyjamas, were part of this manipulation to show him looking every inch like the representative of a welfare state (Mackey 1998:201). The Iranians loved him for this, while it confused the West. They perceived him as odd, a view that was reinforced when he refused to use brute force as an instrument to hold onto power in 1953. According to Bill (1988:56) Mossadeq received no credit for acting in this responsible fashion during the *coup*; instead his actions have been dubbed in the meantime as “*Mossadeq’s mistake*”, and the revolutionaries of 1979 have sworn that they would not repeat his mistakes. If the comprehensive purges and general bloodletting after the revolution and the US embassy siege are considered, it is clear that they have learnt their lessons well.

The US became increasingly involved after Anglo-Iranian relations broke down in October 1952. While the US administration, especially under President Truman, was neutral, this changed when Eisenhower became president. His world view was influenced by the Cold War, and while the reasons for the deepening involvement cannot be divorced totally from British interests or future US involvement in this, the key justification was the fear of a communist takeover in Iran (Gasiorowski 1987:275;

Eisenhower 1963:163; Ambrose 1984:109-110). This view was supported by a number of cables and memoranda, crafted by officials of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which reported on the activities of the Tudeh in this period. CIA Reports of 20 July 1953 and 31 July 1952, for example, noted that “Iran is slipping behind the Iron Curtain”. These reports also showed that in the long run the Tudeh would emerge as the “greatest long-range beneficiary” of Mossadeq’s brief resignation in 1952. It is important, however, that a “Top Secret” analysis of Tudeh activities by the US State Department (dated 3 March 1953) contradicted these CIA analyses as follows:

The Communists did not create the crisis nor are they playing a decisive role in its outcome. However, they are actively supporting Mosadeq in order to get rid of the Shah. If Mosadeq eliminates the Shah the communist position will be stronger and they may be expected to turn against Mosadeq.

The overwhelming evidence presented to Eisenhower was anti-Mossadeq, however, which made Mossadeq’s attempts to limit the Shah’s power unacceptable to the US. Moreover, Tudeh support of Mossadeq in his nationalist struggle created the impression that he was sympathetic to the Tudeh cause and that he could thus rightfully be labelled as a communist. A notable exception was the aforementioned report by the US State Department, which hinted that no Western power wanted to accept that Mossadeq was not fully in control. The West also ignored the key role that the Tudeh played in the bloody uprising of 1952, the reelection of Mossadeq, and consequently, the Tudeh’s role in mobilising the Iranian “Street” in support of the oil policy. In this regard, whenever the Tudeh sensed the slightest modification in the government’s oil policy, it ordered its mob onto the streets to clamour for a toughening of policies toward the West. Instead of providing Mossadeq with support and aid to survive this period of instability, the West, mainly the US, refused to assist and instead just restated highly questionable positions of “impartiality” and proposals of mediation, which were perceived as pro-British and rejected by Mossadeq as harmful to Iran (Zabih 1982b:73; Eisenhower 1963:160, 162).

The only explanation for this was that the US feared a repeat of the revolution in China, given the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, which resulted from the rising nationalism in the Third World during this period of the Cold War. The US fear of communism also played a key role in creating a nexus between Britain and the US in 1953. When Britain realised the need for US support, after the closure of its mission in Tehran, CM Woodhouse, the British intelligence officer for the region and one of the original masterminds of the *coup*, coaxed British arguments in such a way that the primary focus was on the problem of containment of communism instead of restoring the *AIOC* (Srodes 1999:459). Consequently, the US accepted his proposal and became the driving force behind the joint planning for the 1953 *coup d' état* to replace Mossadeq.

4.2.2 The 1953 *coup d' état* in Iran

According to the CIA (1954) Prime Minister Mossadeq was overthrown by a joint CIA-SIS (British Intelligence) operation led by the CIA's Kermit Roosevelt. The report also stated that the project, initially called *Operation Boot* by SIS, was renamed TPAJAX by the CIA (the TP prefix indicating that the operation was to be carried out in Iran). The CIA (1954:18) and Gasiorowski (2000a:4; 2000b:5) also note the quick planning of the *coup*, from the first meeting between Woodhouse and Roosevelt, then head of the CIA's Near East and Africa Division (NEA) in December 1952 and July 1953 when approval was received by the key principals.¹¹

The key motivations indicated were Mossadeq's failure to come to an oil settlement with Britain and the danger posed by the Tudeh, which led to a CIA assessment that Iran "could be falling behind the Iron Curtain" (CIA 1954:iii, vii, 3, 18). The plan also clarified that the Shah's prestige and power would be reestablished if Mossadeq were replaced. Moreover, it was the foreign planners who identified General Fazlollah Zahedi, a former member of Mossadeq's cabinet, as the most suitable replacement for Mossadeq. While the US based their positive view of Zahedi on his pro-US approach and their

¹¹ The key principals approving the plan were: the Directors of the CIA and SIS, the British Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister, and the US Secretary of State and President (CIA1954:18).

perception of him as the most prominent anti-Mossadeq personality in Iran, the British initially found him unacceptable because they had once arrested him in Palestine for pro-German activities. Despite Zahedi's lack of personal military assets and his inability to execute a staff plan, he nonetheless became the Shah's preferred candidate. Consequently he had to be "guided" throughout by the CIA (CIA 1954, Appendix E:5; Roosevelt: 1979:43, 123; CIA 1954:29; Appendix D:4, 10).

The foreign manipulation was nowhere more evident than in the US-UK interaction with the Shah to gain his participation in the *coup*. The CIA (1954:vii, 22-38) and Roosevelt (1979:148-149) emphasise that the Shah's cooperation was essential and both sources detail numerous attempts to gain his cooperation and overturn his continuous "indecisiveness". The Shah remained passive, however, and reneged on his promises of cooperation despite numerous attempts at persuasion by emissaries, including his sister Ashraf, and Roosevelt. Despite various appeals premised on the importance of leadership being taken by the Shah in the venture to overthrow Mossadeq (and thus keep Iran from sliding into the Soviet orbit and the Pahlavi dynasty from collapsing), the Shah continued to procrastinate in typical Persian fashion (CIA 1954; Appendix A:2-3; Appendix B:5-6). He would repeat the same indecision prior to his final departure from Iran in January 1979, when Ayatollah Khomeini returned to replace the Pahlavi dynasty with a theocracy. It is also important to note that according to the CIA (1954:38, Appendix B:10) the plotters of the *coup* were clearly willing to go ahead without the Shah's active participation if Zahedi agreed. Such independent action was only prevented when Empress Soraya persuaded the Shah to sign two *firmons* (royal decrees), one dismissing Mossadeq as Prime Minister, and the other appointing Zahedi as his successor.

4.2.2.1 The role of psychological warfare operations prior to the *coup*

Psychological warfare operations or "black operations", were conducted as an extension of the existing US covert operations in Iran, and played a significant role prior to the *coup*. These operations, codenamed BEDAMN, started as early as 1948 to counter Soviet and Tudeh influence in Iran. It had two complementary focuses, the first being a

propaganda and political action programme which included planting anti-communist articles and cartoons in Iranian newspapers and spreading rumours about the Soviet Union and the Tudeh. Secondly, black operations or direct attacks on the Tudeh and its allies in Iran, designed to turn Iranians against the Tudeh, for example by arranging the infiltration of *agents provocateurs* into Tudeh demonstrations to provoke outrageous Tudeh actions against the government. Funds were also channelled through key clerical figures such as Ayatollah Kashani, a former ally of Mossadeq, and Ayatollah Bihbihani, the Shah's religious adviser, to denounce the Tudeh. Another objective of BEDAMN was to undermine Mossadeq's ruling National Front (Gasiorowski 1987:268-269; Moin 2000:67). While these CIA operations cannot claim credit for all the internal dissension, Gasiorowski (1987:269) contends that it had a significant influence on the erosion of Mossadeq's support base. Documents from the U.S. Department of State (March 20, 1953:1, 3) also showed that prior to November 1952 the US National Security Council had prepared a complete plan to assist a non-communist Iranian government (on the political, economic, military, diplomatic and psychological level) in case of an actual communist seizure of government. This "Psychological Strategy Program - PSB", was now assigned to TPAJAX, with the task to intensify its propaganda and black operations against Mossadeq and the Tudeh. It ultimately became a concerted media campaign to erode Mossadeq's popularity and power base, internally and internationally. The PSB became such an integral part of the TPAJAX operation that its budgetary allowance was raised to US\$ 150 000 (CIA 1954:9-10, 26-27, 32, 37, x; CIA 1954 Appendix A:7; Appendix B:15-16; Gasiorowski 1987:284).

4.2.2.2 The actual *coup d'état*

The 1953 *coup d'état* was carried out in two stages of which the first failed immediately for unknown reasons after being launched on the night of August 15-16, 1953. The CIA (1954:39, 47) and Roosevelt (1979:173) largely put the blame on unfortunate delays (the *coup* was initially planned for the previous night) and the "indiscretions of one of the Iranian Army officers participating". In addition the Tudeh appear to have had prior knowledge of the *coup*. Zabih (1982b:142-143) strongly holds the opposing view that

Roosevelt should take the blame for this failure because he defied the explicit order of US Secretary Dulles not to talk directly to the Shah. Roosevelt's subsequent meetings were observed and reported to Mossadeq, who was able to crush the initial *coup* attempt. As a result of this failure most of the Iranian conspirators went into hiding and Roosevelt was forced to improvise the second phase or "countercoup".

Roosevelt revised the previous strategy, which was intended to render Iran ungovernable by means of (mock) staged attacks on religious leaders and by the peaceful occupation of the Majlis, the bazaars, mosques, telegraph offices and other places considered as strategic all over Tehran. This intention closely adhered to the Persian principle of *bast* (sanctuary),¹² frequently used by the Iranian people (CIA 1954 Annexure B:23-25). In his new plan Roosevelt concentrated on a campaign to convince the Iranian public that Zahedi was the new legal head of government and that Mossadeq was the usurper who had staged a *coup* (CIA 1954:45). This was done by reinvigorating and intensifying the psychological campaign against Mossadeq, mainly by publishing the *firman* that indicated that Mossadeq had been dismissed by the Shah. The fact that this *firman* was handed to Mossadeq's servant and not to himself during the initial attempt was kept quiet and only became part of the legend after the *coup* (Roosevelt 1979:174-175).

The Iranian media and US journalists on the scene were effectively manipulated to stage-manage the event, while the Shah, who had fled to Baghdad, "dramatised" the situation via speeches from exile. A number of events inside Iran were vital to the successful conclusion of the *coup d'état*: The CIA and some Iranian co-workers copied the *firman*s and disseminated a large number of copies of the original *firman*s to the media "informing" them of Mossadeq's "dismissal" as Prime Minister and that Zahedi was "appointed" as his successor. In addition frequent announcements that Mossadeq had staged an illegal *coup* against Zahedi, were planted in the media and elsewhere, adding to the general climate of distrust and instability. A statement signed by Mossadeq - in his

¹² *Bast* is a Persian tradition referring to the right of sanctuary or asylum in mosques, telegraph offices, the entrance to the King's Palace, his kitchen, stables, the Parliament grounds (Majlis) and in foreign legations (Masse 1938:405-406; Wilber 1981:261).

private capacity - announcing that the Majlis would be dissolved and new elections held, awakened the fear in the prevailing climate of uncertainty that Mossadeq would use the opportunity of the Shah's exile to finally eliminate the monarchy, an issue that cost him even more support (CIA 1954:48). The most vital event, however, was the final demonstration which took place on August 19th, which effectively ended Mossadeq's rule. Although the demonstration seems to have been partly spontaneous, the possibility is mooted in some sources that the demonstration could have been a black operation. According to the CIA (1954:66-67) and Gasiorowski (2000a:4-5) the demonstration was partly organised by Iranian agents of TPAJAX and clerical leaders such as Ayatollah Kashani and Ayatollah Bihbihani who literally used CIA slush funds to buy a crowd. Zahedi, who was under the direct control of the CIA, played no active part in the *coup* and was only installed to take command afterwards (CIA 1954:50).

4.2.2.3 The *coup d'état* – implications and influence

The *coup* was a watershed in Iranian history and was principally dictated by Cold War-related geo-strategic considerations. While Iran was not taken over by the Soviet Union or the Tudeh, this apparent fear, present primarily in the upper echelons of the US centres of power, was effectively projected via TPAJAX to destroy Mossadeq's popular government (Gasiorowski 2000a:5; Gasiorowski 1987:276). The 1953 *coup* also marked the first successful peacetime use of covert operations by the CIA, which consequently became involved in a series of similar ventures, for example in Guatemala (1954) and Cuba (1961) (Gasiorowski (1987: 261). The US military intervention shocked the Iranian people and since then linkage between the US and the Shah's despotic regime put the US in the same category as Britain. According to Al-e Ahmad (1982:38), this was the ultimate symptom of *gharbzadegi* since it clearly shows that "cooperation in politics and economics" was equal to "following the directives of the oil companies". Eight US oil companies, for instance, received a 40 percent share in the new Consortium in 1954, equal to the shares once held by the British Admiralty, while the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) was again allotted 40 percent. Royal Dutch Shell and Compagnie Francaise des Petroles respectively had 14 and 6 percent each. However, because AIOC

also had shares in some of the other companies it again ended up as the majority shareholder (Ramazani 1975:266). All that the *coup d'état* thus achieved was to end British political involvement in Iran.

The US and Britain merely exchanged roles with the former (increasingly perceived as the principal) interventionist force in Iran. US-Iranian relations peaked in 1953 in the sense that the US's wilful identification with a "regime of dubious legitimacy", suppression and corruption, sowed the seeds of the 1979 revolution (Ramazani 1982b:18; Bill 1988:128). British involvement remained abhorrent to the sensibilities of the Iranian people due to the British policy of manipulation or "capitulations". According to Ansari (2003:26-27), an even more important reason for this total rejection was the Iranian view of Britain's role in the 1921 *coup* which initially brought Reza Shah and the Pahlavi dynasty to power. This "alleged" British involvement haunted the Pahlavi regime as much as, if not more, than the 1953 *coup* because it posed a huge question mark over the legitimacy of the regime, first at its inception in 1921, and then in the post-1953 period. The blatant foreign intervention and Iran's rejection of it remain a persistent theme of Iran's history throughout the modern era. Although Iran has tried various forms of equilibrium, its weaknesses have always been undeniable. The foreign powers have constantly meddled in its affairs when it rejected negotiations. This was a bitter lesson future Iranian leaders would not forget, which means that the foreign intervention of 1953 was crucial in itself since it provides a sequential linkage between 1953 and the 1979 revolution and acts as a justification for the 1979 US Embassy siege.

4.3 THE INTERNAL DIMENSION

4.3.1 Regime change: a framework for analysis

The cyclical pattern of revolution and revolt, a major characteristic of Iranian society, is discussed in chapter 3. In light of the observations of specialists such as Katouzian (1995:10) and Bar (2004:23), however, it should be noted that revolts in Iran were invariably directed at the governments of the day and not at the system of arbitrary rule.

The 1979 revolution changed this pattern. Skocpol (1982:266) describes the Iranian revolution as a thorough transformation of basic sociocultural and socioeconomic relationships, which effectively made it more of a social than a political revolution. Downes (2002:115), too, observes this comprehensive change and depicts the Iranian revolution as an upheaval against foreign domination, against the politics of bipolarity (the East-West conflict) and against oppression and modernisation at all costs. A review of the internal situation in Iran between the 1953 *coup* and the 1979 revolution also reveals a period of “uneven development” (cf. Abrahamian 1982:419-449) during which economic development overtly advantaged certain levels of society and never cascaded to the poorest of the poor. Tension was also incessant and ever increasing between forces “simultaneously promoting order and those inducing disorder” (cf. discussion of the Rosenau 1998:152 concept of *fragnation* in section 2.2.1). Internal conflict in Iran occurred on two levels at once, one being the Shah’s urgent drive to modernise Iran and another the gradual alienation of the *ulamā*, partly exemplified in the growing resistance they encountered from the state. These two strands of conflict were the main reasons why Iran became a dysfunctional state in the years prior to 1977 / 79, and they are at the core of the following discussion.

The internal dimension also deals with the institutionalisation of the new Islamic Republic of Iran (its overlapping structures and institutions) and the key debate about the introduction of the *vilayat -i faqih*, which became a central focus of the intense power struggle waged by Khomeini as he consolidated his position as the “predominant” leader in Iran. Based on the ultimate decision concept of Hermann *et al.* (1987), the intention is to identify and assess the key decision making units (or power centres) and leaders, apart from Khomeini, which emerged after the revolution. These leaders subsequently also became crucial interlocutors during the Iran-US negotiations to resolve the hostage crisis. Khomeini’s leadership style will only be alluded to in passing since it will be duly discussed as part of case study I (cf. chapter 5) when the hostage issue is examined. It should be noted, though, that the hostage crisis runs like a golden thread through the early years of the revolution and played an integral role in the power struggle. The Militant Students’ reasons for occupying the US Embassy, for example, were not only to gain

leverage in case of a US counter-attack, nor was it only their perceived unhappiness about the Shah's admittance to the US. Rather, as noted by Ramazani (1980:454), Kianuri (MERIP Reports 1979:24) as well as McFadden, Treaster and Carroll (1981:257-258), the real aim was to force the pro-Western and un-Islamic (non-*Tawhid*) government of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan to resign and enhance Khomeini's powerbase.

4.3.2 The failure of the Shah's modernisation programme

The 1953 *coup* reinstated the Shah, and after receiving Roosevelt's assurance that Iran was under no "obligation" to the US or Britain, the Shah was free to act without restraint (Roosevelt 1979:201). Yet, contrary to the example of his traditional despotic predecessors, the Shah did not immediately reintroduce and enforce a system of absolute or arbitrary power at all levels; instead, he introduced a system of "petrolic pseudo-modernist despotism", thereby gaining the support of both the landlords and elements of the *ulamā* (religious establishment) (Katouzian 1981:234; Katouzian 1995:11; Moaddel 1986:537-539, 543).

The Shah wanted to modernise Iran and elevate it to mid-level status amongst the nations of the world and wanted to establish a "guided democracy" or a "political democracy" that would blend elements of the Western parliamentary system and the Persian monarchical system (Abrahamian 1978:3). In the Shah's view political democracy referred to the institutionalisation of politics, the expansion of political participation and the formation of political parties, which would form "actual" and "alternative" governments under monarchical control (Saikal 1980:80). Although this farcical variation of party politics was implemented, it was scrapped when the Shah elevated his regime to a new level of despotism after the 1963 revolt. The Shah's objectives were actually at the core of "the Revolution of the Shah and the People" also known as the White Revolution, which he launched in 1963 to consolidate and widen his popular support base and to lessen his dependence on the US. Intertwined with the White Revolution was the Shah's "vision", which was never clearly defined except that the general aim was to elevate Iran to the status of a regional power (*qodrat-e mentaqe'i*) or a Great Civilisation (*Tamaddon-*

e Bozorg). This implied the transformation of Iran into a strong prosperous and stable monarchical state. He articulated two objectives, namely to guard and influence Iran's political and economic interests and manage its relations, particularly with its neighbours, from a position of strength (Saikal 1980:79-91; 137; Wilber 1981:333). The Shah failed in this project, however, and destroyed his dynasty due to the inadequacies of his reform and modernisation programme, a change in US-Iranian relations, and the vital "structural disequilibrium" between Iran's economic and political developments during the White Revolution. The growing religious alienation will be discussed separately.

4.3.2.1 Iran-US relations under pressure

Iran-US relations became intertwined after 1953. However, Roosevelt's unauthorised statement also lost the US any possible leverage it could have had over what became an increasingly suppressive Iranian government. Iran-US relations nevertheless came briefly under pressure around 1961 / 62 when the US reviewed its relations with this increasingly despotic regime. "Spin-doctors" on both sides could no longer sustain the systematic "myth-making" (deception) about the Shah, which had been going on since the inception of the relationship and have been sustained because of US involvement in the 1953 *coup*. At the same time the US could no longer ignore the growing domestic and international criticism about the brutality of the Shah's secret police, SAVAK, the torture and the executions. Despite the ongoing deception, the contradictions were fairly visible to the world. An *Amnesty International Report* of 1974-75 clearly states that despite the highest rate of death penalties in the world, no valid system of civilian courts, and a history of systemic torture, the benevolent image of the Shah remains intact (Abrahamian 1978:4).

Consequently, the US started to use preconditions linked to US aid and investments to ensure the execution of reforms and other induced adjustments in Iran. This situation developed asymmetrically in favour of the US to the point where in 1961 it handpicked Ali Amini, an independent economist and friend of the Kennedy family, as Prime Minister of Iran. The Shah had little choice but to accept Amini, but shrewdly allowed him to implement various reforms which were bound to fail such as the disastrous land

reform programme (Saikal 1980:76; Katouzian 1981:224-225). The key reason for Amini's failure, apart from the Shah's political conniving, however, was the "selective" use of preconditions by the US purely as a political instrument. Contrary to its original intentions, the US refused to link any preconditions to the flow of US military aid to Iran, thus restraining Amini and directly causing his resignation (Abrahamian 1982:423-424). The land-reform programme, however, triggered violent opposition all over Iran (cf. Roy 1994:137; Saikal 1980:77; Moin 2000:75) since it unified diverse groups such as former landlords, the peasants and the *ulamā* (who also held *waqf*, endowments whose revenue ensures the functioning of religious institutions) and were equally opposed to the programme. It also increased the alienation between the *ulamā* and the Shah and was the event which launched Khomeini on his campaign to become the ultimate leader, a situation which exploded in open revolt in June 1963.

4.3.2.2 "Petrolic pseudo-modernist despotism" and "structural disequilibrium": concurrent images of the 1979 revolution

The Iranian political system has always been rather fluid. In the years preceding Mossadeq and World War II (1941-1953), Iranian politics were immobilised in an interregnum of 12 years marked by a dual sovereignty; followed by a decade of dictatorship between the 1953 *coup* and the 1963 riots; followed again by 15 years of "petrolic pseudo-modernist despotism", which reached a peak with the oil revolution of 1973 / 74 and exploded in 1979 as the Iranian revolution (Katouzian 1981:234).

The Shah changed his monarchy from one that was solely based on the traditional "oriental despotism" of his predecessors to one that was based on "petrolic despotism". Traditionally the term "oriental despotism" has been used to portray an extremely harsh form of "absolutist power" (Wittfogel 1978:101). With regard to Iran, however, this definition is more specifically focused on the *arbitrary* nature of the Iranian State. Its key characteristic is "not that it monopolized power, but arbitrary power, not the absolute power of laying down the law, but the absolute power of exercising lawlessness" (Katouzian 1981:21). Because the Shah (and his regime) lacked popular legitimacy after

the 1953 CIA-SIS initiated *coup d'état*, he partly moved away from “oriental despotism” to “petrolic despotism” or (“petrolic pseudo-modernist despotism”), which became the key characteristic of the period. The reason for this change lies in what Mahdavy (1970:428) defines as the rentier characteristics of Iran. It refers to external rent or rentals paid by foreign entities to the country, for example for transit arrangements or oil. Since oil revenue is perceived as external rent and oil revenues increasingly dominated the Iranian economy in the 1950s, Iran can be classified as a rentier state. Badiei and Bina (2002:1), Mahdavy (1970:432, 436-437, 465-467) and Halliday (1978:17) emphasise the key role of oil to finance the Shah’s “petrolic despotism” and to underwrite his new legitimacy. Oil revenues allowed the Shah to continue with projects without resorting to taxation or running into balance-of-payment problems. In Iran the land reforms destroyed the agriculture sector and other traditional sectors, while only the oil and related heavy industries were developed by foreign powers. Economic developments were sector-related, concentrated in the hands of the rich, while the mass of the population were backward and excluded. Instead of reestablishing agriculture, oil revenues were used to subsidise food imports and to cushion consumers from high prices.

The second image or key reason why the Shah’s economic and political experiment failed lies in what Mahdavi (2003b:21) describes as the “structural disequilibrium” between Iran’s economic and political development. Parsa (1988) describes this same asymmetry as the “social breakdown model”. In terms of specifics Abrahamian (1980:21, 24) and Halliday (1978:9) identify the key elements of “structural disequilibrium” as a complex of socioeconomic and political considerations. They contended that the White Revolution and the famous Developmental Plans failed economically because the reforms were depended on foreign aid, investment and the involvement of foreign multi-national corporations (MNC’s). Furthermore, the developments were uneven and the workforce unskilled, while corruption was rife and the projects badly implemented. Despite economic improvements the White revolution also failed to provide people’s basic needs like sewage disposal and adequate housing. Instead there was immensely wasteful expenditure on grandiose nuclear projects and weapons programmes. At the same time royal foundations such as the Pahlavi Foundation were used to enrich the Pahlavi family

through large-scale kickbacks and money-laundering (Heikal 1982:95; Keddie 2003:165). As the Iranian bourgeoisie accumulated wealth they also showed a total lack of trust in Iran and moved these funds abroad. According to a *Guardian* article dated April 10, 1978 (quoted in Halliday 1978:9), it was estimated that 3 billion dollars or around 15 percent of all Iran's oil revenues were redeposited outside the country in this fashion.

On the political level the key reason for the 1979 revolution was the Shah's failure to link his structural and socioeconomic reforms with political reforms. Instead of opening the system to independent political parties he took the backward step of narrowing the regime's political base. He broke with the middle class and the *bazaaris* and took concerted measures to dissolve their traditional guilds and thereby enhance direct government supervision. The *Hizb-i Rastakhiz* (Resurgence) Party, representing the face of Iran's one-party state, was used for this purpose. Due to the harsh treatment of the *bazaaris* and because of their traditionally close relationship with the *ulamā*, the Shah thus indirectly reinforced this link while alienating the *ulamā* (Abrahamian 1980:24-25).

4.3.3 The *ulamā* rise to power during the 1979 revolution

To paraphrase Skocpol (1982:267) and Sheikholeslami (2003:151), the 1979 revolution was essentially "made" by a mass-based social movement formed under Shī'a *ulamā* leadership. Their membership was united only in their uncompromising opposition and resolve to overthrow the old order. The *ulamā* actions need explaining, however, since their growing radicalisation and alienation from the government and the Royal Court did not happen overnight. Akhavi (1980), Algar (1969) and Moaddel (1986) observe a growing assertiveness and increasing political awareness between the start of the Qajar dynasty (1785) and the 1979 revolution. Subsequently, a milieu was created which finally allowed the "radical" faction amongst the *ulamā*, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, to move the *ulamā* from their traditional non-interventionist stance or "quietist" policies regarding political issues to active political participation.

The following religious themes provide the context for this important shift in Shī'ism in Iran and the Shah's impasse with the *ulamā*:

- The *ulamā* have traditionally been a key element of Iranian political history and played a key role in the recurrent popular protests to established authority in Iran.
- The *ulamā* in Iran were not a homogenous group, but have been deeply divided at times on political and religious matters.
- The relationship between the state and the *ulamā* has traditionally been one of conflict, a key feature of Iranian history. It was at times also a close symbiotic relationship that showed frequent fluctuation as political vacuums were created and filled, given the rise and fall of the respective empires in Iran.
- Due to the belief of the *ulamā* in *taqlid*¹³, intervention in political affairs or taking permanent control was never even a distant aim of the *ulamā* until the 1940s. The reason for this was the continuing occultation of the 12th Imam, which means the absence of any authority to legitimise political participation.
- In the absence of direct political participation, *ulamā* policies can be characterised as “quietist”, interrupted only by brief interventions to show either their growing dissatisfaction with internal events, or with personnel, or with the increasing foreign intervention in Iran.
- The developments and reforms within Shī'ism, especially since the mid-1950s, coincided with the *ulamā* conflict with the Shah and the latter's White Revolution, which heightened tensions and sensitivities on both sides (Moaddel 1986:519; Keddie 1969:34; Algar 1969:122, 265; Akhavi 1980: 100-105, 117).

While all these themes are important, the key element in the context of the present study is the shift that occurred within Shī'ism since the 1950s to move the *ulamā* to full political participation and eventual control of the 1979 revolution. Firstly, the Sunni-Shī'a divide in Islam established the Imamate as the linchpin of Shī'a theory of rule in 656 AD. The Imamate is an institution exemplified by a succession of charismatic figures that dispense true guidance in comprehending the esoteric sense of prophetic revelation. It is

¹³ *Taqlid* refers to the process of following the practices and pronouncements of a scholar more learned than oneself in matters relating to religious law, with faith in the correctness of his advice and without independent investigation of his reasons (Algar 1969:265).

directly linked to the occultation of the 12th Imam, discussed in chapter 1, and as such has given a distinctive character to *Ithnā'asharī-Shī'ism* / Twelver Shī'ism which was adopted during the Safavid dynasty in 1501 in Iran. It combined the concept of *taqiyyah* (cf. 3.5.2) with the essentially “quietist” position of Twelver Shī'ism with respect to secular authority. Those who believe in the “hidden” Imam are not required to do anything in the immediate future, not even to work for a particular reform. While the Imam remained in occultation, all activities of a religio-political nature lacked legitimate authority (Algar 1969:2-4; Akhavi 1980:3; Hussain 1985:22).

Secondly, the establishment of the Safavid dynasty was a key event in the development of Shī'ism in Iran since *Ithnā'asharī-Shī'ism* was officially recognised for the first time as the state religion. Consequently, a body of *ulamā*, the *mujtahids*,¹⁴ took up the Islamic leadership to safeguard the Islamic leadership of the Imams. They were exclusively concerned with legality and jurisprudence, to such a point that original Shī'ism, in its essence religious, “hide” itself, according to the principle of *taqiyyah* (Algar 1969:5). As a result of the occultation the Shī'a denied the legitimacy of any secular power, which also implied that no power could reside with the *ulamā*. However, since they acted as *intermediaries* between the *ummah* (community) and the Imams and also provided “proof” of the Imam, their relationship with the Hidden Imam has been compared with that between the Imams and God, with the result that they gained *de facto* authority and became increasingly vital as leaders of the *ummah* (Hussain 1985:25; Algar 1969:5).

Thirdly, Keddie (1969:39, 42) and Abrahamian (1974:9) note the importance of the non-Islamic element of Iran, since the *ulamā* who came to serve the Safavid dynasty and the Shah had opposing views about *Ithnā'asharī-Shī'ism*. While the *ulamā* and the Shah shared the same veneration for the Twelve Imams, the *ulamā* did not accept the Shah's claim that he was a divine incarnation of the Imams. They compromised, however, and legitimised his authority and claim to the throne in light of the deep-rooted Persian principle of the “divine right of kings” and not in virtue of Shī'a legal theory. This

¹⁴ A *mujtahid* is a Shī'a scholar whose eminence in learning entitles him to issue authoritative opinions in matters of Islamic law (Akhavi 1980: xi).

authority provided the Shah with one of his most famous titles, the “Shadow of God on Earth” (*zill-allāh*) and a “divine mysticism”, which even Shah Reza Pahlavi stressed during an October 1973 interview with Oriana Fallaci (1976:266-268).

Fourthly, the debate regarding *ulamā* leadership in the Islamic community and the state literally continued for centuries until Ayatollah Khomeini persuaded the *ulamā* to relinquish their quietist stance. Of key importance is the argument about who is rightly qualified to lead the community during the occultation: the *mujtahids* (who are qualified to lead and to act according to their own judgment) or the *muqallid*, who must accept the judgement of others (Algar 1969:6). Due to this debate, the main doctrinal school within *Ithnā’asharī-Shī’ism*, the *Akhbari* School, was openly opposed and replaced in the course of the 18th century by the *Usuli* School as the new dominant force. In terms of doctrine, the *Akhbaris* denied any need for the *mujtahids* to exercise independent judgement, reason or consensus in matters of law, since they regard the sacred texts (what is left from the Traditions of the Prophet and the *Imams*) as sufficient. In contrast, the *Usuli* School assigned the key role of interpreting the law to the *ulamā* and demanded that all believers follow a living *mujtahid* and abide by his judgement. An example of how the Usuli doctrine of *ijtihad* (cf. 3.5.1) applied the legal and political rulings of a *mujtahid* was the tobacco protest movement of 1891-1892 when the people obeyed the *fatwa* of Ayatollah Shirazi, the *marja-i taqlid* successfully stopped the tobacco concession to Britain (Keddie 1969:45-46; Moaddel 1986:522; Moaddel 1992:356; Algar 1969:35; Cole 1983:39).

Fifthly, the *ulamā* have traditionally been a key element of Iranian political history. Given their lack of homogeneity, quietist factions of the *ulamā* have cooperated with the state, while the rest have stayed aloof, only intervening sporadically during times of crisis. According to Algar (1969:82-93, 171, 177-178, 265), Keddie (1969:34), Moaddel (1986:519) and Abrahamian (1982:73), the *ulamā* were key protagonists during all major revolts¹⁵ against the state, including the Iranian revolution of 1979. Three key methods

¹⁵ The revolts include: the *jihad* against Russia during the 2nd Perso-Russian War (1826); the successful agitation against the Reuters Concession (1873); the tobacco protest movement of the 1890s; the constitutional revolution (1906-1911); the oil nationalisation crisis and *coup* against Mossadeq (1950-1953); the protests of 1963 against the Shah and the Iranian revolution of 1979.

were employed throughout with great skill, namely: the *jihad* (holy war), the threat of emigration, usually to the *atabat* (or threshold cities of Kerbala and Najaf in Iraq) and the *fatwa* (religious ruling), which remains the most widely used and successful method.

Before returning to the events leading up to the 1979 revolution it needs to be emphasised that these methods form an integral part of Iranian society, at the time and even more so currently, and that these practices are intrinsically linked to the “martyrdom myth”, created when the Shī’a launched their only abortive attempt in 680 AD to take control of the Umayyad Caliphate (discussed in chapter 1). When this attempt failed, Imam Husayn and his followers were killed (martyred) near Kerbala. From a secular point of view this event was a battle between victor and vanquished (Hussain 1985:23-24). However, in terms of Islamic doctrine it symbolises the fight between an Imam and an unjust leader or between a *Tawhidi* leadership (those recognising only the supreme authority of God) and a non-*Tawhidi* (those accepting human dominance). Furthermore, it accentuated two Islamic strategies, namely holy war (*jihad*) on behalf of the Islamic community and martyrdom (*shahadat*) as key principles to wage war against injustice. The Kerbala incident consequently became a catalyst in Islamic history and has been kept alive through passion plays or *taziyeh* processions. It became a key instrument of Khomeini in the 1978 period when he was still creating his revolution (Swenson 1985:134,136).

4.3.3.1 The end of quietism

Despite the changing internal political environment and mounting foreign involvement the *ulamā* remained true to their quietist position after the constitutional revolution. To paraphrase Al-e Ahmad (1982:32), the *ulamā* have retreated so deeply into their shells in the face of the foreign onslaught and had shut out the outside world to such an extent that only the Day of Judgement could rouse them. However, Ayatollah Sayyid Burujirdi, the leading *marja-i taqlid* in Iran at the time and leader of the conservative *ulamā*, compromised with the Royal Court (cf. Akhavi 1980:242, 72-74, 77; Moaddel 1986:537) and concurrently applied a strategy of aloofness and close support of the new Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The Shah too preferred a close relationship with the Burujirdi-

Bihbihani faction since it was seen as more prominent and also more reliable than that of Ayatollah Kashani, whose activities were selectively countered by Bihbihani. The Kashani-Bihbihani competition dated back to their support for the US *coup* in Iran in 1953 (see section 4.2.2.2) and because Kashani's participation in politics and military operations were contrary to the quietist policies of the day.

The issue of participation in politics became increasingly important in *ulamā* circles in the late 1940s and 1950s and eventually forced Burujirdi to hold a seminar in Qom in 1949, where the non-interventionist position was restated and the *ulamā* expressly prohibited from joining political parties. Offenders were warned that any opposition to this resolution would result in a withdrawal of their status as professionals in the religious establishment (Akhavi 1980:63-64). Burujirdi's view implicitly gave *de facto* recognition to the political *status quo* and as *marja-i taqlid* blocked any opposing views from gaining recognition during his lifetime. Both Moaddel (1986:537) and Moin (2000:60) note, however, that a number of senior Ayatollahs, including Khomeini, nonetheless wrote to Burujirdi to express their concern about this matter. Khomeini was firmly committed to Burujirdi at the time and was one of a number of junior *ulamā* who helped him to become the sole *marja-i taqlid*. He also acted briefly as his adviser. This linkage on the side of Khomeini may have been opportunistic, but after the Qom conference, differences deepened when Khomeini joined the radical faction of the *ulamā*. Burujirdi in turn apparently blocked Khomeini's name from going forward as candidate for Qom's seat in the Majlis because he still needed him (Taheri 1985:103-104).

Ulamā support for the state, particularly from the Burujirdi-Bihbihani faction, continued unabated despite increasing divisions and factionalism. They cooperated in various ways in the late 1950s and also justified Iran's participation in the Baghdad Pact – on the grounds that Iran's key role in this alliance was defensive in nature and not motivated by a need for “Christians” to defend Iran. However, when Iran broke diplomatic relations with Egypt, while keeping relations with Israel, the *ulamā* were deeply unsettled (Akhavi 1980:89, 98-99). Moaddel (1986) and Akhavi (1980:23) accordingly note a gradual widening in state-*ulamā* relations due to the Shah's attack on Shī'a doctrine. It was

primarily the result of the Shah's wish to form his own religious cadres. Consequently, the *ulamā* began to break with the Shah, but they remained clustered in mainly two key factions: First there was the conservative faction represented by Burujirdi, as *marja-i taqlid*, and Bihbihani who insisted on a quietist policy until his death in 1961. Their main support base was amongst major landowners since this group of *ulamā* controlled a major part of the *waqf*, as endowments through the religious institutions (Moaddel 1986: 542). Secondly there was the radical faction led by Ayatollah Khomeini (then a junior *marja-i taqlid*) and Ayatollah Taliqani. The aim of this faction was to establish Islamic justice and a genuine parliamentary system through which the masses could make their voices heard in public policy. The faction advocated limitations to one-man rule and articulated a social-reform message encompassing sympathy for the innocent and the oppressed. While it criticised the plundering of Iran's wealth, it was not yet sufficiently radicalised to ask for the violent replacement of social stratification systems of class, status and power. Its power base was the traditional petit bourgeoisie (Akhavi 1980:101-102; Moaddel 1986:543). The stalemate was only broken with Burujirdi's death and the failure of the senior *ulamā* to elect a new sole *marja-i taqlid*.

Since the *ulamā* were increasingly aware of the need to adapt to the changing environment, they initiated a reform process - despite the religious vacuum - that was based on the nature and significance of the Imamate, the concept of delegating authority, upholding the practice of Imam Alī as *vilayat* and the position of the *marja-i taqlid* (Enayat 1982:160; Akhavi 1980:117). Since the developments took place in concert with the Shah's White Revolution, the two sides were sensitive to each other, though the two sets of developments were unrelated. The process was at this time (1960s) mainly driven by leaders like Taliqani and non-clerical allies such as Mehdi Bazargan, later prominent during the 1979 revolution, while Khomeini only played a lesser role (Akhavi 1980:118).

4.3.3.2 The development of Khomeini's theocratic concept

Khomeini's lack of prominence was probably the consequence of the strategy of *tanfih* (cf. 3.5.3), which he employed since the Qom conference as he systematically analysed

Shī'a doctrine. Despite a definite linkage between Ayatollah Kashani and Khomeini and ties between the latter and the Revolutionary Fedayeen of Islam group, Khomeini remained silent, according to the principle of *tanfih* and used the time to develop his early thoughts on an Islamic government. In contrast, Kashani dabbled in active political participation. Khomeini at the time of Mossadeq's government also did not advocate either the overthrow or destruction of the monarchy, but rather attacked secularism and autocracy, while asking that Iran's government become a *hokoumat-e haq* or a "government of God." This he believed could be accomplished through the religious supervision of all the secular laws made in the Majlis (Taheri 1985:101, 97; Akhavi 1980:163; Ramazani 1982b:3).

The development of Khomeini's ideas of a "Government of God" even predates these events, however, since he began to develop a religious-political treatise as early as 1941 in his first book, *Discovery of Secrets (Kashf al-Asrar)*. While the first part of this book deals with theological exegesis, the second part was the first systematic analysis of many of his political ideas, which he would elaborate upon in 1971 in his better known book, *Hukumat-i Islam* ("Islamic Government), which became the guide for the institutionalisation process in post-revolutionary Iran. *Kashf al-Asrar* even described key Islamic institutions such as the Majlis and the Assembly of Experts, which after the revolution became key structures within a dual system where the political institutions function under strict religious supervision (Tabari 1983:60-62). *Kashf al-Asrar* clearly articulated two of Khomeini's key viewpoints (cf. Tabari 1983:61-62), which basically emphasised one encompassing idea, namely that the only acceptable legislator is God:

No one but God has the right to govern over anyone or to legislate, and Reason suggests that God himself must form a government for people and must legislate.

In the contemporary world the most legitimate authority should be the mujtahids.

Khomeini called in his *Hukumat-i Islam* for the replacement of these *mujtahids* with a *faqih* to assume the direct responsibility of leadership of the government. The concept of

a *vilayat-i faqih* (or Absolute Guardianship of the Islamic Jurisprudent), was not new and already existed in earlier Shi'a doctrine, which emphasised the issue of "guidance" from God through the agency of the Imams to their *al-vālaya*, meaning in the technical terms of the "imamology", "appointed heir", "trusted friend" and even "executor" of God's will (Morris 1981:213, 232). Khomeini (1981:84, 55-56) used the term *faqih* or legatee (successor) in his *Hukumat-i Islam* and asked for direct supervision by either a *faqih* or (a group of) *fuqaha* to establish an Islamic government since a secular legislature is unnecessary and invalid as all laws have already been made by God. What he was thus proposing (cf. Rose 1983:167; Ayubi 1991:146-147; Enayat 1982:160) was a radical transformation of Shi'ism from a religio-political tradition into a revolutionary ideology, which also presupposes a fundamental shift in its logical structure. Khomeini explicitly claimed that the *faqih* has the same authority as the Noble Messenger and the Imams (except that this authority does not extend to other *fuqaha*), but denies that the status of the *faqih* is identical to that of the Imams and the Prophet. He furthermore affirmed the "guardian" aspect of the *vilayat* by carefully distinguishing the ontological status of the *faqih* from that of the Immaculate Imams. He only asserted that the *faqih* enjoys the extrinsic or political powers of the Imam (Rose 1983:177).

The key to Khomeini's argument was a reinterpretation of the role and position of the *marja-i taqlid*. While recognising the immense religious authority of this office, Khomeini argued that during the occultation the office of the *marja-i taqlid* was already centralised, dealing with both spiritual and financial matters from as early as the 19th century when it was reorganised by Sheikh Ansari (d.1864). Hence it would only be logical for the *marja-i taqlid* to claim a similar knowledge of political affairs, which explains the development of the doctrine of the *vilayat-i faqih*, which encompasses both the innate and traditional religious responsibilities of the *marja-i taqlid* and the extension of the *faqih's* roles into the legislative, executive and judicial spheres. Khomeini emphasised that in his time the Prophet's religious and political roles were unified (Mottahedeh 1996:70-71; Zadeh s.a:9; Enayat 1982:162; Khomeini 1981:25, 38).

When Khomeini's *Hukumat-i Islam* (1981:27-150) is analysed it becomes evident that he openly used his religious thesis to attack the Shah and the deteriorating political conditions and in fact insisted on the necessity of an "Islamic Government". The key objective however, was obscured until after the 1979 revolution although his thesis never disguised his intention of establishing an Islamic state in Iran. He therefore practised *taqiyyeh* to temporarily conceal his intentions. As a consequence Khomeini shifted focus and created an all-inclusive and mass-based movement against the "corrupt" and "imperialist" government of the Shah and his American supporters (Skocpol 1982:266-267). Stempel (1981:217) and Sick (1985a:55) note that Khomeini's message and intentions were packaged for both the internal Iranian and external Western audience. His erstwhile supporters in the mass movement were caught unaware, while his liberal interpreters, such as former Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yazdi, either misjudged the message or were swept into the maelstrom of the post-revolutionary era. Their vision of a more democratic Iran came to nothing (Akhavi 1980:102; Tabari 1983:62).

The progression of Khomeini from theoretician to activist and dominant leader finally started in the late 1960s. It is evident from an overview of the religio-political campaign waged by Khomeini against the Shah at this time that the 1963 revolt can in fairness be described as "the first phase" of the 1979 revolution (Rouleau 1980:3-6). The total sequence can be assessed on three levels: Downes (2002:88) describes it as a "holy mission" comparable to that of Imam Alī, a consequence of realising that Iranian society was being overtaken by a "pervasive alienation" resulting either from *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxication) as noted by Rose (1983:167), or as a response to the state (cf. Moaddel (1992:356) which was stripping the *ulamā* of their traditional socio-economic and political privileges. Incidentally Akhavi (1980:106) emphasises that most *ulamā* were not against modernisation as envisaged by the Shah's White Revolution but differed with the way the programme was implemented, the wastage of resources by the elite, and the use, justified or not, of arbitrary power by the government, which had exceeded all bounds.

Khomeini differed with the Shah about issues such as: US loans to Iran and the Shah's modernisation programme, which was perceived as having led to the subjugation of Iran

by a foreign power and foreign MNCs; the purchase of millions of dollars worth of military equipment from the US; the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) - whereby US military and civilian advisers and their families were granted full diplomatic immunity and were thus exempted from accountability to the Iranian courts - an issue characterised by Khomeini as a “capitulation” and a violation of the Iranian Constitution. Khomeini also criticised the Shah for maintaining diplomatic relations with Israel. The most critical issue, however, was the enfranchisement of women and land reform, issues which would finally catapult Khomeini into the public eye on the national political level (Rouleau 1980:6; Esposito 1983:153; Floor 1983:75, 84). Khomeini’s opposition to an Iranian government draft bill regarding women’s suffrage was used to launch his first effective campaign against the Shah. It led to the increasing radicalisation of the *ulamā* until matters came to a head during the land reform campaigns of 1962 /1963. During this time Khomeini established widespread links with the *bazaaris* and moulded them into an extensive support organisation known as the Coalition of Islamic Societies. It is also important to note that Khomeini never favoured the higher ranked *ulamā*, but preferred to work with the Islamists and the *ulamā* of lower rank, the *hujjat al islam* (“proof of Islam”). This was a key reason why his concept of the *faqih* would be rejected by most of the senior *ulamā*. The Coalition of Islamic Societies was funded by the *bazaaris* and run by Khomeini’s tight inner circle, at that time already including future revolutionary leaders such as Ayatollahs Behesti, Rafsanjani and Khamenei. Although the *ulamā* failed to stop the Shah’s referendum on land reforms at this time, even declaring it “un-Islamic”, the subsequent countrywide violence, however, succeeded in mobilising religion into political action (Moin 2000:80-95, 210; Kaplan 1997:219; Tehranian 1980:18-19).

Due to the cyclical nature of Iranian revolts, the 1963 revolt became an important dress-rehearsal for the 1979 revolution in terms of pattern and process. Violence led to more government repression, including the destruction of Qom’s renowned Faiziyeh *madrasah* (religious school in Farsi) in 1963. These events were followed by Khomeini’s famous denunciation of the US, Israel and the Shah on 3 June 1963 when he questioned the Shah’s prerogative to rule, given the un-Islamic nature of his government and his oppression of his people. He characterised the Shah as a *taghuti* (tyrant) and utilised the

Ashura¹⁶ celebrations and the analogy of Husayn’s “martyrdom” as part of *ta’ziyeh*, which are actual re-enactments of highly emotional passion plays, to insert the highly emotional “martyrdom myth” as a vital instrument of his revolutionary vernacular. Khomeini thus fused traditional and religious methods to effect government change, making his religious philosophy and methods the driving force behind, if not the *raison d’être* of the 1979 revolution (Swenson 1985:123, 134, 136; Abrahamian 1989:21).

Khomeini was subsequently arrested and even threatened with execution, but fellow *ulamā* interceded on his behalf, emphasising his status as an *ayatollah al-uzma* or Grand Ayatollah, the highest rank amongst the Shī’a *ulamā*.¹⁷ This recognition certified his new status for the first time and elevated Khomeini to the leadership role in the revolution (Esposito 1983:156). “Quietism”, however, only formally ended after Khomeini issued a *fatwa* (after his release), instructing the *ulamā* to stop the practice of *taqiyyeh* and rather made it (incumbent) *wajib* on them to speak the truth. According to Hussain (1985:91-92), Heikal (1982:136-137) and Moin (2000:96), Khomeini saw this *fatwa* as a two-stage process to return to Islam. Firstly, *takhliya* (getting rid of obsolete ideas and practices such as *taqiyyeh*) and secondly, *tahliya*, which is a sweetening process when things or ideas are added, such as creating the position of the *faqih* (*fuqaha*) noted in 4.4.3.1. Another more direct consequence of the *fatwa* was that all compromises with the government were forbidden and that from that time the Islamic movement started a new phase: Instead of passive resistance it changed to active resistance. Khomeini (1981:144; 147) clarifies the concept of *taqiyyeh* in more detail in the *Hukumat-i Islam* when he differentiates between the traditional application of *taqiyyeh* to safeguard the Shī’a religion and the usage thereof by the *faqih*. While the traditional way is allowed, the *faqih* cannot practice *taqiyyeh* but can only express God’s words which are always true. The Iranian

¹⁶ Ashura is the 10th day of the mourning month of Muharram, the first month in the Islamic lunar calendar, which marks the date of the battle of Kerbala when Imam Husayn and his followers were killed and the “martyrdom myth” effectively started (Downes 2002:180-181).

¹⁷ The Shī’a *ulamā* are organised into an internal hierarchy ratified by cooptation and reflect the level of prestige of one’s diploma: *hujjat al islam* (“proof of Islam”) is the junior level, *ayat allah* or *ayatollah* (“sign of God”) the mid-level and *ayatollah al-uzma*, Grand Ayatollah / *mujtahid* is the most senior level and the only possible source of imitation or *marja’al-taqlid* (Roy 1994 171).

opposition lost impetus when Khomeini was forced into exile in 1964 and only regained full impetus prior to his return to start the second phase of the revolution in 1978.

4.3.3.3 The return of Khomeini and the end of the Pahlavi dynasty

The period from 1964 to 1978/9 was characterised by a persistent deterioration of the internal situation in Iran. The situation came to a head on 31 January 1979 when Khomeini established the Islamic Republic and effectively ended the second phase of the revolution. Khomeini succeeded because the Shah, despite his overall control, failed to open the political establishment. Increasing socioeconomic problems and specifically the un-Islamic behaviour of the Shah alienated him from the Iranian people and the *ulamā*. Even the most passively minded *ulamā* joined the opposition when the Shah, at his Coronation, announced a new “Great Civilisation” and replaced the Islamic calendar with a new Royal calendar dating back to 2535 BC. Other reasons for the opposition were the utmost moral decay that resulted from White Revolution and the Shah’s total disregard for the *Sharia* (Abrahamian 1980:25-26; McFadden *et al.* 1981:254).

According to Tehranian (1980:14), Abrahamian (1989:30) and Stempel (1981:98) the event that finally “triggered” the revolution was an ill-judged diatribe in January 1978 by the Iranian government against Khomeini, labelling him a “black reactionary” in the pay of foreign governments and in collusion with international communism. This was similar to “black operations” on Kashani and Mossadeq during the 1950s and was seen as a humiliation by the Iranian people. It led to the start of three forty-day cycles of protest between February and May 1978. Due to the heavy-handedness of the government, the patterns of 1963 were repeated, except that they became more persistent. Emotions were kept focused throughout by *ta’ziyeh* on the “murderous regime of Yazid” (the Shah as a killer of Imam Husayn). As Swenson (1985:136) described it, the whole 14 months of antigovernment protests became one continuous *ta’ziyeh* performance. Moreover, when deaths resulted, there were more intensified mourning periods, followed by more killings and protests. The series of events climaxed on 4 September 1978 when more than half a million Iranians demonstrated against the Shah, asking for the return of “Imam

Khomeini” and the introduction of an Islamic Republic in Iran. Khomeini hailed this as a successful referendum ending the monarchy, while it was also the first time in Shī’a history that the title Imam was given to a living person. The Shah’s decision to declare martial law and call in the army increased the violence. While he clung to power until January 1979, before going into exile, the Pahlavi dynasty (which then had the fifth largest military in the world) effectively disintegrated in the face of persistent unarmed protests orchestrated largely by the *ulamā* (Abrahamian 1980:21; 1989:30-34).

Various other factors contributed to the Shah’s downfall, including the US administration’s refusal to accept the conclusion of numerous intelligence and diplomatic reports between 1978 and 1979 that the Shah’s government was crumbling. According to Daugherty (2001:468), the US found this incomprehensible because it would have meant the “reconstruction of US Iranian policy” after 37 years and the review of US relations with a number of Middle Eastern countries and key European allies. Consequently, nothing was done. Moreover the uncoordinated nature of US decision making on Iran (discussed in 4.2.1.2) fell into further disarray, which was not helped by the excessive influence on US policies of the Iranian Ambassador to the US, Ardeshir Zahedi.¹⁸ Ultimately, however, it was President Carter’s sole decision, but he frequently took advice from organisations and individuals such as the Rockefeller Group and Henry Kissinger as well as friendly associates or advisers of long standing, bypassing all relevant departments (Bill 1988:243-244; Taheri 1988:57-91). Consequently, US decision making on Iran was often contradictory as both Ambassador Sullivan (1981:156-172) and Huyser (1986: 85, 100-101) found when they served in Iran prior to Khomeini’s return.

While the study of the US “intelligence failure” falls outside the ambit of this dissertation it needs to be emphasised that it has become almost tradition for US administrations to blame the CIA for their political failures. However, as Donovan (1997:160) observed, the key failure lies not in the apparent “intelligence failure”, but rather in the failure of the CIA to persuade the policy makers to accept the available intelligence. Furthermore, the

¹⁸ Zahedi is the son of General Zahedi of 1953 *coup* fame. He had a close relationship with the head of the NSC, Zbigniew Brzezinski, resulting in a situation where most US policies on Iran were cleared with him before being adopted (Sick 1985a:71).

CIA and SAVAK had a “special intelligence” arrangement which mirrors the special US-Iran strategic relationship. Although its existence is disputed, Daugherty (2001:457) and Ramazani (1982b:129-130), for example, have observed that this arrangement meant total dependence by the CIA on SAVAK for information on Iran. Hence the CIA was banned to collect intelligence inside Iran on any of the opposition groups. This arrangement left the CIA blind, but the oversight was perceived as negligible because it came in exchange for the military and satellite-tracking stations the US had on the Iran-USSR border. The US fear for communism remains the primary concern and it left the US blinded by self-interest and self-censorship in Iran, which according to Bill (1988:394) was done by the US’s “Pahlavi-diplomats” who selectively screened what intelligence was to be forwarded to the US policy maker. The main reason was probably these diplomats’ self-interest and the fact that they also have become too cosy in their relationship with Iran.

The US was consequently totally surprised and confused when the revolution infused religion as a key dimension of statecraft (cf. chapter 3.5.). The US found it incomprehensible that its opponents in Iran were a medieval group (the *ulamā*) with a 7th century religious-political philosophy under the leadership of Khomeini. Failure to understand the potential of religion as a political weapon was the key policy failure of the US in Iran. In fact, Stanfield Turner, then head of the CIA, could only respond in anger by declaring that Khomeini was “an irrational, irascible bastard”, especially given the fact that he did not have a detailed psychological profile of Khomeini at his disposal. It was to be expected, therefore, that during the subsequent hostage crisis the US would again fail to identify or to “read” its interlocutors correctly and predict the actions Khomeini would take as he managed, in the circumstances, to effectively mask his true intentions (Daugherty 2001:470; Sick 1985a:165; Andrew 1996:442).

Despite a slow realisation that the Shah’s time was at an end and that a new religious-political force was evolving, the US nonetheless continued to miss numerous opportunities to either adapt its policies or to apply pressure on the Shah. It blindly switched its loyalty to the government of Premier Shapur Bakhtiar, the last Pahlavi prime minister before the collapse of the Iranian government early in February 1979. US

procrastination in terms of decision making forced the Shah into exile since the US could not decide if it should attempt to reach a compromise with Khomeini or if it should try to install a regency, or whether it should initiate another *coup d'état*. Information on this issue differs widely, but Sullivan (1981:156) and Ramazani (1982a:6-7), amongst others found that Iranians believed in the omnipresence and influence of the US and the CIA, and even the Shah linked the uprising directly to US/CIA activities. This view gained further currency as the Iranian media frequently reported that the “Huysen Mission” to Iran was to organise a *coup d'état*. This is an assumption that Huyser (1986) has always rejected, given the absence of clear instructions. Indirect references were made, however, and it appears as if the US was hoping that Huyser would use his own initiative to stage a replica of the 1953 *coup*. When Huyser (1986:283-284) was finally formally requested to organise a *coup* late in 1978 he refused since the Iranian Army had totally collapsed. Moreover, the cost of committing US troops was seen as unacceptable by the US General Staff.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Chapter 4 dealt comprehensively with the religious and political drivers that led to the 1979 revolution, thus providing vital context to explain one of its key events, the hostage crisis, which will be addressed in chapter 5. Chapter 4 also alludes to the immense intelligence implications of Iran’s political implosion, as its strategic relationship with the US was shattered. It also tracks the rise of an *ulamā*-controlled Shī’a theocracy, a phenomenon that was unprecedented to the West. A critical factor overall, however, was the persistence of cyclical revolts in Iran and the direct and critical linkage between the Anglo-Russian and more particularly, the American involvement in Iran and the resultant Iranian abhorrence of foreign oppression. The US-UK intervention during the 1953 *coup d'état* fits squarely into this cyclical approach and therefore became a natural part of and justification for the takeover of the US embassy during the 1979 revolution.

Furthermore, chapter 4 gives a detailed overview of Iran’s “structural disequilibrium” or the “social breakdown model”, showing how the Shah’s modernisation and

Westernisation programmes uprooted indigenous social, economic, political, educational and legal institutions, thus leading to the development of new cultural-political elites who demanded popular participation. A refusal to co-opt such elites, and the general exclusion of the population at large from the political process, created a dysfunctional system that led to a shift in leadership from the monarchy to the *ulamā* and the *bazaaris*, thus removing one of the key pillars of traditional Iranian society, namely unquestionable respect for both the monarchy and the Shī'a traditions. These institutions were closely linked, even to the point of being indistinguishable from each other in terms of their political aspirations. The 1979 revolution ended in the destruction and vilification of the monarchy and led to steadily increasing pressure on the traditional Shī'a hierarchical institutions. Khomeini's preference for the Islamists and more particularly the lower ranked *ulamā* is bound to have dire consequences for the Iranian Shī'a tradition. His intervention limited the natural growth and enrichment of the Shī'a tradition because of the emphasis on an elected *faqih*. After his death, his successor, Ali Khamenei, was only a low-ranked *hujjat al islam*, who was superficially elevated to the status of Ayatollah and thus could not claim to be a *marja' al-taqlid* or source of emulation.

Chapter 4 establishes an important link between the previous three chapters and chapter 5 (case study I) since it clarifies and explains key issues such as Iran's religious-political inter-relationships and shows how these issues relate to other matters, such as regime fragmentation and institutionalisation, which are key building blocks of chapter 5. It also reemphasises the importance of culture in the Iranian people's psyche, for example by explaining the *baten-zaher* interplay as a cultural and psychological instrument and as an instrument used in negotiation, which fused the traditional and the current to create a *baten-driven* opposition to rid Iran of all foreigners, including the Shah. Khomeini's *fatwa* to end quietism and actively joining the struggle ended the traditional usage of *taqiyyah* in Iran, thus heralding a watershed in the development of Iranian negotiating style since Khomeini made it clear in his writings that the traditional use of *taqiyyah* was only banned by the *faqih*, who must always speak the truth in virtue of his status as the religious leader. Given the variations of *taqiyyah* one can nonetheless assume that its current form, *kitmān*, will retain its validity for negotiation purposes.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY I: THE HOSTAGE CRISIS: 1979-1981

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 deals specifically with the hostage crisis or embassy siege. It is therefore connected with the internal conditions in Iran as discussed in the previous chapter and provides the background to the case study under review. As noted by Moaddel (1992:367-368), the hostage crisis was one of at least three significant events that decided the course of developments in post-revolutionary Iran. The other was the endorsement of the Islamic constitution in late 1979, and the third was the cultural revolution of 1980-1981, which took the form of a reign of terror and mass-bloodletting as followers of Khomeini cleansed Iranian society of everything and all persons deemed “un-Islamic”. However, the task at hand is not to analyse the embassy siege in exhaustive detail, but rather to take a closer look at the Iranian negotiating style utilized during this event. American initiatives and actions will only be reviewed briefly as representing opposing policies, mindsets approaches and views to those of Iran. It is important to reemphasise that the US found itself on wholly unfamiliar and uncharted terrain in having to deal with an evolving religiously driven diplomacy, a situation that became untenable when the US continuously failed to identify its Iranian negotiating opponents (Christopher 1985:8).

Analysis of the Iran-US negotiating process will be done through the application of elements of Putnam’s two-level game metaphor (1988:1993) and the leadership theory of Hermann *et al.* (1987), particularly in relation to the embassy siege. It is believed that the two key propositions identified in chapter 1, section 1.4, will be successfully addressed in this way, namely “who” is the person(s) or organisations that constitute the ultimate decision making unit, and how is the negotiation process organised; secondly what factors influence the negotiating process. Since the discussion will be about negotiations, the original definition of negotiation, discussed in chapter 1 (1.4.1.1) as an integrated and multiphase process needs to be reemphasised. Even so, the hostage negotiation process had its own distinctive phases and was a mixture of the multiphase models identified

earlier in the process by Cohen (1997), Salacuse (2003) and Mitchell (1989). The respective phases are differentiated in a multilayered analysis and the competing power centres or types of decision units as well as the decision making processes and leadership behaviour at the time of the hostage crisis in Iran are surveyed. Particular attention will be paid to Iran's negotiating methods during the various phases.

5.2 PARALLEL EVENTS: PERPETUAL REVOLUTION, INSTITUTIONALISATION, LEADERSHIP AND TAKEOVER

5.2.1 Perpetual revolution and institutionalisation

The immediate post-revolutionary period in Iran was characterised by perpetual revolution and anarchy. While Khomeini never wavered in his intention to establish a *Hukumat-i Islam* (Islamic Government), his liberal supporters were misled by his initial promises of creating a "democratic republic" in Iran. The intention regarding an Islamic state and its future institutions were, however, already mentioned in the *Hukumat-i Islam* although the specific detail was not provided, while upheaval and factionalism between the various groups took more than three years to settle. The anomaly of the Iranian revolution was that the purges substituted the relatively new and modern political state institutions of the Shah with new religious supervisory institutions under Islamic (*Tawhidi*) control. It was a "ritual cleansing" to rid the state of the evil legacy of the Old Regime of "despotism," atrocities and suppression (Skocpol 1982:267; Abrahamian 1989:30-34, 42; Abrahamian 1980:21; Moslem 2002:21).

Despite pressure from his Mujahedeen allies to hasten implementation, Khomeini also had to allow a period of dual government since his Islamic support base was not yet ready to launch the theocracy. Consequently, the immediate post-revolutionary period was characterised by a division of control where a "provisional government" under the secular Premier Mehdi Bazargan was occupying the state institutions, while a secret and shadowy Revolutionary Council, controlled by Ayatollah Mohammad Behesti and key religious supporters of Khomeini, were enhancing their religious support base. Taheri (1985:234) describes this subterfuge as an example where the Khomeini-Behesti faction has

illustrated *khod'eh* in practice. Rouleau (1980:7) regards this political manoeuvre as one of Khomeini's most important strategic achievements, particularly since he despised Bazargan's Liberation Front and Mossadeq's old National Front members who represented the old order and incessant repression. Since Bazargan's pro-democratic views and opposition to the theocratic system were unacceptable to Khomeini, the Bazargan government was not allowed to exercise real power and was given a mere caretaking role. When Khomeini could do without Bazargan, he withdrew his support and soon after the provisional government was swept aside by Khomeini's Islamic supporters. While claiming political "aloofness" Khomeini ruthlessly used vigilante groups such as the *komitehs*, the *Hezbollah* (Party of God), and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) or *Pasdaran* to suppress all resistance and to destroy and replace all state institutions with new ones of a religious nature (Abrahamian 1989:42; Downes 2002:122; Benard & Khalilzad 1984:106-109; Moslem 2002:21). The end product was an Islamic state as defined by Khomeini, in which the authority and activities of the *ulamā* were fused with the state itself, by integrating all the competing centres of authority under the state (e.g. the military establishment, the bureaucracy, the political structures and the economy), and thus under religious control (Skocpol 1982:278).

5.2.2 Leadership: "regime fragmentation"

As the Islamic Republic and its respective institutions evolved, the political revolution in Iran formally ended with Bazargan's resignation and coincided with the start of the hostage siege. It was followed by a cultural revolution in 1980-1981, which can be described as an intense cultural-religious struggle, accompanied by considerable bloodshed and extended over more than 18 months as various power groups fought for political control under the guise of safeguarding the revolution (Rouleau 1980:11-12; Mackey 1998:288). To use Hagan's terminology (1993:68), it was a period of anarchy characterised by a high measure of "regime fragmentation", which led to an obscure and highly unstable decision making process. An intense power struggle raged during this entire period between the competing individuals and power centres as they fought for recognition, either as the predominant leader or as multiple autonomous actors in Iran. At

least six competing power centres existed, but since their respective roles and impact are discussed as the Iran-US interaction evolved and the mediation process intensified, the groups will only be named at this stage. They are the Bazargan government; Behesti's Revolutionary Council; the Muslim Students Following the Line of the Imam (DAPKHA); the Consultative Assembly, with the President and Khomeini at the apex.

There were also powerful groups, outside these power centres, such as the Marxist oriented *Feda'iyan-e-Khalq*. This clerical group came into being after World War II and initially opposed the sidelining of the Islamic Law and the Shah's modernisation programmes. It radicalised in the 1950s and was responsible for various attacks and assassinations. The second organisation was the *Mujahedin-e-Khalq* (MEK/MKO) which represents the radical left wing of the Muslim organisations founded in the early 1970s. While both groups played a key role in overthrowing the Pahlavi dynasty, it was mainly the MKO which impacted on post-revolutionary Iran. After the dismissal of Bazargan it joined Khomeini's Islamic Republic Party as one of the two "wings" of the revolutionary movement in which capacity it supported the takeover of the US embassy. The MKO increasingly opposed Khomeini's policies because of the tendency towards religious zealotry in society and refused to ratify the Islamic Constitution. Instead it joined forces with President Bani-Sadr and attempted to counter Khomeini's initiatives. Since Bani-Sadr had no power base and the rallies and actions of the MKO took place during the early phase of the Iran-Iraq War, both were seen as treacherous. Khomeini suppressed them militarily and used the occasion to eliminate all opposition, replacing Bani-Sadr and forcing him and the MKO into exile. Khomeini's actions enhanced his political control and changed the negotiating milieu (Ramazani 1980:447; Hussein 1985:134-164; Zabih 1982a:47; Rouleau 1980:9-10; Downes 2002:103, 127; Ansari 2003:228-229, 233).

The power struggle had dire consequences during the US-Iranian negotiations since the key interlocutors were divided amongst the power centres and changed as the internal struggle progressed. The various power centres, and hence negotiators were essentially divided into two groups: the first was a moderate group whose membership, was essentially Western or French educated Iranians who had been with Khomeini in Paris.

They included individuals such as Ibrahim Yazdi, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh and Hasssan Bani-Sadr, who were all to become foreign ministers or, in Bani-Sadr's case, first minister of foreign affairs and then President of Iran. The second group consisted of Khomeini's traditional, but insular network of former students and associates, mainly originating from the *bazaar* and his support organisations (e.g. the Coalition of Islamic Societies), most of whom were ardent Islamists. This network replaced the first group after Khomeini's return to Iran (Downes 2002:117; Saunders 1985a:45-46). However, the roles of various individuals and their levels of access to the West and to Khomeini, would be dictated during the crisis by either the radical behaviour of the Revolutionary Council or the intransigence of the Militant Students, or Khomeini's subsequent approval, his declaration of a moratorium on tolerance of initiatives, or his withdrawal of approval (Hermann *et al.*1987). Khomeini was the only constant, a fact the US only realised at a late stage as shown by Sick (1985a:187-188), who notes the perception of US officials that there was no alternative for Bazargan and that only the moderates had the capability to establish a workable government in Iran. They were wrong, but this error was compounded during and even after the hostage crisis when the US persisted with initiatives that focused entirely on the Iranian moderate power centres as a way of dealing with the Iran-US dispute (Rouleau 1980:10).

5.2.3 Takeover of the US embassy

The occupation of the US embassy took place on 4 November 1979 and was the second event of this nature that year. The two attacks were markedly different. The first, the so-called Valentine's Day attack, was launched on 14 February 1979 by armed elements of the Marxist oriented *Feda'iyān* and ended peacefully - to the extent that Khomeini even apologised for it - after the intervention of Prime Minister Bazargan and Foreign Minister Yazdi (Sullivan 1981:250-268; Houghton 2001:77). In response to the attack, security at the embassy compound was upgraded by adding window grills, steel doors and blast shields, and by reducing the embassy staff from 1200 to around 60. The second attack was launched by the Muslim Students Following the line of the Imam, a group of unarmed students, who took the name out of respect for Khomeini (Ebtekar 2000:35).

Despite clear similarities between the two attacks that should have alerted them, the US embassy personnel misjudged the situation, wrongly believing that it would be another brief demonstration or sit-in (Saunders 1985a:39; Turner 1991:26-27; Houghton 2001:78-79). In corroboration Houghton (2001:79) notes that neither the hostages nor the US decision makers noticed the significant changes, particularly relating to the erosion of Bazargan and Yazdi's political power base that had taken place in Iran's internal environment since the February takeover.

Four issues that need to be addressed include: clear identification of the Muslim Students; Khomeini's control over them and their level of independence; the Students' organisational structure and ideology; and above all their justification for the embassy takeover. Divergent schools of thought exist regarding the endorsement of the siege by Khomeini. According to Ebtekar (2000:55-56), the Militant Students agreed before the attack to request sanctioning from Khomeini via *hujjat al islam* Khomeiniha, a key religious leader, but the latter was reluctant to interfere, explaining that Khomeini, as the leader of the revolution, would find it difficult to give his permission publicly in advance. A statement by Khomeini on the same day, calling on secondary and religious students to take action against America and Israel was nonetheless taken as endorsement by the Militant Students. This view is supported by Ioannides (1980:30) when he observes that various Militant Students, including Ebtekar (then a key Student leader), indicated in an interview held in the embassy in 1980 that Imam Khomeini was not informed of the imminence of the siege, but that the Militant Students, interpreted his Line of Thought. Moses (1996:11) presents a different picture, inferring from the debate on this issue that Khomeini may have orchestrated the event. He alludes to the crucial influence of Khomeini's world view and his role as the "interpreter" of God's will. The siege can thus be seen as divinely guided and approved, resulting from God's instructions to use the event to show how the oppressed people should rise against the US as the "Great Satan". Khomeini's predilection for the spiritual world and his apparent aloofness from political matters also made it difficult to understand or predict his patterns of behaviour during the hostage crisis.

The Militant Students thus became an important independent power centre in Iran. This view is substantiated by Ebtekar (2000:65), Taheri (2005b:2), Zabih (1982a:44-45) and Ioannides (1980:15), all of whom noted that only about 400 selected students from the Sharif, Melli and Tehran Universities as well as the Polytechnic planned and executed the takeover. The Central Committee or Office of Consolidating Student Unity (OCSU), which acted as the executive body of the Militant Students, was only created after the takeover. Five committees were created to take care of security, public relations, maintenance, interrogation and liaison. While most sources are silent about the role of Dr Habibollah Peyman as a planner and leader during the siege, Zabih (1982a:46-51) and Ioannides (1980:15) concur that he provided ideological guidance and initially a key role in the Central Council of the OCSU. However, after Khomeini sent *hujjat al islam* Khoehniha to act as prayer and spiritual leader to the Students, the latter had a direct line to Khomeini. Khomeini, however, waited a number of days before formally legitimising the siege, and only after he realised the immense opportunity the siege presented. On 12 November 1979 he declared to Monsignor Bugnini that “their action represents the will of the entire nation, not the arbitrary whim of a small group” (Khomeini 1981:279).

Many questions remain regarding the justification for the embassy siege. Several reasons have been identified, namely the changing political environment; a key one was the need for the Shah to return to stand trial, which was a deception since the Militant Students actually intended to replace Bazargan’s Provisional Government and redress Iran’s humiliation. Ebtekar (2000:36) observes that the Militant Students never imagined that their act of protest would have such a far-reaching impact on the political history of Iran and the region. They never anticipated that the occupation would last more than a couple of hours or a few days at the most. At the time the Militant Students also felt personally humiliated by the actions and oppression of the US in Iran, and by the hostility and bias of the international and primarily the US media. Therefore, they were determined to explain the wrongs committed in and against Iran by a succession of US governments and intelligence agencies directly to the US public by occupying the embassy and holding US diplomats and intelligence personnel captive. In doing this they believed they had found both the ideal platform and leverage to broadcast the information about US transgressions

to the world (Ebtekar 2000:21). Another justification for the occupation noted by Ebtekar (2000:52), Zahrani (2002:9) and Zabih (1982a:44) was a paranoia amongst the Militant Students that the US would intervene “to destroy the revolution” in a repetition of the 1953 *coup*. They considered the Shah’s entrance into the US as a compelling argument and asserted the siege at once as a rejection of foreign presence in Iran and a means of safeguarding the revolution against a counter *coup d’état*.

The hostage crisis established the Militant Students as a crucial player in the revolution and the negotiation process. The hostage crisis became a central discourse in the internal power struggle in Iran, a factor noted specifically by Moaddel (1992), Sick (1985a) and Houghton (2001). Most authors insist that the cause of the occupation was eclipsed by the fact that the Shah went to the US almost two weeks before the occupation (Ramazani (1980:454). The hostage issue was critical for the power struggle waged by Khomeini, who even described it as the start of the “second Revolution” because he used it to eliminate his nationalist opposition (Ramazani 1988:284). As the consolidation of his power continued Khomeini specifically used the vast amounts of sensitive and secret information at his disposal to discredit his opponents. The Students painstakingly recovered shredded data from the “Spies Den”, as the embassy was dubbed by Khomeini, then published it when it would make maximum impact on the course of the revolution (Ebtekar 2000:97-101). The siege actually became central to Iran’s international confrontation with the US. For example, the meeting on 2 November 1979 between Bazargan, Yazdi and Brzezinski, the US National Security Advisor, in Algiers was used to precipitate the takeover. Moses (1996:xi, 1-2) and Hunter (1992:110) argue that this contact was misunderstood by the Iranian people, including the Militant Students, who feared renewed US intervention. While both the leftist and Islamic forces opposed Bazargan’s policy of retaining reasonable relations with the US, each group wanted ties with the US to be eliminated completely and not merely curtailed. The siege thus also presented the ideal opportunity for Khomeini to finally discredit Bazargan and destroy the Provisional Government.

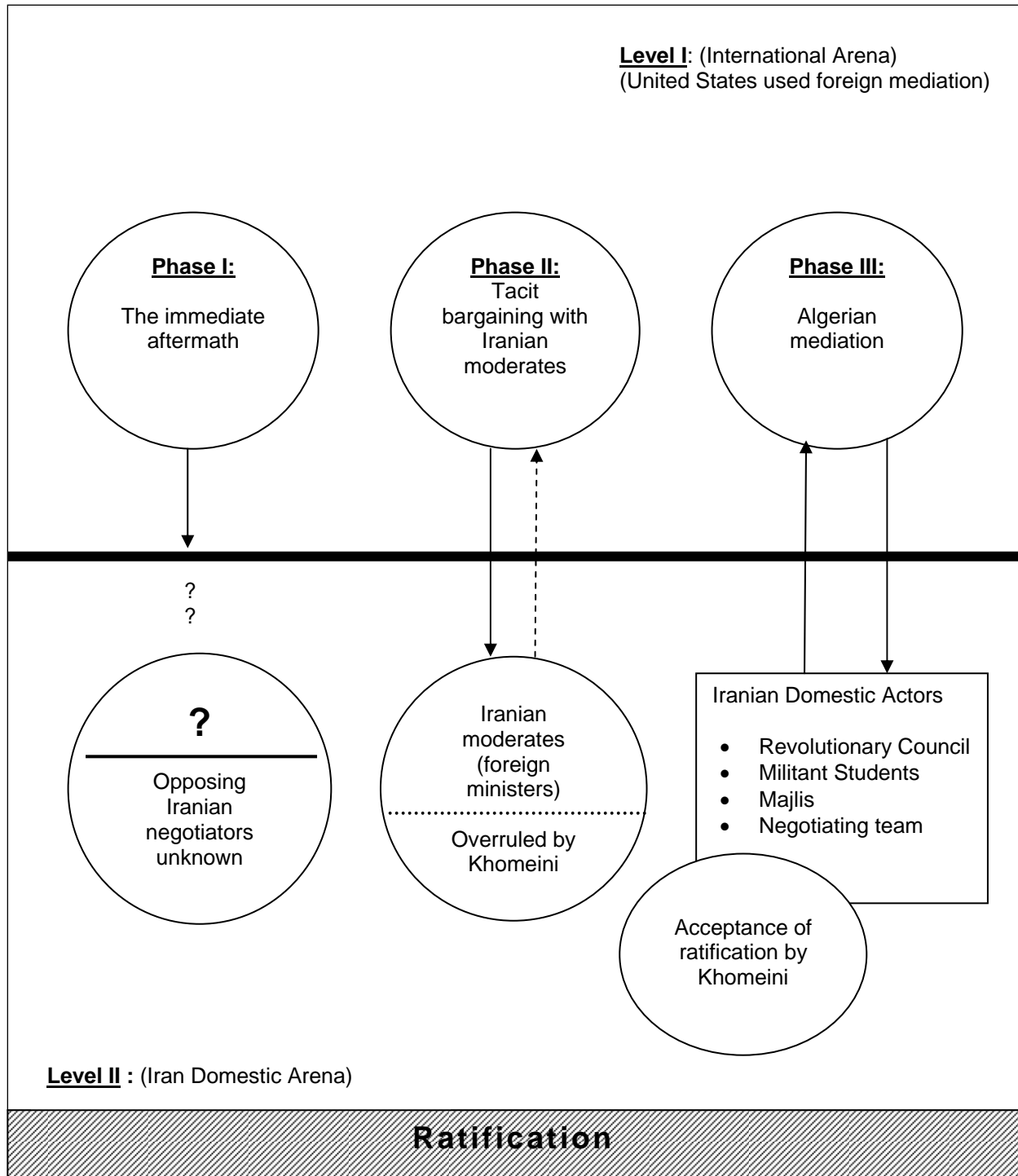


Figure 5.1: Iran-US negotiating interactions 1979-1981

5.3 THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS

5.3.1 A phased approach

It should be emphasised again that there are significant differences between negotiations, tacit bargaining, arbitration and mediation (cf. 1.4.1.1), and that the discussion of the takeover as an important precursor of the Iran-US negotiating deadlock belies that it was the first phase of the confrontation. In the following section the negotiating process will be analysed in three phases, proceeding from the takeover. The phases (cf. *Figure 5.1*) are the following:

- *Phase I*: The aftermath of the takeover period
- *Phase II*: Tacit bargaining or a long period of failed prenegotiations
- *Phase III*: The end game: the involvement of Germany and Algeria

5.3.1.1 *Phase I*: The aftermath

This was a relatively brief interlude following the start of the siege on 4 November 1979 until approximately mid-November when *Phase II* was initiated. *Phase I* was characterised by surprise and incomprehension on the US side as they waited for a quick release of the hostages similar to the first occupation early in February 1979. While the US focused the work on two policy coordinating committees, the Special Coordinating Committee (SCC) chaired by Brzezinski and the Policy Review Committee chaired by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, it failed to correctly identify its Iranian negotiating partners as shown in *Figure 5.1*. Due to the fragmented nature of the Iranian political environment at the time and diverse US views regarding the Iranian leadership, the US State Department and National Security Council (NSC) held opposing views. The State Department identified Khomeini and the Revolutionary Council as potential players, while the NSC viewed Khomeini as the principal planner behind the scene. Both saw the problem as inherently linked to Iran's evolving internal politics, but neither realised that Khomeini held absolute control in Iran. The US saw the Iranian actions as the irrational

conduct of “primitives and barbarians” because it failed to understand how intertwined Iranian culture, politics, history and religion were, and that the revolution had effectively fused religion and politics under religious control. The US also had trouble dealing with people who transgressed important codes of International Law which they perceived to be biased against the developing world.¹ In the circumstances, therefore, the US ignored warnings from Islamic countries and scholars that before releasing the hostages Khomeini would use them as an instrument to promote his domestic agenda. Another key US problem was the moral dilemma of negotiating with “terrorists”. This dilemma was finally resolved by giving pride of place to the perceived need to serve the broader US interest of saving lives (Christopher 1985:4-7, 19, 30; Saunders 1985a:44, 51-52, 58, 64; Moses 1996:15-17; Avruch 2006:47; Falk 1980:413-414).

The Iranian position at the time was quite obscure and extremely fluid due to the bitter infighting amongst the fragmented Iranian leadership factions or multiple autonomous unit(s) engaged in enhancing their positions, if one applies the phraseology of Hermann and Hermann (1989). According to Stempel (1981:225-227) it became clear almost immediately after the takeover that the Militant Students were an independent element in the negotiations. They were watching Khomeini, who refused to heed Bazargan’s calls to end the siege, and were oblivious to the potential international danger of keeping the hostages. The Militant Students were setting the pace and even Khomeini’s refusal to negotiate overlapped with original demands by the Militant Students, namely to return the Shah to Iran trial. Although Khomeini (1981:279-280) and the Militant Students fused their demands (e.g. the return of the Shah’s funds to Iran after a just trial) and Khomeini ratified and included them in the official Iranian position, the Militant Students remained a relatively uncontrollable group. This problem became a serious obstacle at crucial times during the negotiations. While the Militant Students accepted “Khomeini’s Line” and they were mostly willing to act on his command during the later stages of the siege, they made it clear that the Militant Students, not the government (at the time the Revolutionary Council), would keep the hostages in custody. Matters were thus

¹ Examples include Iran’s rejection of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and treaties dealing with the protection of diplomats on the grounds that the key issue was Iranian sovereignty rather than the application, or the interpretation, of such treaties (Gross: 1980:396).

complicated from a negotiating point of view since two different groups were involved with the hostages: the Militant Students who had physical control and Khomeini on the one hand, and to a lesser extent the clerics of the Revolutionary Council who used the event to consolidate their control in Iran on the other (Stempel 1981:227).

Two other issues that rose to prominence during *Phase I* were Khomeini's reemphasis of his world view and the emergence of a new diplomatic vernacular in Iran. Khomeini stressed the North-South dichotomy (cf. 3.3.2.3) and saw the fall of the Shah and the siege as two successive blows to the US and USSR and an illustration of their inability to control the "oppressed masses" (Moses 1996:11). The theme of divine retribution and justice became an intrinsic part of the new Islamic government and gave rise to a religiously controlled diplomacy and a new diplomatic vernacular. The ritual daily marches around the embassy were a repeat of the traditional *ta'zyeh* or passion plays and according to Sheikholeslami (2003:152) reflected a symbolic victory of the Iranian dispossessed over imperialism. This triumph alluded to the principles of righteousness and justice (*haqq*), (one of the few words in Farsi that denotes negotiation) and became a shield against being trampled on by the foreign powers as in the past (cf. 3.4.1). The characterisation of the US as the "Great Satan" and cries of "Death to America" dates back to this era, but was actually part of a 1000-year old tradition of cursing and vilifying of your enemies called *tabarra* (Chelkowski & Dabashi 1999:112-113). Consequently the US came to be viewed as an external illegitimate force that continually strove to destroy the pure, internal core of the Iranian revolution. In the US, Iran took on a demonic form and was seen as a crazy outlaw nation whose actions were illegal, irrational and erratic (Kifner 1981:178; Gerges 1999:42-43; Beeman 1990:165).

It appears from the above that two sets of drivers determined the negotiating environment during Phase I:

The US drivers

- Failure to correctly identify the Iranian negotiating opposition.

- Failure to appreciate the importance of religion in Iran and as an additional element in Iran's faith-driven diplomacy.
- A perception of Iran as irrational and untrustworthy, given its transgression of International Law.

The Iranian drivers

- The presence of fragmented multiple autonomous actors as well as a predominant leader (Khomeini) who was still consolidating his position.
- The existence of the Militant Students, both as an independent faction and the actual custodians of the hostages.
- The importance of religion.
- Fusion between the international (hostage) issue and the internal power struggle.
- Reluctance to negotiate.
- Its view of the US as an untrustworthy hegemonic power given America's history of intervention in Iran.

5.3.1.2 *Phase II*: Tacit bargaining or a long period of failed pre-negotiations

Phase II is divisible into an initial active period extending from late November 1979 until March 1980, followed by a relatively inactive period from March to September 1980. This phase will be considered with reference to the Iranian domestic and international negotiating context.

a) The Iranian negotiating environment

The Iranian internal negotiating environment was analogous to *Level II* (the domestic) negotiating environment described by Putnam (cf. chapter 2.3 and *Figure 5.1*). Iran was a society in flux, lacking a formal institutional state structure and conventional rules for decision making. In fact it would be fair to say that Iran was in a state of endemic anarchy. Although decisions were ostensibly driven by two strands or currents of power at the same time, the appearance was not borne out by practical realities. For example,

Khomeini was unchallenged as the revolutionary leader, but he was initially not the predominant leader or even an active participant in the decision making process. His apparent intention was to stay aloof from politics and act only as final arbiter, guide and *faqih*. However, when the survival of the revolution and its legitimacy were threatened by political infighting, Khomeini became increasingly involved and replaced Bazargan's Provisional Government with the clerically controlled Revolutionary Council headed by Ayatollah Behesti. Yet even this Council found themselves at odds with Khomeini about the hostages despite their Islamic credentials and close ties with Khomeini. The result was an ill-defined symbiotic relationship where the day-to-day activities were left to the Revolutionary Council and the latter or any other (e.g. the Militant Students) of the fragmented multiple autonomous actors would defer to Khomeini about key issues such as the hostages (Hagan *et al.* 2001:199; Stempel 1981:198; Hagan 1993: 220). This ultimate control (e.g. control of last resort) was limited to the brief rule of Khomeini as *faqih*. His successor, Ali Khamenei, was only a *hujjat al islam* whose authority was constrained, as will be shown in chapter 6.

Given the disorganised nature of government, therefore, foreign policy making was fragmented between the competing decision makers. According to Hagan *et al.* (2001:201-202) and Hermann and Hagan (1998:129), the decision makers differed sharply about internal issues, the future of Iran and the hostages. Both moderate and radical clergy failed to gain their respective objectives in this regard. The moderates could not gain a quick release or even control of the hostages, while the radicals failed to punish the hostages or put them on trial. Khomeini overruled them at crucial times and it was clear from developments that he had key preferences on the issue. It took time to achieve a consensus with the fragmented factions that reflected his own view, and Khomeini either gave or withdrew his sanction at critical times until he had consolidated his own internal power base. Khomeini wielded power in relatively close conformity to Putnam's concept (1988:438) of *involuntary defection*, which is how domestic groups subvert or veto an agreement supported by a statesman or chief negotiator. In Iran there was no chief negotiator during *Phase II*, however, which means the key prerequisite for this kind of defection was absent. Because Khomeini was withholding the domestic

ratification of possible agreements, the possibility of using the *win-set* as a negotiating strategy as proposed by Putnam (1988) was also precluded. No *win-set* could function effectively without agreements, nor could it function in the fragmented policy environment of post-revolutionary Iran.

b) The international negotiating environment

In terms of specificity the international negotiating environment can be demarcated by two interlocking sets of leverages. The leverages model of Moses (1996) will be generally applied as the operating framework for the analysis since it supplements the ultimate decision making actor classification by Hermann *et al.* (1987:311). While Hermann *et al.* (1987) deal specifically with the calculated allocation of resources (by various leadership groups) in order to prevent other units in government from overtly reversing their positions, Moses (1996:23) deals with a leverage system where these resources are applied in a negotiating setting. Moses defines leverages as “those means not involving direct action by which one government can exercise some influence over the policies of another government at any particular time” and as instruments to effect change in the policy environment. Moses also breaks levers down into tacit levers, which are employed indirectly in the form of sanctions, thus establishing the boundaries of the bargaining situation in a given negotiating environment; and active levers, which can be manipulated more directly in the form of promises or threats (Moses 1996:23-24, 26).

The total leverage scheme which provided the parameters for Iran / US negotiations (cf. *Figure 5.2*) was a combination of tacit and active levers that were available at the time to both countries. Relatively speaking Iran was the antagonist and was initially not interested in negotiation, while its actions were reactive rather than proactive and an amalgam of Putnam’s two boards or *Level I* (international) and *Level II* (domestic) negotiations. In contrast, the US initiatives were proactive and inclusive of the international community as a whole. Given the circumstances as noted, the existence or not of US levers will be discussed first in juxtaposition with the Iranians’ levers for purposes of comparison.

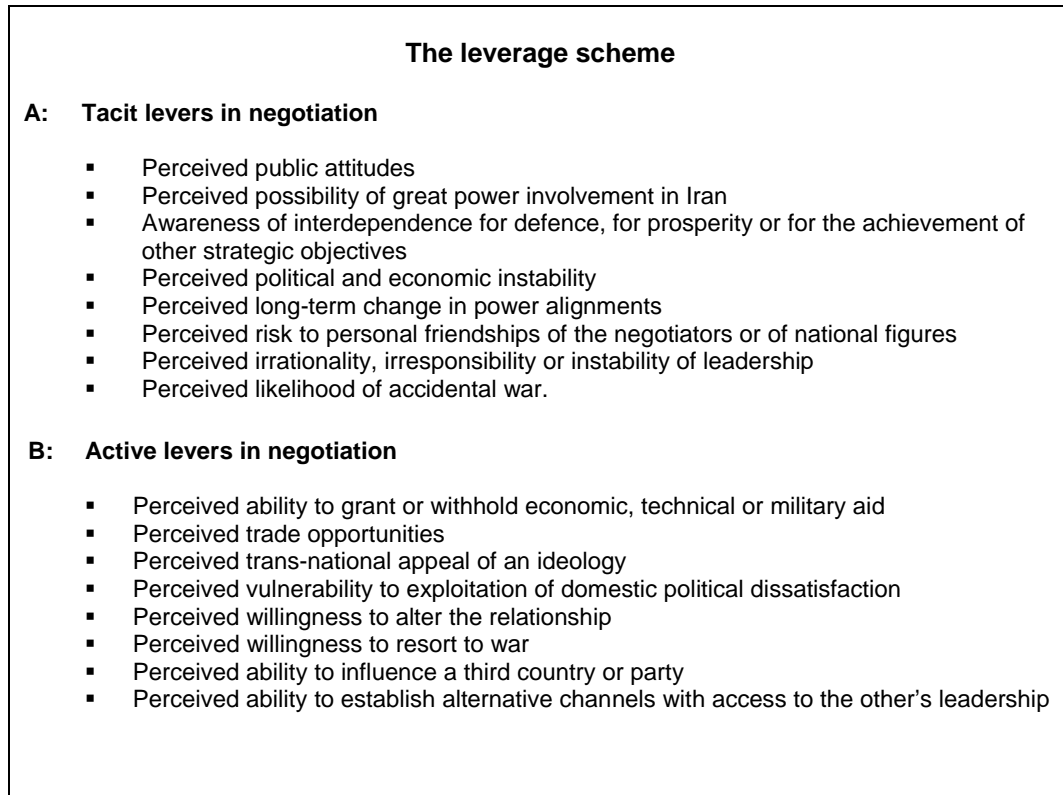


Figure 5.2: Moses' leverage scheme

Source: Moses, R.L. 1996. Freeing the hostages – re-examining US Iranian Negotiations and Soviet policy, 1979-1981.

While the US's leverage was limited on the tacit level, Iran had more room to manoeuvre. According to Moses (1996:28-32) the tacit US levers (cf. *Fig.5.2*) comprise the following:

US levers ► ◀ Iranian levers

US tacit lever

- Perceived possibility of great power involvement.

Foreign involvement on the whole and oppressive US intervention perceived or otherwise, runs like a golden thread through US-Iranian relations. While this issue has already been discussed in depth, Moses (1996:29) and Sick (1985a:234) note the existence of two distinct views on the Iranian side. First, after a strongly worded message from President Carter, some feared that Iranian trade would be disrupted. This

apprehension was interpreted in some US circles as the main reason why the hostages were not trialled. Secondly, Khomeini believed that the US lacked the military capacity to retaliate. Since Khomeini was indispensable to the Iranian decision making process and the hostage negotiations, his dismissal of the possibility of foreign involvement as “a shadow without substance”, and his willingness to risk severe international political and economic punishment (unprecedented and incredible to the West), but conforming to Iran’s “martyrdom myth”, effectively neutralised this tacit US lever.

Iranian tacit levers

- Public attitudes prevailing in the US.
- US perceptions of the irrationality, irresponsibility and instability of the Iranian leadership.
- US perceptions of political and economic instability of Iran.
- US perceptions of war inadvertently breaking out with Iran.

The Iranian tacit levers during *Phase II* were more comprehensive, as noted above. Iran perceived the US correctly as sensitive to public attitudes, which impacted in two ways on the situation. Firstly, the US deported hundreds of Iranian students, some anti-Khomeini, thus creating protests and counterdemonstrations in the US. The US justification of the deportations as an effort to counter possible vigilante attacks, which might endanger the hostage negotiations, failed to convince. Secondly, Iran missed no opportunity to use the foreign media to keep all eyes focused on the hostage issue, with the result that US negotiators were always under intense internal and external media pressure.

Iran exploited the US perception of the “irrationality, irresponsibility or instability” of Iran’s leadership” to its advantage. The US believed that Iran was inherently unstable because the Militant Students rather than the Iranian government kept control of the hostages. The Revolutionary Council after Bazargan’s dismissal was an unknown quantity, and there was a frequent rotation of foreign ministers and other officials (Moses 1996:30). This view is endorsed by Saunders (1985b:78), who remarks that the US

seemed anxious at the time to know whether Khomeini could achieve the release of the hostages. The US uncertainty about Khomeini's behaviour and even his mental state therefore influenced future negotiations.

Initially the Carter administration considered the perceived political and economic instability in Iran as a tacit lever, that could be turned to the advantage by the US, but this view was abandoned as apprehension grew that a systemic breakdown, internal wars and increasing regional instability (Iraqi incursions) might be imminent in Iran, with the result that US apprehension in this regard became a potential lever at the disposal of Iran instead (Moses 1996:30-31).

Iran also deployed the perceived risk of accidental war as a tacit lever. Iran correctly excluded the possibility of any military attempt by the US to rescue the hostages, believing instead that the US would limit its actions to punitive financial and economic measures simply because the US wanted to keep the negotiating track open and would therefore not be readily drawn into a conflict either in Iran or with the Soviet Union. Understandably, military action was limited to one failed attempt, and even Turner's requests for the mining of Iran's harbours were rejected (Moses 1996:31-32; Turner 1991:36, 107). According to Moses (1996:32) there was little sign that this tacit lever was ever fully exploited by Iran. There was also no evidence of Iranian enthusiasm to engage the US directly in war. The threats to the hostages rather came from the Students who wanted to either put them on trial or execute them in case of a US military intervention.

The US-Iranian bargaining position seems more balanced in terms of active levers.

US active levers

- Perceived ability to influence a third country or party.
- Perceived ability to establish alternative channels with access to the other's leadership.
- Perceived ability to grant or withhold economic, technical or military aid.
- Perceived willingness to resort to war.

The US used these active levers as part of its two-track negotiating policy: non-military (usually economic and financial punitive measures against Iran) and endeavours to find a negotiated solution (Saunders 1985b:72). While the active levers will be briefly explained as instruments, their application will become clearer during the discussion of four key US negotiation attempts during *Phase II* (cf. *Figure 5.1*). Due to Iran's fragmented decision making, the US lacked the capacity to communicate directly and, especially with the correct coalition of multiple autonomous actors. In fact direct contact was almost impossible after the dismissal of Bazargan and Yazdi. The US thus employed two overlapping active levers: the active influence of third countries or parties and the perceived ability to establish alternative channels with access to the other's leadership whereby they attempted to persuade Khomeini to release the hostages. Key among the third parties were the Vatican, private clergy, Islamic countries such as Algeria, Turkey as well as Austria, Switzerland, the Red Cross, the UN and the Socialist International. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) became also embroiled in an initiative which eventually led to the release of the black and most women hostages (Moses 1996:32-34; Keesing's Contemporary Archives 1980:30205, 30529-30535).

The active lever deployed by the US with considerable success from its own point of view was the perceived ability to grant or withhold economic, technical and military aid. For example, almost immediately after the start of the crisis the US stopped all foreign and military aid to Iran. Furthermore, when it became known that Iran planned to withdraw its foreign assets from US banks these assets and deposits were frozen by Executive Order 12170 (Moses 1996:34-35; Carswell & Davis 1985a:175). Carswell and Davis (1985b:205) and Moses (1996:36) confirmed that the freeze entangled economics and politics and linked the release of the hostages with the release of Iranian assets. The final active lever was the perceived willingness of the US to go to war. According to Moses (1996:34) this was not crucial, given Khomeini's conviction that the US lacked the capacity to wage war.

Iran had three active leverages that impacted significantly, outside Iran on the US environment and even beyond.

Iran's active levers

- Perceived trade opportunities.
- Perceived vulnerability to exploitation of domestic political dissatisfaction.
- Perceived transnational appeal of an ideology.

To counter the US active lever, which was applied by imposing a ban on economic, technical and military aid, Iran gained certain economic opportunities because oil companies attempted to gain exemptions from the economic freezes, described by Carswell and Davis (1985a:192) as a “mini-economic war”. While companies were eventually told to comply with official US policy, regulations governing these transactions were vague and open to legal challenge. The Militant Students also used the perceived threat of vulnerability to the exploitation of domestic political dissatisfaction to appeal directly to US students to expand their demonstrations. The Students’ activities gained momentum after the release of the black hostages since Khomeini used this opportunity to address the racial divide in the US. US internal and international agendas concerning Iran began to overlap increasingly showing how closely these levels were in Iranian politics. Iran also successfully exploited the perceived transnational appeal of an ideology as active lever since the Iranian embassy crisis initially generated a great deal of sympathy throughout the Muslim world. The event in Iran even prompted a series of attacks by militant groups on US embassies in Pakistan, Libya and Kuwait between November and December 1979. Apart from the destruction of US buildings and the killing of personnel, its most strategically important effect was that it forced the withdrawal of more than 900 US officials from sensitive areas while the hostage crisis was in progress. The influence of this active lever thus not only affected, but disrupted US activities throughout the region until well after the crisis (Saunders 1985b:90-91).

c) Three negotiating attempts

As part of the US strategy, as illustrated in *Figure 5.1*, three key attempts were initiated, but contrary to customary US behaviour, all these actions were indirect and directed through intermediaries since Khomeini had ordered his officials not to talk to the US (Saunders 1985b:76-77). Although this directive was followed, an indirect telephone

dialogue was conducted with “no-body” on the Iranian side, but with key Iranian officials actually listening, but not responding. The reason for the perplexity of the US about the Iranian leadership was directly related to Khomeini’s resolve to safeguard the revolution. Subsequently, the identities of members of the Revolutionary Council as new government were kept secret and the West thus could not deal with Iran except through either the “front” of the Bazargan government, before its dismissal, or later with its more moderate foreign ministers. The US, however, used Switzerland, who provided its good offices to the US after the release of the Afro-American hostages. Its foreign minister and ambassador both carried sensitive messages from the US to key Iranians, while the Swiss, after the official break in Iran-US relations, also formally became the protecting power of US interests in Iran (Saunders 1985b:89).

Effectively therefore, the Iran-US interactions amounted to a deliberate contradiction, creating an illusion for the benefit of the West, which reflects the Iranian principle of *taqiyyah* and its non-religious equivalent (*kitmān*), as forms of keeping one’s original convictions secret (see above). On a more practical level, Iran’s instability was caused by the replacement, in all the Iranian institutions of non-*Tawhidi* men with a *Tawhidi* leadership (those accepting only the dominance of God) (Hussain 1985:136-137). The Islamisation of Iran and not the hostage issue was therefore the most crucial task.

Since much has been written about this period, only key aspects of each initiative will be explored. It will be done sequentially, with the pattern of analysis repeating itself in an attempt to illustrate respectively which levers were employed, and above all, to indicate what role Khomeini played in each attempt. An assessment - based on fact or inference – of Iranian negotiating style, with specific reference to *Phases I, II and III*, will form part of the conclusion.

i) The use of presidential emissaries

This first US attempt, which followed immediately after the start of the crisis, proceeded on the principle of active influence of parties under US control. Two US emissaries

(Ramsey Clarke and William Miller) were sent to Iran with a personal letter from President Carter, intending to establish contact with “anyone who could speak for Iran” (Saunders 1985b:74). This was the first US attempt at addressing two key issues: how to normalise US-Iran relations and the release of the hostages. The emissaries had personal telephonic contact with some members of the Revolutionary Council (including Behesti) and even with the embassy while attempting to deliver the letter to Khomeini. However, since Khomeini banned key Iranian officials to meet directly or officially with the emissaries, this letter was never delivered. The mission failed primarily because of the intense media coverage, which led to Khomeini’s ban on contact since Iran feared that it would be seen as succumbing to US pressure (Saunders 1985b:74-76).

ii) The PLO initiative

The PLO’s relations with Iranian militant groups apparently dated back to pre-Revolutionary days when Iranians were provided with training outside Iran (Zabih 1982a:47-48; Ioannides 1980:14). Allegations of Palestinian involvement in the takeover were based on this fact but their involvement could never be proven. However, several documents retrieved by the Militant Students from the embassy showed that, while there was intense rivalry between the PLO and the more radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), it was the PLO which finally created a revolutionary and ideological convergence with the Iranians. This made the PLO ideally suited as a mediator. While there could have been positive spin-offs for the PLO, it nonetheless clearly indicated that it wanted no *quid pro quo* from the US. The PLO was acting on its own behalf and not for the US. Moreover, it would talk directly to Khomeini (“Documents from the US Espionage Den 1979); Saunders 1985b:78).

Three contrasting views exist regarding the role and impact of the PLO initiative. Moses (1996:46-47) remarks on the close relationship between the PLO and Iran and the fact that the PLO was willing to intercede on behalf of the US. He also notes the PLO view of the hostage issue as a “self-contained” issue and that it wanted no rewards from the US. Despite the close ties between them and Khomeini, the latter questioned the PLO’s *bona*

fides, refusing to believe that the PLO was mediating on its own behalf, or to gain future advantage for Iran. He believed that the PLO had been deceived by the US. The Militant Students also refused to talk to the PLO representatives who nevertheless interacted with Khomeini and the Revolutionary Council, but ended their mediation after approximately two months when they judged that the internal situation was too chaotic to gain results. Smit (1981:193) and McFadden *et al.* (1981:44-45) regard the PLO's role in this "back-channel" as effective, but Saunders (1985b:79), Turner (1991:32) and Stempel (1981:229) consider it rather inadequate, maintaining that the release of the women and Afro-American hostages on 18 and 19 November 1979 was the result of a unilateral decision by Khomeini. The rhetoric illustrated that it was a goodwill gesture since the release came just after Thanksgiving, but at the same time it was intended as a divisive policy instrument given the focus on garnering support from the "US's oppressed minority" communities. Ebtekar (2000:89) concurs, emphasising that Khomeini "requested" the release of the hostages after the Militant Students had "processed" (interrogated) them to ensure that they were not involved in espionage. Numerous statements by Khomeini, referring to the US embassy as a "nest of spies" or the possibility to put the hostages on trial as spies according to Islamic Law, emphasised Iran's fear of espionage by foreign powers (Kifner 1979:A1, A12). Iran's approach illustrated how Iran applied a tacit lever (perceived sensitivity to public attitudes) and how Tehran failed because the hostage issue did not impact significantly on internal US racial politics. While the PLO initiative apparently failed in the general mission of gaining the release of all the hostages, it stressed the essential truth about negotiating with Iran, namely that Khomeini had to be the focus of all future negotiating initiatives.

iii) Interaction with the Iranian "moderates"

These interactions can be divided into two distinct periods. The first covered a seven-month period from mid-November 1979 until March / April 1980 when a breakdown in negotiations led to a futile military attack and a stalemate lasting until September 1980 when Iran elected a Majlis that could negotiate the release of the hostages. Throughout this period third-party mediators, such as the UN, the UN Commission and a group of

French lawyers tried to establish an alternative channel to the Iranian leadership on behalf of the US. All attempts failed, however, because according to Saunders (1985b:96) all actions were essentially aimed at proving that the US was “doing something”. Everyone was in fact waiting for Khomeini. *Phase II* ended when Iran contacted the US via intermediaries to start negotiations about the hostages.

Despite all the available detail the key issues that deserve mentioning regarding these interactions include the disregard by the US of the valuable lessons learned from the PLO initiative, namely that Khomeini was pivotal in Iranian decision making. In terms of US interactions with Foreign Minister Bani-Sadr and his successor, Sadegh Ghotzadegh, the US refused to realise the limitations of their respective power bases, as well as its inability at the time to subjugate Iran once more (Moses 1996:52). While this period also saw the exchange of detailed US and Iranian demands, the two countries’ approaches were markedly different (Saunders 1985b:84-87). While the US wanted the release of the hostages as a prerequisite for any discussion, Iran’s demands were always contingent upon the release of the hostages as the final step of an agreement. Khomeini also added another constraint, namely the return of the Shah as a prerequisite. Since this issue was directly linked with the Iranian view of justice, all negotiations stalled when the idea of a trial also resurfaced.

The UN (Secretary General Kurt Waldheim) was keen to interact with the Iranians, but this desire was not necessarily reciprocated. While the Revolutionary Council wanted discussions and a visit, Khomeini rejected the idea. When Waldheim was allowed to visit he ignored advice from Ambassador Hoveyda (1999:8-9), for example, who warned him about the futility of the exercise. According to Hoveyda neither the UN nor the Americans understood that the visit of the Secretary General was actually perceived in Iran as a victory for Iran’s hostage taking and that this perception strengthened the position of the Militant Students who therefore increased the urgency of their demands. The visit was openly used as a negotiating method. Photographs of Waldheim and the Shah set the mood, with the result that he was exposed to mobs and the sight of mutilated bodies during a visit to the *Cemetery of the Martyrs* (Saunders 1985b:101, 109). This

carefully orchestrated *ta'zyeh* (passion play) was intended to divert the UN mediation. Despite the failure of the visit, Moses (1996:115) and Saunders (1985b:119) note that Waldheim made two key discoveries during his interaction with the Revolutionary Council: that Ghotzadegh had been designated by them as a “liaison” with the Militant Students; and that increased US economic pressure would result in a rapid trial of the hostages.

A brief period followed where Ghotzadegh tried to use his “close relationship” with Khomeini to solve the crisis. His strategies and scenarios were manifold and included promises to set up direct talks with the US, a proposal to use two French lawyers (Christian Bourguet and Hector Villalon) as cut-outs between himself and the US, and finally the UN Commission, which was intended to pursue a gradualist policy, namely to hear Iran’s grievances and visit the hostages. Characteristic of all these attempts was the continuing zig-zag pattern of a relatively unfocused process that was severely constrained by regular Iranian changes to text and Khomeini’s intransigence. The UN Commission’s attempt was an excellent example of both constraints. After much planning and agreement regarding the mandate, Iran changed the language or terms of reference of the original agreement and then - while the Commission was airborne - Khomeini again changed the rules when he announced that “only the elected representatives of the people would decide the hostage issue” (Saunders 1985b:130). The issue thus stalled in March 1980 because Khomeini overruled the possible transfer of the hostages to government control and the Revolutionary Council failed to reach consensus. Consequently, the *status quo* remained with the majority of the hostages under the control of the Militant Students and with three senior US officials in custody at the Foreign Ministry. With the negotiations stalling, the US attempted a failed military assault in April 1980. Khomeini interpreted this failure as proof of God’s divine intervention (Mackey 1998:307). The hostage negotiations went into limbo although the US continued its campaign in all international forums. All the interlocutors were waiting, first for the election of a Majlis, and secondly to see what would be the outcome of the *Phase III* negotiations. In retrospect it becomes clear that *Phase II* was nothing but an interlude in preliminary

bargaining, with Khomeini setting the pace as the Islamic Republic settled and Khomeini used the hostages to maximise his internal advantage.

5.3.1.3 *Phase III*: The end game: involvement of German and Algerian mediators

a) Changes in the negotiating environment

Phase III (initiation of Iran-US negotiations) resulted from a number of changes in the negotiating environment. Negotiation in *Phase III* was a gradualist process in which initial German-Iranian tacit-bargaining cleared the way for Algerian mediation. The phase started in September 1980 when Iranian officials contacted the German Ambassador in Tehran to inform him of Iran's willingness to discuss the future of the hostages, and concluded in January 1981 with their release. The main reasons for Iran's attitudinal change were closely linked to alterations in both its *external* and *internal* environment. According to Slim (1992:217), Saunders (1985c:291) and Moses (1996:253, 255), the following factors influenced the Iranian decision: the death of the Shah; completion of the Islamic institutional process and the establishment of the theocracy. Moreover, Iran's fears of a repeat of the 1953 *coup* had subsided; while the hostages had lost their relevance as "pawns" in the internal struggle. There was also growing concern about the cost to Iran's foreign image of holding the hostages – especially after Prime Minister Rajai experienced Iran's isolation at the UN in October 1980 and the fear that the incoming Reagan administration would deal more harshly with Iran. Khomeini's deteriorating health apparently also played a part although this information is disputed by some. The Iraqi invasion or "Imposed War" added to the urgency of finding a solution since the hostages were the key if the issue of the outstanding US deliveries of military and other aid to Iran was to be addressed.

b) The "unknown" German mediation

According to Sallinger (1982:267-270), the key feature of this stage of the mediation was that Gerhardt Ritzel, the German ambassador in Tehran, initiated an unilateral process

unbeknown to the US, based on the contacts he had cultivated with the moderate Iranian opposition and the *ulamā* since 1978. Due to Iran's admiration for Germany he was respected and given access to their inner circle. After the hostage taking Ritzel was even offered the chance of an "audience" with Khomeini, but since these interviews usually turned out to be monologues with no possibility of dialogue, Ritzel requested "a free discussion" with his own interpreter in attendance. This was refused. However, he reached Khomeini indirectly via the *ulamā* and they carried the message that the "ungentle treatment of foreign envoys" transgressed the Qu'ranic principles of justice and truth, principles that Khomeini held dearly. Ritzel's message resulted from debates with Islamic scholars and their acknowledgement that hostage taking violates the *Sharia*.

Ritzel however got the specific opportunity to assist and mediate when he met Sadegh Tabatabai, a State Secretary in the Iranian government and brother-in-law to Ahmad Khomeini, the only surviving son of the Imam. Tabatabai was furthermore married to a German woman and German educated, and while the rest of Khomeini's entourage spent their exile in France, he stayed in Germany (Sallinger 1982:265, 271). The bond of a common language and Ritzel's interest in the revolution thus created a situation of mutual trust and friendship. Ritzel only informed the US in general terms that a dialogue had started and requested them not to attack Iran a second time.

The critical elements of *Phase III* were decided upon in this period when Ritzel, apparently without official sanction, and Tabatabai (whose mandate remained unclear) independently created the framework for the Algerian-led mediation that followed. According to Sallinger (1982:271), Ritzel explained to Tabatabai the three *non-negotiable* positions of the US, namely no return of the Shah's money without legal process; that Iran also had no legal right to sue the US diplomats who had served in Iran; and a formal apology from the US, which was issued only on April 19, 2000 when the then US Secretary State, Madeleine Albright apologised for the first time for the CIA's involvement in the 1953 *coup* when she referred to it as a "setback in the political development of Iran" (McAdams 2000:2). Ritzel and Tabatabai reached agreement on four issues, namely: guarantees against future US involvement in Iran's internal affairs;

the return of the Shah's wealth by legal means; the cancellation of all claims by the US against Iran; and the return of embargoed funds. Tabatabai eventually forwarded these issues or conditions to Ahmad Khomeini. The latter passed the framework to his father who accepted the conditions but insisted on procedure and acceptance by the Majlis, who were sure to comply with Khomeini's decision. Two Commissions were respectively created on 14 and 15 September 1980 to deal with the hostage issue: one that would deliberate the fate of the hostages, linked to the Foreign Affairs Commission and headed by *hujjat al islam* Khomeiniha, the Militant Students' Prayer Leader and the so-called Behzad Nabavi Commission in the Prime Minister's Office. Nabavi was a Minister of State for Executive Affairs who effectively became the "sole Iranian negotiator" at the end (Slim 1992:216; Saunders 1985c:292).

When the German-Iranian guidelines were relayed via Germany to the US they were met with disbelief and a request for clarification. Moses (1996:255) emphasised the ongoing scepticism in the Carter administration, noting that what actually changed was not the Iranian negotiating position, but that the US could finally deal with a relatively settled revolutionary government and Iranian representatives with government credentials. The change was accentuated when it was suddenly but directly clarified by Khomeini on November 12, 1980 during his Message to the Pilgrims when he repeated the same four issues as *conditions* for the release of the hostages (Khomeini 1981:306).

Germany played a final role as host to the only two face-to-face meetings between an Iranian official (Tabatabai) and the US negotiator, Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher. In the process it provided the good offices of Foreign Minister Genscher, and by changing venues Germany also "accidentally" excluded the greater part of the US delegation. Consequently, the meeting took place in a controlled environment where Tabatabai was not overwhelmed by a large group of Americans. This created the opportunity - as noted by Sick (1985b:26), Sallinger (1982:273) and Moses 1996:257) - for the various officials to agree, not on the detailed technical US or Western bound legalistic approach, but on an approach based on broad principles, which was consistent with the Iranian method of negotiations.

The German mediation can be described as successful since it created an environment that was conducive to future mediation. It also illustrated the perceived leverage of third party influence and the perceived ability to establish alternative channels with access to the other's leadership, which Germany employed. According to Sallinger (1982:276) this process was stalled, however, by the outbreak of the "Imposed War", which Iran perceived as a US conspiracy that was indirectly intended to gain the freedom of the hostages. The timing of the Iraqi invasion and their huge US arsenal gave credence to some of the Iranian arguments, if viewed from an Iranian perspective. As a result the Majlis announced their decision to "freeze any discussion on the hostages".

c) Algerian mediation

Three issues will be explored in covering this part of Phase III, which is broader than just the Algerian mediation effort. The main focus will be on the Algerian involvement and especially the reasons for its involvement, its key roles in tacit-bargaining; the mediation phase; and its role as guarantor of the Iran-US Agreements. Attention will also be given to the respective Iranian and US negotiating positions and the special procedures developed by the US as the process moved towards ratification by the Majlis.

Although a number of alternative interlocutors such as Syria, Libya, the PLO and Switzerland were also initially considered, Algeria's selection, according to Slim (1992:206-210) and Carnevale, Yeo Siah Cha, Wan and Fraidan (2004:285), was primarily based on the following: its excellent international credentials as a negotiator; its culture and revolutionary background and specifically the Iranians' respect for the Algerian revolutionary leaders and their revolution; the truly neutral position of Algeria, which neither criticised nor endorsed the embassy takeover; it had acted previously as mediator between the US and the South Vietnamese Liberation Front in the matter of prisoner release and was thus one of the few countries in the world in the 1980s with good relations with both the US and Iran. When the US broke off diplomatic relations with Iran in April 1980, therefore, it was not surprising that Iran requested Algeria to represent Iranian interests in the US.

The key problem at this time was to break the stalemate created by the “Imposed War” and reactivating negotiations. An opportunity presented itself when Prime Minister Rajai visited the UN in October 1980. What followed can be described as a form of tacit bargaining conducted by Algeria. Although Rajai refused the opportunity to meet with US officials, Algeria was approached earlier by the US and therefore used the occasion to stress the disadvantage of Iran’s isolation with Rajai. Additional talks followed during a stop-over in Algiers where the same message was emphasised to Iran. Consequently, Iran accepted Algerian mediation, a decision that Algeria communicated to the US on 2 November 1980 (Sallinger 1982:277; Owen 1999:57-58).

Before discussing the mediation effort, the US and Iranian negotiating positions should be reviewed. According to Slim (1992:210, 214) and Heikal (1982:190-191), the dispute involved power asymmetry, pitting a superpower against a developing country and former ally. The US was also a stable Western democracy and Iran a newfound religious theocracy. Both were ignorant of these facts, however. Iran at the time knew or cared little about international law, as perceived by the West, while the US had no understanding and little interest in Islamic religious law and the traditions of Shi’ism.

When Iran designated Algeria as mediator, the Iranian negotiating framework had already been defined by Khomeini, and the Majlis had accepted the four basic conditions. This constrained the negotiating manoeuvrability of Nabavi, as the sole Iranian negotiator, and the Nabavi Commission since he could not stray from the Imam’s principles. Iranian latitude was thus limited and it either wanted a *Yes* or a *No* document as an answer. The Iranians therefore preferred to sustain a considerable financial loss rather than oppose Khomeini (Slim 1992:216). While the Majlis and the Students remained to the end at loggerheads about the control of the hostages the process was slowly moving forward.

In the US it was finally realised that the hostages had lost their role as an instrument in the internal Iranian struggle, and that the revolution was consolidated. Negotiations were therefore possible, given that Khomeini and the opposing power centres were in accord on this issue (Saunders 1985b:82, 1985c:290). Since the US had immediately accepted

the first two Iranian conditions, concerning political and military intervention in Iran and the release of Iranian assets (only the dollar amounts remained an issue), only the cancellation of all US claims against Iran and the return of embargoed funds actually had to be negotiated (Slim 1992:216). Another issue was a timeline for the release of the hostages. As part of the original Tabatabai-Ritzel framework (cf. 5.3.1.3), a clear timeline with 4 November 1980 as final date was provided for the release of the hostages. It was also symbolic since it was a year after the Militant Students occupied the US embassy and it coincided with the US presidential elections. President Carter's poor showing in the polls would have made failure to secure the release a towering humiliation, but the final release was nevertheless deliberately delayed by Iran until the night of the inauguration on 20 January 1981 (McFadden *et al.* 1981:275, 276, 300). This showed the Iranians' ignorance about the US presidential system and the timing of the inauguration of the incoming Reagan administration. The many allegations regarding a "deal" between the Iranians and the Reagan camp to delay the release so that the new administration could reap maximum political advantages from such a delayed strategy (colloquially known as the "*October Surprise*") has never been proved (Moses 1996:354-366).

It was up to Algeria to cross this divide. They did it with skill, and by staying neutral. Algeria made it clear from the start that its mandate would be mediation and *not* arbitration. According to Owen (1985:308-309) and Saunders (1985a:51), Algeria mainly acted as *passive* intermediary or go-betweens, always keeping the negotiation process secret. The Algerian mediators would thoroughly "interrogate" the conditions set by the Iranian Majlis and the respective answers of the US to gain a detailed understanding of the US position. This process was reversed in dealing with the Iranians. A member of the Algerian mediation team later described the intricate interactions as "one extended seminar". "In Tehran we explained to the Iranians the US legal, banking and political systems. In Washington we explained the politics of revolutionary Iran". While they did guide or make some suggestions to the US so that issues could be clarified, the Algerians never formulated anything themselves. Thus, while the US did the drafting, Algeria only provided an external check, sensitive to the Iranian ideological requirements, which sometimes required redrafting or changes. An example was the sensitive issue of non-

intervention in Iranian affairs. In the first draft the US just pledged “*that it is the policy of the US not to intervene...*,” but an Algerian suggestion to insert the words “*and from now on will be*” before the word “policy” was accepted and probably even seen as an apology by Iran (The Algiers Accords 1999:A-59; Cohen *et al.* 1981:894; Sick 1985b:31).

During the mediation, which primarily dealt with the clerically staffed Nabavi Commission, an alternative Iranian structure also suddenly appeared, headed by Ali Nobari of the Iranian Central Bank, which even had the support of Western lawyers. Although the US freeze of 1979 had irrevocably linked the financial and political processes, the two negotiating processes of 1981 were initially conducted independently, entirely with the objective, pursued by Nobari, of recovering Iranian funds from the US. At first the two structures overlapped since the Nobavi Commission’s focus was increasingly financial, but then these two processes - the one a private financial and the other a politically driven negotiating process - merged when the US realised that a possible separate deal on the financial issue might leave the hostage issue unsolved. The US kept the financial leverage, but could not stop the haggling that is so typical of the Iranian *bazaar* driven economy and politics (Carswell & Davis 1985b:205).

The mediation continued its zig-zag pattern around Christmas 1980 when the outrageous financial demands made by Iran almost led to a total breakdown and the withdrawal of Algeria. The key remained the creation of a face-saving formula that would remain within the boundaries of Iran’s four conditions. It was clear from the respective notes since the beginning of the mediation that Iran was always dissatisfied with either the detail, or the lack of detail, specifically regarding the dollar amounts at issue in the Escrow Agreement, which went from outrageous to below what Iran publicly demanded. Apart from having to respond to Iran, it was always the US who was looking for a new formula or shifting previous positions. All the staff work (drafting, legal and financial) was also done by the US and not by Iran (Sick 1985b:34, 49-50). Since Iran required a *Yes-No* document, the US resorted to the strategy of developing two documents, one simply saying *Yes* to Iran, and another detailing how the US would respond and what it needed to meet its requirements (Saunders 1985c:290). However, the mediation stalled

on the issue of the Shah's assets despite agreement by both parties to a "mutually claims-settlement procedure". Even this obstacle was overcome after some intense wrangling just before Algeria ended its mediation on the US deadline of 16 January 1981.

The Algerians' mediation, though somewhat unorthodox, can be described as successful since they used almost no leverage and acted strictly as intermediaries. If leverage is to be considered, then the effectiveness of Algerian activities is best expressed as perceived *ability to establish alternative channels with access to another (country's) leadership*. In the final mediation period Algerian mediation did become active when Iran refused to sign an agreement with the US. Algeria thus agreed to a US proposal of "declarations" to be issued by the government of Algeria and signed by the disputing parties. The Bank of Algiers was to act as guarantor for the financial exchanges and the Escrow Agreement (The Algiers Accords: 1999:A-65-A-67). This procedure was finally accepted, while Iran and the US also agreed in the Escrow Agreement to provide an amount of US\$7.95 billion, a sharp decrease from its public demand of US\$9.5 billion, as part of the mutually agreed claims-settlement procedure. Iran paid the said amount (received from the US) into an account to settle all US claims, thus off-setting the Iranian loans from all the US and other financial institutions collectively. Bowden (2006:577) notes in this regard "we're getting back what they took from us and giving back ... what we took from them." The US also agreed to freeze the Shah's assets.

Of vital importance was that Iran used the possibility of a trial of the hostages as an instrument to keep the mediation process under pressure. It also used the media to force the pace when negotiations stalled. However, Iran simultaneously publicly accepted a huge financial loss when the mediation concluded (Carswell & Davis 1985b:225). This is difficult to explain, but can most likely be linked to the Iranian martyrdom concept. The cost to Iran was totally acceptable since Khomeini claimed it as a victory and a comprehensive humiliation of the Great Satan, particularly President Carter who in his 1978 New Year's message on a visit to Tehran, while Iran was already imploding into chaos, toasted [the Shah] and Iran "as an island of stability" (Hoveyda 1999:32-33). Khomeini also used both the Majlis and its Speaker to sell a relatively poor agreement, in

financial terms, to Iranian radicals and the public at large. While detail is lacking it appears as if the Iranians employed a process that reminds strongly of Putnam's (1988:447) method of *synergistic issue linkage*, which is a process linking unpopular themes such as the agreement with the popular theme of humiliation of the US. Unpopular projects becomes in such fashion part of widely acceptable official policy.

5.4 CONCLUSION

It is essential, since the present dissertation focuses on Iranian negotiation style and methods, to emphasise that the 1979 revolution brought important changes. While the attention of pre-Islamic Iran was on the foreign policies of equilibrium, negative equilibrium and positive equilibrium, the Islamic state diametrically switched to issues such as anti-imperialism and support for the "oppressed" (Savory 1990:35-67). The key change, however, was the adoption of a religious-driven diplomatic negotiating style. In a syncretisation of Iranian traditions and Islamic concepts a new diplomatic style and vernacular were created. Telling examples were the marches around the embassy and the mob attacks aimed at Waldheim, which were extended and carefully orchestrated *ta'zyeh* reflecting the age-old ritual of *tabarra* and linking it with Iran's victory over imperialism. Since the foreign powers had traditionally ignored the Iranian concepts of justice and truth (the principle of *haqq*) and Iran has created a new value system based on these concepts, the hostages became directly linked with this issue. Furthermore, negotiations were not possible until the negotiating environment, both internally and externally, changed and mediation became possible. The usage of the Iranian concepts of *taqiyyah* and its non-religious equivalent (*kitmān*) as well as *khod'eh* were also illustrated in this chapter, either directly or by inference. While Khomeini had banned the usage of *taqiyyah* by the *faqih*, the current use of *kitmān* in worldly affairs was amply illustrated by Khomeini's leadership style as he stayed aloof, created various non-*Tawhidi* political structures like the Bazargan government as he enhanced his political powerbase. His use of half-truths and subterfuge or regular re-interpretations as he overruled his many opponents (as shown in the discussion of Phase III, *Figure 5.1*) can be seen as *khod'eh*, while his creation of the Islamic state based on the concept of the *faqih* was essentially an

example of *ijtihad*, which permits Muslims either to adhere to the dominant ideology of their sect or to follow their own private interpretation of these sects and interpretations (Venkatraman 2007:237). Another key influence (cf. Taheri 1987:196-197) was the discovery of the value of holding Western hostages. While hostage taking has for centuries been an integral part of political life in the Middle East, the sudden realisation of the “weakness” of the US to secure the hostages quickly, either through negotiations or force, started a trend and indirectly provided small countries and groups with a capacity to project their influence in excess of their abilities.

It is also clear that the narrative of chapter 5 and *Figure 5.1* amount to a definitive response to the two key questions raised (cf. 1.4), namely: “who” constitutes the ultimate decision making unit and “how” is the negotiation process organised as well as what factors influenced this process. The earlier assessment made in chapter 2.5 proved to be correct, and Putnam’s key concepts (1988), such as the win-set and the role of a chief negotiator, were generally not in evidence around the 1979 US hostage crisis, while elements of the theory of Hermann *et al.*, such as the competing leadership types were found to be present. Considered as a whole, it appears that the US and Iranian approaches to negotiations were markedly different in a number of ways:

- The US attempts and rhetoric were primarily legalistic and were calculated to “force” Iran to negotiate.
- The US was highly flexible and was forced to do all the staff work during the final mediation.
- *Phases I* and *II* were in a sense an interregnum, and the US was just kept busy, while *Phase III* was the actual negotiating phase, and even here non-US mediators did the tacit bargaining. Where the US did excel was in the final part of this phase with the creation of special procedures and unique negotiating formulas.
- There were only two face-to-face meetings between Iranian and US officials during the hostage crisis. The rest of the interactions was indirect and conducted through intermediaries. Even the final Algiers accords were not signed with each other, but with Algeria as the mediator guaranteeing the accords.

- Iran was unwilling to negotiate and would set the pace and timeline and its rhetoric were religious and ideological.
- Although Khomeini unfailingly demonstrated his pivotal role in Iranian politics, the US never fully grasped this fact or its implications.
- Iranian negotiating latitude was limited by Khomeini's acceptance of the four conditions. (It has since become an increasing problem to by-pass the constraints imposed by Khomeini's ruling without betraying their content or the revolution).
- To broaden Iran's freedom of movement it continuously threatened to try the hostages in open court, went public with portions of the "secret" mediations, procrastinated and expressed general dissatisfaction with the US proposals.

The intensity of the negotiating process emphasised how little Islamic Iran and the US knew about each other. While chapter 5 emphasised these differences, it may thus be appropriate to conclude with the rather negative views of one of the hostages, Bruce Laigen, (cf. Walker & Harris 1995:21), who points out the highly adversarial nature of Iranian negotiations: that negotiating positions had to be asserted forcibly in the face of considerable intransigence; interlocking relationships relating to all aspects of an issue had to be repeatedly developed; performance had to be the *sine qua non* - and not mere statements at every stage; mutuality had to be stressed since the cultivation of will was a waste of time; and the negotiator had to be prepared for the possibility of frequent breakdowns since Iranian negotiators would resist any form of rational negotiating.

CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDY II:

THE IRAN-E3/EU NUCLEAR DIALOGUE: 2003-2006

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter tracks the nuclear dialogue between Iran and the E3/EU, the latter being represented by three countries of the European Union (EU), namely France, Britain and Germany.²⁰ The analysis is restricted to the four-year period from 2003 to 2006 since the nuclear dialogue between Iran and the international community was largely outsourced by the US during this period. The E3/EU fulfilled the brokering role due to their close economic relations with Tehran since the US, after the cessation of official relations between the US and Iran after the 1979 revolution and the bitterness of the US hostage crisis, refused to deal directly with Iran. Consequently, the US acted only as a proxy player whose presence became increasingly tangible as the negotiations zig-zagged between deadlocks. The negotiations also frequently included supplementary interventions by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN and UN Security Council (UNSC) and increasingly direct pressure on the Iranian government.

The development of the Shah's nuclear programme will also be contextualised with reference to the key principles it generated for Iran's nuclear policy and provided the foundation for the current Iranian nuclear programme. The main object, however, is to gain final clarity about the questions posed in Chapter 1.4, namely:

- How do Iranian diplomats negotiate?
- Who is the "ultimate decision making unit?"
- How was the nuclear dialogue organised and what factors influenced these processes?

These questions will be answered first of all by analysing the first or ultimate question through analysis of the other two. Then question two will be addressed by analysing Iran's formal and informal decision making structures or networks (discussed in section

²⁰Despite the incorrect usage by the Iranian and European media and academic establishment, E3/EU is the correct official reference used in official documents of Iran, the EU and the IAEA.

6.4) as it guides Iran's nuclear policy. While question three will be answered by analysing the Iran-E3/EU negotiations, it is important to emphasise that the focus will not be on a detailed dissection of the Iranian nuclear dossier, but on the various modalities that have been identified throughout this dissertation. This links directly with Iran's primarily religiously driven diplomacy and negotiating techniques such as *taqiyyah* or *kitman*, *tanfih*, *khod'eh* and *tae'arof*, which are discussed in the previous chapters.

6.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

6.2.1 Nuclear policy under the Shah (1957-1979)

The development of the Shah's nuclear programme falls outside the scope of this study, but some brief background notes are required to understand the Islamic nuclear programme. According to INFCIRC/657 of 15 September (IAEA 2005:4), Sahimi (2004:2), Kibaroglu (2007:225-226) and Ramazani (1982b:60), Shah Reza Pahlavi's nuclear programme was started in 1957 with active US assistance when Iran and the US signed an Agreement for Cooperation Concerning the Civil Uses of Atoms. Afterwards, the US agreed to provide technical assistance for the Iranian programme and leased "several kilograms of enriched uranium" to Iran. The symbiotic strategic military relationship that existed between the US and the Pahlavi dynasty since the 1950s was thus extended into a "commercial bi-national conglomerate" to include the nuclear terrain (Bill 1988:204).

According to Etemad (1987:212) and IAEA INFCIRC/140 of 22 April 1970, the Shah was the sole nuclear policy decision maker. It was his decision to elevate Iran to the status of a nuclear power and to become a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in March 1970. The Shah also established the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI)²¹ in 1974 with the mandate to plan for and work on the complete full fuel cycle²² including the generation of 23 000 MW electricity by nuclear power plants (IAEA

²¹ While the literature refers to the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI) as the "IAEO", I have adopted AEOI as it is the form used by the IAEA, except when quoting from sources.

²² "Full fuel cycle" at the time focused primarily on uranium exploration and mining, conversion and nuclear waste management related to the Bushehr nuclear facility (Ghannadi-Maragheh 2002:7). The definition was broadened in recent years relating to Iran to include uranium mining, uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing.

INFCIRC/657 2005:4; Lotfian 2008:159). His simultaneous announcement of plans to build 23 nuclear plants throughout Iran from 1974 until 1994 also clearly indicated the existence of a long-term nuclear development plan (Kibaroglu 2007:225-231). The Iranian programme was supported not only by the US but by several European and Latin American countries (e.g. Britain, Italy, France and Germany) who transferred nuclear-scientific knowledge and expertise to Iran or assisted with the construction of nuclear projects in Iran (Quillen 2002:17; Bahgat 2006:308). Germany and France played key roles in training Iranian students and scientists in Iran. As a result there is currently a massive and highly visible Western legacy in the current Islamic nuclear programme. West Germany was primarily important in the construction of the initial nuclear power reactors at Bushehr, the site of the current reactor. German construction ended in 1979, leaving the project unfinished. It was destroyed by Iraqi counter-proliferation strikes during the Iran-Iraq War (Kibaroglu 2007:231; Venter 2005:63).

6.2.1.1 Key drivers

a) Security

The principal driving force behind the Shah's nuclear programme on the security level was imperial Iran's perception of the threat posed by regional powers like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and mainly Iraq and the increasing nuclear capabilities of Israel and India (Quillen 2002:18; Kibaroglu 2007:229). The existence of Israel's nuclear capability was even then an "open secret" as noted by Cohen (2006:38). While Iran and Israel were strategic partners at the time, the Israeli victories during the Israeli-Arab conflicts of 1967 and 1973 gained the Shah's attention and hence his announcement in 1974 that he was launching "a more comprehensive" nuclear power programme. India, which was perceived as a possible provider of nuclear aid, was seen at the time as a serious regional rival to Iran. Etemad (1987:204) notes in this regard that India's first nuclear tests brought a change in US-Iranian relations since the US began to review its policy *vis-à-vis* the non-proliferation regime. More serious for Iran, however, was Iraq's attempts to gain nuclear know-how, ostensibly to counter the Israeli nuclear programme, but actually to match or surpass Iran as evidenced by its agreement to purchase the Osirak research reactor from France in 1976.

b) National prestige

Imperial Iran proudly claimed to be a “continuous monarchy” and the successor of a dynasty that was 2500 years old. The Shah’s grandiose nuclear programme was directly linked with his vision of a “Great Civilisation” (*Tamaddon-e Bozorg*) or his plan to elevate Iran to the status of a major regional power. Nuclear development was thus integral to Iranian national prestige and pride. As a *rentier* state (cf. 4.3.2.2), and due to the oil fluctuations of 1974, vast amounts of money became available for the expansion of Iran’s nuclear power capacity from 10 000 MW to 23 000 MW (Kibaroglu 2007:229).

6.2.1.2 The importance of the Shah’s programme

The Shah’s nuclear programme was vital because it laid the scientific foundation of the current programme and also identified key principles regarding reprocessing, while its initial covert character is still relevant in the current Iran-E3/EU nuclear dialogue.

i) The issue of reprocessing in Iran

Lotfian (2008:159) notes that the US was increasingly mistrustful of the Shah’s nuclear ambitions, while Kibaroglu (2007:229) observes that in its interaction with the Shah the US sought to keep control of, or if this was not possible, to establish international control over the uranium and reprocessing facilities in Iran. Iran however, only agreed to reprocess the US-derived plutonium in Iran. Reprocessing activities in Iran have since become a key principle even in the current Iran-E3/EU nuclear dialogue.

ii) The existence of a covert nuclear programme

Vaziri (1998:311) as well as Dueck and Takeyh (2007:190) note that the Shah’s nuclear programme was not only intended for nuclear power production, but also had its covert component. This view is disputed by Etemad (1987:212) as totally “absurd”, but his rejection does not necessarily deny the existence of a covert programme nor is it the last

word about the subject. Ardeshir Zahedi²³ came nearer to the mark by asserting that Iran's strategy at the time was aimed at creating what is known as "surge capacity", which consists of the know-how, the infrastructure and the required personnel to develop a nuclear military capability within a short time without actually doing so. The assumption within Iranian policymaking circles was that Iran should be in a position to develop and test a nuclear device within a timeframe of 18 months. Credence for this view is provided by Milani, McFaul and Diamond (2006:263), who claim that the Shah had a two-track approach in mind whereby Iran would join the NPT, while concurrently developing the capability to go nuclear if anyone in the region did so. Milani *et al.* (2006) argue that Iran's overt and covert ties with West Germany, France and South Africa (to secure supplies of yellow cake) were the primary reasons why the US started to curtail the Shah's nuclear programme. Tarock (2006:651) and Mayer (2004:7) present a different view, stating that the US did not require security guarantees from Iran in exchange for nuclear aid, but instead wanted Iran's support for its strategy to contain communism while ignoring the creation of a covert nuclear programme by the Shah.

6.3 THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAMME (1979 -2006)

6.3.1 Changing perceptions regarding nuclear technology – three stages

Iran's nuclear programme evolved through three distinct stages since the 1979 revolution. The first stage coincided with the first decade of the revolution, the consolidation of power by Ayatollah Khomeini and the Iran-Iraq War, reflecting two causal factors (cf. Dueck & Takeyh 2007:190; Kibaroglu 2007:233-234; Quillen 2002:19): the abrupt ending of all US and Western nuclear aid to Iran and the concurrent termination of the nuclear programme by the new theocratic leaders. Even a large project like Bushehr was scrapped because Ayatollah Khomeini in particular viewed the nuclear programme as *harām* (i.e. conduct that is immoral, un-Islamic prohibited under the *Sharia* and a waste of money). While there were some conflicting views in *ulamā* ranks about how nuclear technology should be used, most followed the Khomeinist principle of "Neither East, nor West, only the Islamic Republic of Iran". Consequently, the Iranian leadership first rejected everything that was Western like the nuclear programme. Then

²³ He was the Iranian ambassador to the US for a number of years and is the son of General Zahedi who replaced Mossadeq after the 1953 *coup*.

they initiated a brief and intense anti-modernization phase in Iran's domestic and foreign policies, which led to a brain-drain by Iranian scientists to foreign countries. Moreover, the Israeli anti-proliferation strikes, which destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak in 1981, reduced the urgency for nuclear development by Iran (IISS Strategic Dossier 2005:9; Vaziri 1998:314).

The second stage, which was launched during the presidency of Ayatollah Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-1997), focused on the revival of the nuclear programme. Kibaroglu (2007:234) and Bahgat (2005:32) note that Khomeini's death in 1989 removed a key constraint, while the cataclysmic impact of the Iran-Iraq War and the realisation of the value of modern military technology became key drivers for its revival. Iran restarted its nuclear upgrading programme during the war and when its requests for aid to its previous nuclear partners were continuously blocked by US pressure or "a US policy of denial", Iran turned to developing countries such as China, Brazil, India, Argentina and the Ukraine (Bahgat 2005:32; Kibaroglu 2007:235). Although China initially supplied Iran with a number of small research reactors, various other components and more than a ton of enriched uranium (cf. IISS Strategic Dossier 2005:13), US pressure, including economic and other threats, also successfully terminated this relationship in 1997. The situation left Iran with Russia as the only country willing to cooperate with it in the nuclear field (Orlov & Vinnikov 2005:50). Consequently, Bushehr was reconstructed with Russian assistance, while the revived Iranian nuclear programme also largely became an indigenous Iranian programme that could remain unaffected by the withdrawal of foreign aid like in 1978. According to the IISS Strategic Dossier (2005:12) the exceptions are specific technologies that were acquired either legally or illegally from North Korea and Pakistan, mainly through the A.Q. Khan network. The IISS Strategic Dossier also argued that after an intensive investigation of Iran's "undeclared activities" a preponderance of evidence showed that at the time Iran was actively pursuing a covert nuclear programme with both civilian and military applications. The existence of this "covert programme" (or "lack of reporting" from the Iranian viewpoint) lies at the heart of the present impasse between the West and Iran and is to blame for the distrust between the two sides.

The process culminated under the reformist government of President Muhammad Khatami (1997-2005). Khatami was important (cf. Halliday 2006:64) because he initiated

a “cooperative” foreign policy with Iran’s neighbours and the international community that was largely based on his own philosophical views and writings [cf. his address (Khatami 2001:30-36) on 5 September 2000 at the Dialogue Among Civilisations Conference at the United Nations]. Iran nonetheless failed to use the opportunities created through its increasing interaction with the international community to address the nuclear issue. Iran’s nuclear debate at the time rather lacked urgency, illustrating again the Iranian characteristic that “whatever problem it faces, the world should come to Iran rather than the other way around” (Halliday 2006:65). Halliday’s analysis of the situation is only partly correct, however, since what he failed to see is that the “Iranian inaction” illustrates Iran’s religious diplomacy. In this case the technique followed is *tanfih*, whereby Iran waits and forces an opponent to make the first move and thus the first mistake. As noted by Berman (2004:5), rather than stop its nuclear programme, Iran’s real intention was to gain time to finish crucial projects. Thus Khatami applied his “dialogue of civilizations” concept as an instrument to undercut EU and US pressure, convincing both that Iran was moving towards pragmatic accommodation. When Khatami became a lame-duck Iranian president, the E3/EU and US also decided to wait for Rafsansani to be re-elected as president in 2005 since the West assumed that it would be easier to engage Rafsansani in negotiations about the nuclear issue after his election due to his purported moderate views on nuclear affairs (Sadri 2007:25).

The period since June 2005 reflects a hardening of Iran’s nuclear calculations as international pressure increases when Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected as president. His election was a consequence of increasing domestic and foreign challenges to Iran, which led to a conservative consolidation of power and the presence of a “simulated irrationality” in Iranian foreign policy (Sinkaya 2006:6; ICG Middle East Briefing Report 2004:10). According to Hourcade (2006:43), Ahmadinejad’s election also represented a change in the political guard since it was in essence a defeat of the *ulamā* at the hands of a neo-conservative non-cleric. Beeman (2006:87-88) and Farhi (2004:115) also provide extra clarification by emphasising that the second-generation revolutionaries or *Abadgeran-e Islami* (Islamic Developers) are dedicated to reviving the ideals of the original revolution. They also share one common bond as *Issasgari*, or members of the war generation. Since the war they have entered positions of power throughout Iranian society and the vast Iranian *nazam* (system) and most of the individuals appointed by Ahmadinejad in Cabinet and other key positions, such as the nuclear negotiator, belong

to this shared *dowreh* (cf. 3.6.1.2 and glossary). The “common experience” of the Iran-Iraq War also shaped the Iranian leadership’s strategic assumptions. Most important was the realisation of the significance of nuclear deterrence since international treaties, institutions and public opinion cannot guarantee Iran’s security. This was amply illustrated when the Iran-E3/EU nuclear dossier was sent to the UNSC on 4 February 2006 (London Declaration of January 31, 2006).

6.3.2 Key drivers

The key drivers motivating the “unwanted and un-Islamic programme” in the 1980s are largely similar to the Shah’s programme with the main focus on defence and security, prestige and political preservation, and with energy as a new addition. The major change, however, is the total transformation of Iran’s security environment where its sense of insecurity and vulnerability has increased immeasurably as the US, a former ally, joined Iraq as one of Iran’s two principal regional enemies.

6.3.2.1 Security

Iran has traditionally been concerned with strong regional rivals like Iraq, but after the Iran-Iraq War, Iran became increasingly concerned about hostile encirclement (Carpenter 2007:26). Because Iran declared itself to be the protector of Islam and the oppressed masses (*mostazafin*), the threat of a rising Shī’a spectre alarmed Iran’s Sunnī neighbours, and created a nexus between an emerging anti-Iranian bloc of mostly Arab countries and the US (Sinkaya 2006:3). These alignments, the presence of US bases and personnel in the region raised Tehran’s threat perceptions. This is still the case regarding Turkey, a key signatory of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO); Russia, whose policies in the Caspian Sea are in direct competition with Iran, as well as the nuclear capability of India, Israel and Pakistan and the latter two countries’ close alignment with the US. The events of the Iran-Iraq War, together with the massive US power projection in Iraq, the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan, remain the key security driver (Bahgat 2005:27-31; Takeyh 2006b:55). Iran’s threat perception has changed in light of the new role of the US in the region, which is now perceived as a direct *regional threat*, with the result that a nuclear capacity is considered as the only effective deterrent to secure Iran’s integrity and sovereignty against possible US aggression (Bowen & Kidd 2004:265).

Dueck and Takeyh (2007:196) note the direct influence of the Iran-Iraq War on the Iranian threat perception. The war most importantly changed perceptions regarding the need and use of nuclear weapons among the Iranian religious leadership. It emphasised that Iran's initial human-wave assaults were insufficient as a strategic doctrine and ended the perception that revolutionary zeal and martyrdom could overcome technological superiority. The main reasons why Iran ended the war, according to Chubin (1990:140-141), Sigler (1990:149-150), Thränert (2005:2), Kemp (2003:50), Hiltermann (2004:155, 158-159) and Ansari (2006:112-117), were also the key drivers emphasising the urgent need for a new Iranian security deterrent in view of the psychological impact of the intense Iraqi chemical weapons (CW) attacks on Iran (which lacked a CW capacity); the "war on the cities"²⁴ of 1988; the direct involvement of the US in the war by providing intelligence to Iraq; as well as Western indifference to the plight of Iran at the UN. US involvement in the tanker warfare²⁵, the destruction of Iranian naval craft and the downing of an Iranian Airbus by the US in 1988 all emphasised the futility of the war. Moreover, Iran's acknowledgement of the importance of technology indicated a shift in policy and elicited the acknowledgement from Ayatollah Rafsanjani that: "With regards to chemical, bacteriological and radiological weapons, it was made clear during the war that these weapons are very decisive. We should fully equip ourselves in both offensive and defensive use of these weapons" (Dueck & Takeyh 2007:196).

The legacy of the Iran-Iraq War and Western double standards at the UN left a bitter memory that burdened the psyche of the Iranian people and further heightened their general threat perception. Consequently, Iran is incredibly sensitive about being challenged. This sensitivity was especially provoked by a perception of Iran, generated by the US, first as a "rogue state" and then, in December 2002, as part of the "axis of evil" countries, which included Iraq and North Korea. The regular renewal and

²⁴ The "war on the cities" refers to the 1988 campaign initiated by Iraq when it attacked Iran's cities and infrastructure with SCUD missiles. Iran retaliated, but had insufficient numbers of missiles, while Iraq also received US intelligence for accurate bombing (Chubin 1990:140-141).

²⁵ The "tanker warfare" (1984-1988) was the most intensive attack since World War II on neutral shipping, mostly in the Persian Gulf. It was initiated by Iraq in 1981 with attacks on civilian ships and was countered by Iran from May 1984. Since then Iran regarded this strategy as a key element of its asymmetric naval warfare doctrine (Hansen 2007:16; Haghshenass 2006:1).

expansion of the *Iran Sanction Act (ISA)*²⁶, promulgated in May 1995 and most recently renewed until 2011, adds to the tension (Katzman 2007:1; Ryan 2002:55). Iran-Iraqi rivalry changed entirely after the Gulf War (1990-1991) and the US attacks on Afghanistan (2001) and the invasion of Iraq (2003). The massive US deployments made the US a regional player and direct military threat to Iran (Bahgat 2006:314). The new regional threat is driven by the US anti-Iran policy, which fused the nuclear issue, human rights and terrorism, in Iran and the Middle East in general, under the rubric of the US war on terrorism in the aftermath of 11 September (Afrasiabi & Maleki 2003:256). US pressure led to the solidifying of Iranian tradition, nationalism and the resistance narrative, thus emphasising the need for a nuclear capacity and casting doubt on appeals for compromise since Iran's policy is informed by the premise that if "it stands firm it will have its rights regardless of the cost" (Dueck & Takeyh 2007:197).

Given the close US-Israeli alignment and President Ahmadinejad's continuing rhetoric regarding the "annihilation" of Israel, for example during the "World Without Zionism Conference" in Tehran (Ahmadinejad 2005:3), one is inclined to accept the Israeli nuclear capability and its policy of nuclear opacity²⁷ as another key driver motivating Iran. Yet, the situation is more complex. Bowen and Kidd (2004: 265) observe that Iran regards Israel as an external threat because of Iran's opposition to the Middle East peace process, and more particularly its support for anti-Israeli organisations like Hezbollah and Hamas and only then because of Israel's nuclear capability. Ganji (2005:5) and Zimmerman (2004:57-57) clarify any ambiguities by emphasising that Iranian support was primarily provided for Palestinian organisations out of fear that the establishment of relations between Israel and some Arab countries would make it easier for Israel to orchestrate a campaign of pressure against the Iranian nuclear programme. Takeyh (2006b:53) and Bahgat (2005:29-35) furthermore argue that the Iranian threats and anti-Israeli rhetoric are largely employed to mobilise regional and Iranian domestic opinion. Iranian leaders have opted not to confront Israel directly or militarily, but to maintain its indirect challenges by way of asymmetric warfare. Regardless of frequent Iranian threats,

²⁶ The *Iran Sanction Act (ISA)*, originally called the *Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA)*, was passed in 1995 in response to Iran's intensified nuclear activities and support to organisations such as Hezbollah, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (Katzman 2007:1).

²⁷ "Nuclear opacity" or nuclear ambiguity refers to a policy adopted by Israel whereby it keeps the status of its nuclear capability deliberately veiled (Cohen 2006:34).

Israel is not viewed as one of Iran's key drivers and would only become a critical threat if it launched counter-proliferation strikes at Iran's nuclear facilities.

6.3.2.2 Prestige and political preservation

Iran views itself as part of an ancient civilisation, and in terms of Iran's cyclical view of life and history "perceives the Islamic revolution as just another cycle of national growth destined to make Iran again a great regional power" (Sadri 2007:21). According to Bahgat (2006:323) and Afrasiabi and Kibaroglu (2005:257), there is significant support for the nuclear programme among the general Iranian populace who consider Iranian accomplishments in the fields of nuclear science and technology as the apex of technological advancement, general sophistication and Iranian nuclear capability. It is perceived as a definitive indicator, therefore, of the restoration of Iran's dignity and respect, which it lost due to *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxication) or foreign interventions as described in previous chapters (cf. Al-e Ahmad 1982). As maintained by the Secretary of the Supreme Expediency Council, Mohsen Reza'i, it is common cause that the restoration of Iranian self-respect will lead to the reinstatement of Iran in its traditional role as "the center of international power politics" in the Middle East (Berman 2004:45).

The popular support for the nuclear programme is evidenced by Ahmadinejad's success in the March 2007 parliamentary election when 70 % of overall vote went to his nuclear-based campaign (Bentley & Nasserli 2007:1-5). A slightly different picture was projected by the first ever nationwide telephone survey to be conducted in Iran in mid-June 2007. Its questionnaire linked issues of good governance, foreign aid, trade and the wish for economic growth directly with perceptions of the nuclear programme, a linkage that obscured the findings since a positive result was ostensibly countered by findings in other questions. For example, it turned out that only 29% of the survey group regarded the nuclear programme as a very important priority in comparison with economic growth, which was seen as an urgent requirement by 88%. A majority of 52% nonetheless favour the development of nuclear weapons as an urgent requirement for Iran's safety. However, support for nuclear weapons dropped to below 17% when the nuclear issue becomes a stumbling block if Iran is to receive foreign aid, while 80% were in favour of full inspections and a guarantee not to develop or possess nuclear weapons in return for foreign aid (TerrorFreeTomorrow.org 2007:1-2).

The Iranian *ulamā* require a nuclear capacity for political self-preservation. According to Milani *et al.* (2006:266) and Chubin (2006:8), the Iranian leadership felt a need to rely on a nuclear capacity to rally nationalist opinion after the war, to serve as an instrument to relieve domestic pressure coming from an increasingly restive populace, and to protect their own positions, the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic and Iranian national interest.

6.3.2.3 Energy

The need for nuclear energy currently forms the central argument in Iran's nuclear policy. While a detailed assessment of this particular issue is beyond the scope of the present study, it is important to emphasise that the argument is rejected by the international community regardless of Iran's insistence on the civil focus, the need for self-reliance, or economic considerations as the pillars of its nuclear policy. On face-value, Iran appears to have a valid argument and the following official reasons for developing a civilian nuclear capacity seem convincing:

- Despite abundant oil resources²⁸ Iranian estimates show that it will be a net importer of oil and its by-products by 2020 if it continues its current consumption patterns.
- Increasing domestic consumption of Iranian oil will negatively influence Iran's foreign exchange earnings from the exchange of oil and gas.
- Fossil fuels can be more valuable if used in petrochemical and processing industries.
- Nuclear energy and products are more ecologically friendly than fossil fuels and are also used in medical applications (Moshirzadeh 2007:524; Bowen & Kidd 2004:258)

²⁸ Iran is the world's third largest holder of proven oil (136.3 billion barrels) and gas reserves. Its oil reserves were roughly 10 percent of the world's total petroleum reserves in January 2007. Its consumption of 1.6 million bbl/d rises annually by around seven percent. It is the biggest gasoline importer after the US, with more than 400 000 bbl/d. due to sanctions, costs and consumer demand, forcing gasoline rationing for the first time in 2007. (Iran Country Analysis Briefs 2007:1, 3, 5, 6; Hansen 2007:7; Tarock 2006:650; Hughes 2005:2; Askarieh 2008:191).

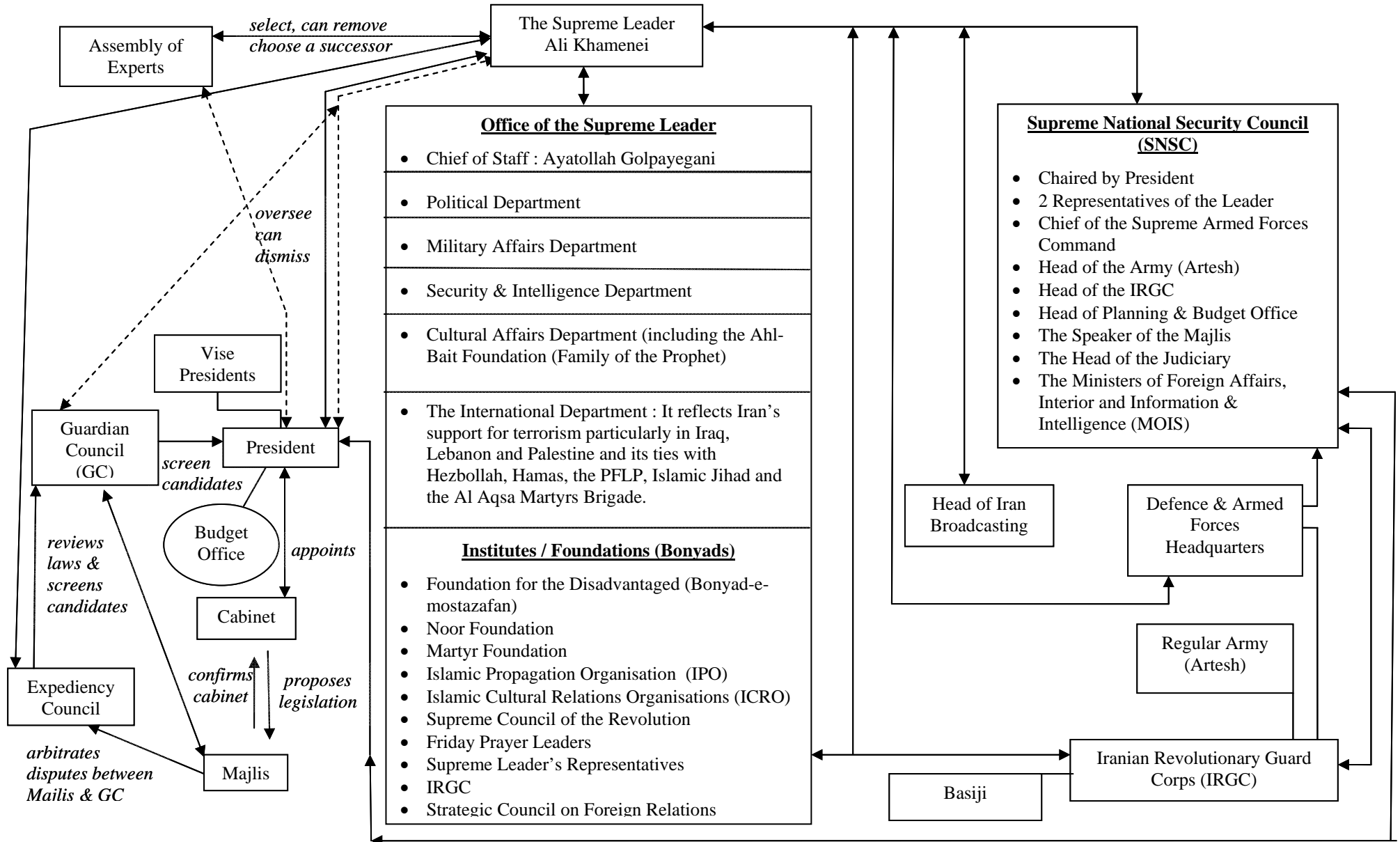


Figure 6.1 : The Political Structure of Iran

Adapted from Baktiari (1996:61) and Iran Diplomatic Handbook 2006 2 ed. (CRS – 44)

— = Institutionalised Structures
 - - - - = Personal Networks

6.4 THE IRANIAN NEGOTIATING STRUCTURE

6.4.1 Iran's "ultimate decision making unit"

Before discussing the Iran-E3/EU negotiations it is essential to deal with the key question who constitutes the "ultimate decision making unit" in Iran or who is responsible for negotiation. In the process various key elements of the two-level game theory of Putnam (1988) and the ultimate decision making unit theory of Hermann, Hermann and Hagan (1987) will be illustrated or inferred to. According to Hermann *et al.* (1987), as discussed in section 2.4.3.3, Iran has multiple autonomous actors as decision units, which are dispersed across a range of institutional settings or factions. Iran is a mixed system where the leadership or decision making structure is highly fragmented or cartelised and informal networks have been prominent since the time of Imam Khomeini when he created the key role of *vilayat-i faqih* and became the predominant leader. In cartelized political systems "power assets - including material resources, organisational strength, and information – are concentrated in the hands of parochial groups, each with very narrow interests focused in a particular economic or bureaucratic sphere" (Snyder 1991:31). Currently the factional divide is along the well known trichotomy of reformists, pragmatic-conservatives and hard-liners as observed by Abootalebi (2000:3), Pollack (2004), and Takeyh and Gvosdev (2004). The high fluidity together with the frequent switching of membership by the Iranian elite between the factions, however, makes opposing political divisions irrelevant. This movement supports the author's view that the traditional moderate / hard-liner dichotomy in the nuclear dialogue does not refer to a clear "factional" division, but rather reflects degrees of flexibility between two or more approaches or strategies in relation to the nuclear issue. *Figure 6.1* is used as point of reference to identify the "ultimate decision making units". However, only selected institutional and informal networks are discussed that have a direct or indirect role in terms of Iran's nuclear decision making structure as shown in *Figure 6.2*.

6.4.2 Major formal institutions in Iran

Iran is in theory a theocracy with overlapping religious and secular institutions and it is traditional to characterise the country as “authoritarian”. However, it has more democratic features than most countries in the Middle East (Sadri 2007:21). According to Elisabeth Mayer, quoted in Afshari (2001:16), the Iranian Constitution is a “remarkable admixture of international human rights principles concerning equality and assertions of the supremacy of Islamic law that directly contravenes them”. Khomeini likewise intended to implement his *Hukumat-i Islam* (Islamic Government) concept in Iran, but gave it instead a national, state-controlled and institutional framework after 1979.

Regardless of such criticism and the high-level of control in its election processes, which makes it seriously flawed, Iran at least has frequent elections for all positions, and Articles 107 and 111 of the Constitution respectively provide for the election and the removal of the successor to Ayatollah Khamenei as *vilayat-i faqih*. While much can be said about religious control and the *Sharia* (religious law) in this framework, it is obvious from *Figure 6.1* that only the Supreme Leader is elected by a religious body, the Assembly of Experts, whose members in turn are directly elected by the people. Articles 107 and 112 clearly stipulate that even the “religious oversight body”, the Council of Guardians, has secular members, while the Expediency Council, another supervisory institution, has a religious membership who are directly appointed by the *faqih*. In the absence of the 12th Imam, the institutional framework thus filled the “space” and afforded power, order and legitimacy to the Shī’a *ulamā*. When Khamenei, then president, proclaimed the primacy of *Sharia* over other laws in 1988 he was reprimanded by Khomeini who issued a public reply, reaffirming the preeminence of the Islamic state over *Sharia* (Roy 1994:177).

A similar reality is also reflected by De Bellaigue (2002:4), who notes that *ulamā* representation in the Majlis has declined from 51 percent in the 1980s to a mere 12 percent in 2002. However, if the general views of the *ulamā* are taken into account regarding current Iranian politics, and particularly the concept of the *vilayat-i faqih*, there could also be a second explanation, namely withdrawal from the world in typical Shī’a fashion. As an

Ayatollah quoted in Abdo and Lyons (2003:43) observed, “the politics of today does not confirm with the spirit of Shī’ism ...the revolution brought about an anomaly, an abnormality and aberration in religious thought”. This religious disinterest received momentum in 2005 when Ahmadinejad, a non-cleric, was elected as president. Based on the collective reflection of Iran’s current constitutional phase, it can thus be deduced that Iranian governance conforms to a “secular” model in the sense that the state defines the place of the *ulamā* and not the other way around.

Iran’s formal institutions can be characterised as a mixed or dual system with secular structures and religious oversight bodies, as well as directly elected and non-elected institutions (cf. *Figure 6.1*). Its multitiered institutions and responsibilities are reflected by the Constitution. Moshaver (2005:178), and Sazegara (2005:1) note that the *vilayat-i faqih* or Supreme Leader (Khamenei) is appointed by the Assembly of Experts, who themselves are selected from a limited number of candidates for an eight-year term. While the Assembly of Experts has the constitutional authority to select, replace and choose a successor for the *faqih* they have yet to do so. The president is elected directly by the people for a period of four years, but all presidential candidates are beforehand vetted by the Guardian Council, a body consisting of 12 members of which six clerical members are appointed directly by the *faqih* and six lawyers who are nominated by the head of the judiciary, who in turn is directly appointed by the *faqih*. The Guardian Council also vets all potential members of the Majlis, a body of 290 members who are directly elected by the populace. The heads of the regular Iranian Armed Forces (*Artesh*), the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC / Pasdaran) and the Basiji Resistance Forces are also appointed by the *faqih*. The key institutions / officials are thus the supervisory and religious structures headed by the *faqih* and the Guardian Council, who consequently have the most influence throughout the *nazam* (system). The responsibilities of the political system - Presidency, Cabinet, Deputy Presidents, Majlis, the Department of Foreign Affairs and their relevant policy committees involved in, for example, nuclear negotiations - however, are limited, because of Iran’s closed system where they have to function under direct religious guidance. Consequently, their roles are only discussed as they relate to the nuclear negotiation decision making process.

The Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), which is Iran's highest defence and security authority, came into being in 1989 after a constitutional review (which added Article 176) and effected the closure of the Supreme Defence Council, which was controlled by the IRGC (Katzman 1996:203). The SNSC also plays a key role in terms of the nuclear decision making process [cf. 6.4.4; Article 176 of the Constitution, Samii (2006:77), Byman, Chubin *et al.* (2001:24), Moshaver (2005:191) and *Figure 6.1* where it refers to SNSC membership]. However, all is not as clear-cut as it seems since President Khatami, effectively lost control of the SNSC during his "reformist" attempts, firstly by having his supporters removed from the SNSC, and secondly by losing his authority in the Council to the Secretary of the SNSC and first Iranian nuclear negotiator, Hojatoleslam Hassan Rohani. Rohani was one of the representatives of the *faqih* in the SNSC and reported directly to the *faqih* who in fact endorses all decisions of the SNSC. The duality between the president and the representatives of the *faqih* in terms of control remains a controversial issue and while Ahmadinejad sometimes chairs meetings, ultimate control, rests with the *faqih* and the Secretary of the SNSC.

The central decision making structure in Iran rests with the *faqih* and, more particularly, the Office of the Supreme Leader. Most of the functionaries of the Office, however, form part of complex informal network structures that date back to prerevolutionary days and will shortly be discussed in section 6.4.4.3. Note that the *faqih*, particularly in the time of Imam Khomeini, fulfilled an important "balancing role" as an intermediary between the various factions, while preserving the supremacy of the *ulamā*. Khomeini was omnipresent as the supreme or predominant leader, and both the Shī'a scholars in Qom and the public at large were in awe of his high clerical status, political skill and leadership, which allowed him to link the two popular strands - religious rule and the popular power of revolutionary Iran (Vaziri 1998:322; Abdo & Lyons 2003:37). His legacy is still dominating Iranian politics and foreign policy, and many of his decisions still serve as guiding and constraining factors. Some decisions have created precedents, such as his support for the Militant Students responsible for the US hostage crisis, and his acceptance of full responsibility for UNSC Resolution 598, which ended the Iran-Iraq War (Hooglund 2002:129).

In contrast the new *faqih*, Ayatollah Khamenei, lacks the religious and political training and thus status of Khomeini and has limited authority in Qom. He was only a *hojjatoleslam* or middle-ranking member of the clergy and was only elevated to the rank of Ayatollah after his election as *faqih*. According to Baktiari (1996:55) the chief ideologue of the conservative establishment, Ayatollah Meshbah-Yazdi, in particular attempted to enhance Khamenei's position in 1994 by explaining his role as the "logical successor" and claiming that his qualification as a jurist equals the qualifications of piety, justice and knowledge of *Sharia* required from a *faqih* when an Islamic government is in power. This claim was unnecessary since the way for Khamenei's succession was prepared in 1989 during the constitutional review when the requirement of the *faqih* to be a *marja-i taqlid* (the most eminent source of emulation) was removed. It nonetheless resulted in a situation where Khamenei's rulings carry less weight than those of Khomeini. He has also been unable to resolve disputes between senior Shī'a *ulamā*, the government and revolutionary institutions regarding key policy issues. He also undermined his own legitimacy when he announced that he prefers to be the *marja-i taqlid* for only the Shī'a community outside Iran. Accepting lesser titles and allowing his supporters to refer to him as the "logical replacement" has lessened his authority. Thus he for instance failed to gain central control over the finances of Qom, a rejection with immense political impact since the *ulamā* informed him that attempts to elevate himself to the position of senior *marja-i taqlid*, also would come to nothing since Qom would "continue to follow the rulings of those who had passed away" (a clear reference to Khomeini). Khamenei's shaky religious support base forced him to rely mainly on his own security networks and religious supporters to monitor and "guide" Iran. The supporters are selected "hard-line" *ulamā* from Yazdi's Haqqani Seminary in Qom, who claim the right to monopolise the reinterpretation of Islamic texts, which directly contradicts the traditional flexibility of Shī'ism to survive as a living faith and survival strategy (Baktiari 1996:52-56; Abdo & Lyons 2003:37-39, 43; de Bellaigue 2001:75).

6.4.3 Iran's informal networks

The analyses provided here are mainly based on Social Network Analysis (SNA) theory and backward mapping, but as can be seen from studies on the Iranian government by Renfro and Deckro (2001), this is not an exact science. Moreover, it calls for detailed knowledge of the country concerned. This became evident from the failure of the indicated study to discuss the vital role of Khamenei as *faqih* or Supreme Leader. The study of informal networks is therefore critically dependent on inference. In Iran an extremely complex informal network runs parallel with the institutional system, which reflects a picture of apparent chaos to a *gheir-e-khodi* (outsider). However, there are concentric circles of political influence (*nofouz*) that emanate from the *faqih*, and are only intelligible to well-connected *khodi* (insiders or “one of us”) (Bar 2004:23, 25; Daragahi 2008:15). Three dimensions of this informal network – which is more important than the formal institutionalised process) (cf. Samii 2006:64) - are explored in brief historical context with particular reference to the traditional bases of informal networks and the semi-official and state-affiliated informal networks.

6.4.3.1 A brief historical context

According to Byman *et al.* (2001:21) and Samii (2006:64), Iran has a multitude of informal networks based on family ties, kinship or personal relationships (similar political or religious affiliations and a shared military experience) – the *dowreh* or “circle” as well as economic linkages through the *bazaaris*. Because of the existence of alternative channels there is a rooted conviction in Iran that nothing can be done through regular channels and that the use of informal networks is essential (Samii 2006:65). The *dowreh* system is the most important informal network (cf. 3.6.1.2) that is pervasive, like a “multilayered and honey-combed network of informal groups” all over Iran. Samii (2006:65-66) and Vaziri (1998:322) note that it is literally everywhere and based on secret societies, the *maktab* (elementary Qur’anic schools), the *madrasah* (religious seminaries), political cliques, tea-house meetings, ritualistic religious meetings of extended families, government *anjoman* (associations), bureaucratic factions, *zurkhaneh* (“traditional houses of strength” where

athletes train), poetry classes, groups related to the *bazaaris*, and military veterans who shared the experience of participation in the Iran-Iraq War. Since the members of a *dowreh* are not necessarily linked to the same social class, it can be assumed that participation opened the system and members could gain influence and insight disproportionately to their official status (Samii 2006:65).

6.4.3.2 Traditional bases of informal networks

The traditional bases refer to various factors which form the foundations of personal networks, such as religious status and education, political affiliation, military service and wealth. These groups are intertwined, fluid and difficult to define or differentiate.

Religious groups remain primary since they also exert educational, political, economic and intelligence influence. According to Samii (2002:1, 3) and Beeman (2006:87) it is natural to find left-wing, reformist and right-wing oriented *ulamā* clustered together in Qom. Statistics differ widely about the number of *ulamā*. For example, de Bellaigue (2001:75) and Samii (2006:68-71) note that according to Iranian sources in 2001, the numbers vary from 200 000 in Qom to 300 000 as reported by European sources in 1989. Another 50 000 to 60 000 Iranians had religious training, while religious students packed the *maktabs* and *madrasah* all over Iran. Most major Iranian cities like Tabriz, Shiraz, and Tehran have their own *madrasah*, but the principal centre of religious education in Iran is at Qom, which housed more than 60 individual *madrasah*, including the famous *Fayzieh* and Haqqani *madrasah* (Samii 2006:68-69). *Madrasah* provide religious training and infuse Shī'a *ulamā* with a common educational experience and knowledge regarding management and political survival. Critical are the tactics of *razdari* (secrecy, meaning that no *ulamā* should divulge information about the innermost working and secrets of the *ulamā*) and the techniques of *taqiyyah* or dissimulation, which justifies deception (see earlier chapters).

Senior *ulamā* come from similar backgrounds, while their offspring sometimes have political influence throughout the system: The Larijani brothers are excellent examples, with Ali Larijani (elected as Speaker of the 8th Majlis in May 2008), prominent as a key

actor in Iran's nuclear negotiations, especially before 2005 with the E3/EU. While his personal profile is impressive it suffices for the present purpose to note that he is the son-in-law of Ayatollah Motahari (himself a pupil of Khomeini and one of the most respected Islamic scholars of his time) and that his two brothers are both well-connected in the system. Sadegh Larijani is a member of the Guidance Council, while Mohammad Javad Larijani counts among the many roles befalling the positions of deputy foreign minister and "diplomat at large" after being hand-picked by Khamenei in March 2006 to enhance Iran's international standing (Nourizadeh 2007:1; Iran Focus 2005:1-2; Melman & Javedanfar 2007:193-194). Ali Larijani's personal influence and network straddles the religious and political system as a whole and links with both the followers of Khomeini and Khamenei. His role as senior IRGC commander during the Iran-Iraq war also provides him with the required revolutionary credentials.

Business connections and wealth are an illustration of informal networks. The best example is Ayatollah Rafsanjani and his family's control over a Pistachio-empire, *bonyads* (foundations) in Iran *et cetera*. Rafsanjani used his political office and kinship with the *bazaaris* to forge a new "free market system" in Iran during the period of "construction" when he was president. The system is an Iranian variation of the Western model where the new mercantile elite control the economy, which is free of state control (Klebnikov 2003:3; Ansari 2007:13). It led to volatility in the market, the creation of unregulated informal networks or cartels, and the rise of *aqazadeh* (corruption) by the so-called "thousand families" who misused the privileges of family with revolutionary credentials who are in key positions (Ansari 2007:13; Samii 2006:72-73).

Shared revolutionary activities and a joint military endeavour such as the Iran-Iraq War also created a *dowreh* and moulded individuals together as one of the best examples of personal networks in Iran. 18 of the 21 members of Ahmadinejad's first cabinet shared the Iran-Iraqi "experience" mainly as members of the IRGC (its al Quds Forces – Special Operation Brigades) the Basiji (volunteers) or intelligence structures and thus belonged to the exclusive Islamic Revolution Devotees Society or *Isargaran*, (cf. 6.3.1) (Alfoneh 2008:1-7; Kapiszewski 2006:21-22).

6.4.3.3 Semi-official and state-affiliated informal networks

The differentiation of the formal and informal networks as they relate to the *faqih* and particularly the Office of the Supreme Leader is only done for purposes of clarification since they jointly reflect the activities of the said Office, which is the centre of decision making in Iran. Two distinct phases can be distinguished, namely the early institutionalisation under Khomeini and increased centralisation under Khamenei as he increased the Office's personnel and his personal advisers (Baktiari 1996:49, 53). According to Roy (1994:173-174), Moslem (2002:22) and Baktiari (1996:49-50), Khomeini developed three key personal networks reflecting religious, military, and most of all, "personal or direct" supervision by the Office of the Supreme Leader:

- Religious control: As explained in section 4.3.3.2 above, Khomeini created networks drawn mainly from the *hojjatoleslam* and *bazaaris* to counter the resistance offered by most of the venerable *marja-i taqlid* in Qom to the principle of *vilayat-i faqih*. The two networks (secular and young Islamists) fused under Khomeini and pervaded the Iranian *nazam* as he appointed them in leadership positions to become leaders at Friday Prayer Sessions²⁹, in religious organisations, and as leaders in thousands of mosques throughout the country.
- Military control: Khomeini created the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC / *Pasdaran*) in the midst of the Revolution as an alternative to the unreliable imperial army. The IRGC and a network of security committees consequently became his Islamic footsoldiers to safeguard the revolution.
- The "Leader's Representatives": The "Imam's Representatives" were initially appointed above all senior political functionaries in all departments and organisations as Khomeini's "personal eyes and ears" since they reported directly and only to the *faqih*. They were all *Tawhidi* men (those accepting only the

²⁹ Friday Prayers express the ulema's views on critical religious and policy issues and mobilise the population directly for or against policies (also foreign policy) (Gibreel 2001:4).

dominance of God) and played a key role in the purges during and after the revolution to remove *non-Tawhidi* officials from the system. Their presence is now less conspicuous, but their status under Khamenei has not declined.

When Khamenei became *faqih* he fused some of his Office's responsibilities with those of the presidential office, a position he held from 1981 to 1989. He also moved large numbers of advisers from his administration and personal networks to act as "Leader's Representatives". The result was a personalised and omnipresent Leader's Office of more than 600 personnel, advisers and Leader's Representatives, headed by his son-in-law, *hojjatoleslam* Mohammad Mohammadi-Golpayegani (cf. *Figure 6.1*). The advisers and the Leader's Representatives closely supervise and manage the concentric circles of political influence (*nofouz*) emanating from the *faqih* (cf. 6.4.3) and the complex interplay between the large number of highly fragmented power centres in Iran (Nasr 2007:6; Samii 2006:66; Jafarzadeh 2007:238). Since each policy decision is supervised, the Leader's Office in fact duplicates government. It has departments for religious and cultural affairs, security and intelligence, foreign affairs, military advisers as well as offices for Iraqi affairs and the nuclear issue. There are Leader's Representatives in the IRGC, Basiji, religious organisations, mosques, the *Artesh*, the Majlis, foreign policy-making structures, the MOIS, police agencies, all government departments, Qom, the provinces, much of the media, the Friday Prayers Leadership and business foundations (*bonyads*). Note that the IRGC and the Basiji are ultimately perceived as guardians of the revolution. Their personnel thus collectively added to the many layers of Leader's Representatives already in place.

Bar (2004:37-38) notes that Iranian negotiating teams include Leader's Representatives to ward off the perceived risk of conspiracy. The fact that they report directly to the *faqih* causes considerable politicisation within teams, as well as collective decision making and a significant use of back channels. Key advisers worth mentioning are: former Foreign Ministers Ali Velayati and Kamal Kharazzi; General Mohammad Mir Hejazi – head of the Security and Intelligence Department and *hojjatoleslam* Ali-Akbar Nateq-Nuri and *hojjatoleslam* Mehdi Karrubi, both former Speakers of the Majlis. There are also two Leadership Representatives on the SNSC who play a key role in Iran's nuclear decision

making since the Office of the Supreme Leader is ultimately responsible (cf. 6.4.4.2 discussion of Ministerial Policy Making Committee). It is also important to note that the former Secretary General of the SNSC and nuclear negotiator, Hassan Rohani, and his successor in both positions, Ali Larijani, remain the Leader's Representatives on the SNSC (Baktiari 1996:54; Samii 2006:66).

Foundations (*bonyads* or charities) also play key roles in the system of semi-official networks. Katzman (2006:1) and Klebnikov (2003:1, 4) note that *bonyads* were created after the revolution by expropriating all the assets of foreign investors and the Shah's Pahlavi Foundation (cf. 3.6.1.1). The *bonyads* were turned into conglomerates or the "dark side" of the Iranian economy. They report only to the *faqih*, accruing millions of dollars in slush funds for his personal use, and to advance the revolution. In some sectors control by the *bonyads*' is estimated to be as much as 30% to 40% of the total Iranian GDP. The *bonyads* are a useful instrument for the *faqih* to utilise regarding social welfare services, to enhance Iran's economic hegemony in the region, to support intelligence operations abroad, procure nuclear-related and other sensitive equipment, and according to the Western view, to support terrorism. The most important *bonyads* in Iran are the *Bonyad –e Mostazafan* (Foundation of the Oppressed), which is headed by a *bazaari*, Mohsen Rafiqdust, a former bodyguard of Ayatollah Khomeini and also the first Minister of the IRGC. *Mostazafan* manages more than 400 companies and factories with an estimated total value of US\$12 billion in 2006. It is the largest economic entity in Iran, controlling large sectors of Iran's agriculture, shipping, petrochemicals and the tourism industry. Some of its profits are used to assist 120 000 victims of the Iran-Iraq War and the poor. Rafiqdust also heads the *Noor Bonyad* (which specialises in pharmaceuticals, the import of sugar and construction equipment) and is now on the Expediency Council (Katzman 2006:1-2). The IRGC has created independent ventures like "*Ghorb*", which is active in the oil exploration field, using its political influence to win business away from more experienced foreign firms (Katzman 2006:1-2).

6.4.4 Iran's nuclear decision making structure

The current Iranian decision making structure was only created after an Iranian opposition group, the *Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK)*,³⁰ revealed the comprehensive nature of the Iranian nuclear programme, and especially the existence of two secret nuclear facilities respectively at Natanz and Arak to the West in late 2002. Natanz is a centrifuge plant for the enrichment of uranium, and Arak is a heavy-water plutonium enriched plant (Jafarzadeh 2007:xi; Takeyh 2003:21; Ehteshami 2006:78). The IAEA responded by initiating continuous on-site inspections; moreover, the Iranian nuclear dossier was discussed for the first time by the IAEA Board of Governors in May-June 2003 (Rohani 2005:2-5). Iran felt threatened and decided that the responsibility for the nuclear issue should be raised to a higher level of discussion after 2002. Formerly, responsibility for both the technical and the political matters had rested exclusively with the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI). In view of the decision to raise the nuclear issue in a higher forum, it was discussed by the Secretariat of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) for the first time in September 2003. The meetings showed clearly the existence of vastly different opinions within the Iranian *nazam* about how to handle the nuclear issue. It was agreed, nevertheless, that there was an urgent need for a clearly defined nuclear decision making structure in Iran. Such a structure was duly evolved from the existing structures (cf. *Figure 6.1*). This exercise illustrated that nuclear decision making was done by relatively few people who were spread throughout the system. It specifically illustrated the key role played by the nuclear negotiator as broker or key leader in the interactive bargaining process between *Level II* (domestic arena) and *Level I* (the international arena) during the nuclear negotiations. Iran therefore reflects certain key elements of Putnam's (1988) two-level game metaphor and the leadership typology of Hermann *et al.* (1987) (*Figure 2.1*, *Figure 6.2* and *6.4.4.1* show the current implementation on the Iranian system).

³⁰ The *Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK)* (cf. 5.2.2) is the largest Iranian opposition group in exile. It originally supported the revolution and is a member of the Iranian National Council of Resistance (NCRI) in exile and on both the US State Department and EU's terrorist watch list due to its previous terrorist activities. However, the US supports the MEK as instrumental in its policy of regime change (Zimmerman 2004:9; McFaul, Milani & Diamond 2006-2007:125; Jafarzadeh 2007:225).

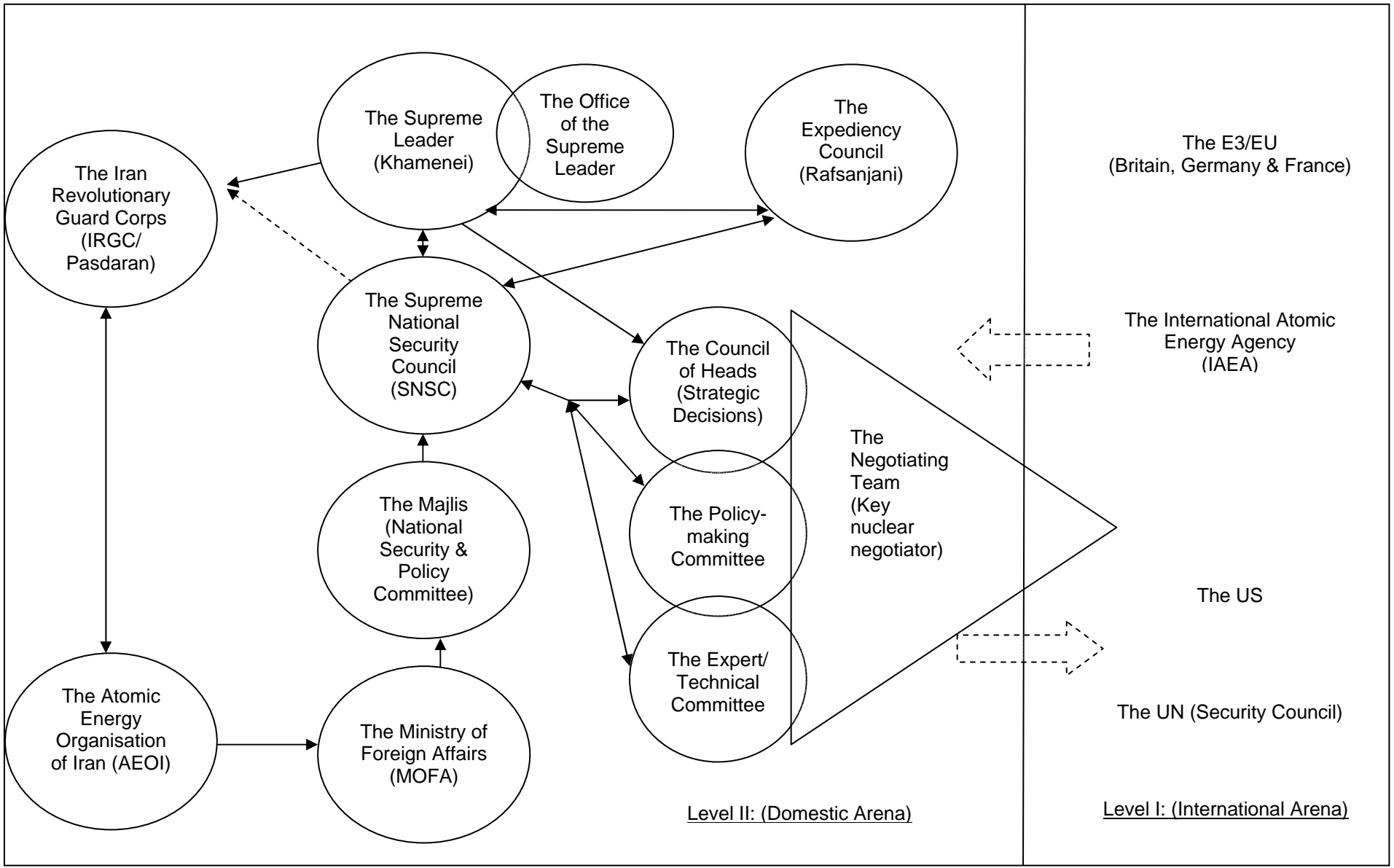


Figure 6.2: Iran Nuclear Decision making Structure

6.4.4.1 Types of decision units in Iran

a) The predominant leader

The *predominant leader* is the ultimate “decision” making unit supported by a closely linked formal and informal network of religious, political, security and *bazaaris*. It confirms the ultimate decision making role of the Iranian Supreme Leader as *faqih* where foreign, security and particularly nuclear matters are concerned. It also reveals his key role as decision unit according to the typology used by Hermann *et al.* (1987).

b) Multiple autonomous actors in Iran

Various *multiple autonomous actors* are active in Iran. They include the president whose influence on clear decision making is limited. He only forms part of a broader consensus within the *Council of Heads* in the SNSC, which is responsible for strategic decisions. While he chairs the SNSC - currently Iran’s highest defence and security authority - it is the two Representatives of the Supreme Leader, Hassan Rohani and Ali Larijani (as successor Secretaries and nuclear negotiators) who report directly to the Supreme Leader and guide his decisions on the nuclear dossier. Three committees within the SNSC are responsible for most nuclear decision making, namely two overlapping lower-level expert or technical committees; a policy-making committee; and the Council of Heads (cf. 6.4.4.2 below).

Another key agency is the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI), which has a dual role according to Chubin (2006:38), Melman and Javedanfar (2007:77, 101, 127, 144-145) and Jafarzadeh (2007). Firstly, these authors agree with Ghannadi-Maragheb (2002:2) – current AEOI Vice President for nuclear fuel production - that the AEOI is Iran’s legal institution entrusted with nuclear research, energy production, nuclear fuel production, education and planning, and regulatory safety. Secondly, the authors also argued that the AEOI was a front for most of Iran’s covert nuclear activities between the 1990s and 2002 / 2003 when the MEK revealed the covert programme and Iran declared

its nuclear activities to the IAEA. While the AEOI should technically be co-managed by the SNSC and the Majlis, the AEOI refused Majlis oversight and budgetary insight and prefers to deal directly with the SNSC and IRGC. Gholamreza Aghazadeh-Khoi, director of the AEOI, is involved in various committees dealing with nuclear negotiations and has also claimed to be “father of the Iranian nuclear programme,” but his role is in fact rather limited (Samii 2006:81).

The Iran Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) has been the defenders of the revolution since 1979 and is now omnipresent in all levels of society, including the nuclear field, given its involvement with the issues of Iranian national survival, security and the economy. The IRGC’s influence became more widespread after Ahmadinejad’s election in 2005, but its considerable and direct influence is also attributable to its traditional and direct links with the Supreme Leader (and other networks). The Secretary of the Supreme Expediency Council, Mohsen Reza’i, who headed the IRGC from 1981 to 1997, and his successor, General Yahya Rahim-Safavi, who served from 2003 to 2006, regularly objected to the course of Iran’s negotiations with the E3/EU, while harshly criticising Rohani and his negotiating team (Samii 2006:80; Sinkaya 2006:7).

At first the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in nuclear decision making was merely diplomatic in that it was confined to reassuring the international community that Iran was strictly intent on developing peaceful nuclear applications. In the meantime MOFA has become a key player in the Expert Committee responsible for the technical side of the negotiations, contrasting with its former non-participant status (Afrasiabi & Kibaroglu 2005:267). The Majlis have a minor role in nuclear decision making, relating only to the ratification of protocols or agreements for example the Additional Protocol Agreement which the Majlis refused to ratify although Iran signed it in December 2003. The Majlis and Khatami, who denied Iran’s interest in nuclear weapons, remained ignorant of the extensive nature of the nuclear programme until 2003. Thus members of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Majlis aptly referred to them as “tools of the SNSC”. The roles of the Expert, Expediency and Guardians Councils are limited to oversight or vetting (Samii 2006:9; 82; Samii 2005d:12).

6.4.4.2 The appointment of a single nuclear negotiator

The appointment of a chief nuclear negotiator was the key decision resulting from the abovementioned SNSC decision making debates. It is the only formal link between *Level I* and *Level II* as discussed in Chapter 2 and illustrated in *Figure 6.2*. The proposal to appoint Hassan Rohani as chief nuclear negotiator and the SNSC as sole agency entrusted with the nuclear file came from Kamal Kharrrazi, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and adviser on foreign affairs issues, to the *faqih*. The intention was to clarify the confusion about the large role overlap, lack of coordination and secrecy between agencies like the AEOI, MOFA, and to a lesser extent, the SNSC (Samii 2006:81; Rohani 2005:7). Rohani's appointment emphasises Putnam's view that a chief negotiator has no independent views and only acts as honest broker on behalf of his constituents. Rohani (2005:6-7) and Kane (2006:5) also note that his appointment was a consensus issue and that he functioned under strict supervision. He was not the sole decision maker in terms of the "red line" issue, but was ordered to leave the ministerial-level committees unchanged, while important clarification and guiding principles were continually provided by the *Council of Heads*. The chief negotiator nonetheless, acts as the primary official in Iran's current nuclear control mechanism, despite being guided by several committees directly related to the SNSC (cf. *Figure 6.2*). A key feature of all the committees (cf. Samii 2006:78) was their consensus view about the "red line" issue. It indicated that while they might support temporary suspension, they would never support any agreement to the effect that Iran should relinquish its control of the fuel cycle.

a) The Council of Heads

The Council of Heads is responsible for high-level strategic policy decisions. Its composition before and after the election of President Ahmadinejad in 2005 changed only slightly when he and some new ministers replaced those elected under Khatami. The current members are: Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as the Supreme Leader (unchanged); Ayatollah Rafsanjani as Head of the Expert and Expediency Councils (unchanged); Rohani who was the nuclear negotiator, Secretary of the SNSC and the Supreme Leader's

Representative on this Council between 2003 and August 2005, switched positions with Larijani, another Leader's Representative on the SNSC. Despite the rotation Rohani remains on the Council as a key adviser of Khamenei on the nuclear issue. President Ahmadinejad replaced Khatami as chair of the Council, but it is Larijani (as Leader's Representative) who reports to the Supreme Leader. Ali Shamkani, the Minister of Defence was replaced by Brigadier General Mustafa Mohammad-Najjar and became an adviser in the Office of the Supreme Leader (Chubin 2006:39; Alfoneh 2008:2-3; Samii 2005a:3-5).

b) The Ministerial Policy Making Committee

The Ministerial Policy Making Committee is responsible for decisions on a ministerial level and meets regularly. Its members are mainly ministers, or former ministers, who currently hold key positions either as advisers to Khamenei in the Office of the Supreme Leader or are key officials of the SNSC. As before, the membership both before and after Ahmadinejad's election in 2005 will be reflected. Ali Younesi, the Minister of Intelligence and Security, was replaced by Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Ehzei, the Director of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI); Gholamreza Aghazadeh-Khoi remains. Dr Ali Velayati, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs during the Khamenei presidency and now foreign policy adviser and Leader's Representative to Khamenei, remains right through the period as a member. Manucher Mottaki, the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, replaced his predecessor Kharrazi. Larijani who was only a Leader's Representative during 2005 period, became the nuclear negotiator, thus replacing Rohani, who stays on the Supreme Leader's panel of nuclear advisers (Chubin 2006:38-39; Alfoneh 2008:3; Samii 2005a:5-6).

c) Expert Committees

The Expert Committees deal with the technical aspects of the nuclear issue. Rohani (2005:5) distinguishes between two technical committees, one headed by a key official of MOFA and the other by a senior member of the Secretariat of the SNSC. The committees

are joined in *Figure 6.2* for purposes of illustration, because of the close cooperation between the two bodies as they interact with the E3/EU, and because the officials of both committees form the core of the Iranian negotiating team which has a rotating leadership. Other members either came from the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI) or had technical and military links with the IRGC. The Expert Committee had the following members in 2005 (cf. WMD Insights 2007:1-2, 4; Chubin 2006:39; Savyon 2005:2; SpiegelOnline 2005:6): Sirus Naseri from MOFA who headed the negotiating team, was responsible for technical issues on a foreign affairs level and acted as a key adviser to Rohani and as head of Iran's permanent delegation to the IAEA in Vienna; Husayn Moussavian, from the SNSC, was the deputy head of the negotiating team. Other members were Brigadier General Ali Hossein Tash, who is the deputy head of the SNSC for Strategic Affairs and a senior IRGC commander; Mohammad Saidi as deputy head of the AEOI for International Affairs and Planning; and Alaeddin Bouroujerdi, the Chairman of the Majlis' National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

6.4.4.3 Ratification and involuntary defection

Putnam (1988) argues that there is a symbiotic relationship between ratification and the chief negotiator in the sense that the latter consults and coordinates the domestic opinions on *Level II* in order to gain results in the negotiations on *Level I*. The best example in Iran is the *Majlis'* refusal to ratify the signing of the Additional Protocol to the NPT although Rohani had signed the agreement. This illustrated Putnam's concept of *involuntary defection* where the domestic constituency or *Majlis (Level II)* vetoed the actions of the chief nuclear negotiator on *Level I* (the international arena).

6.4.4.4 Nuclear policy shifts in the post-2005 period

- a) The presence of two nuclear factions in Iran

There are two diverging nuclear factions in Iran: a *pro-nuclear* and an *anti-nuclear faction*. However, despite differences in the approaches informing nuclear policy,

consensus does exist in that both factions agree that Iran is entitled to develop a civil nuclear capability. They also jointly subscribe to the view that Iran did not transgress any international commitments, but was only guilty of not fully disclosing the details of its nuclear programme to the IAEA (Moshirzadeh 2007:521; Savyon 2004:1). Despite broad public support for the nuclear programme, the nuclear debate is inconclusive and its outcome will depend on the interplay between the factions (Ehteshami 2006:81).

- i) The *pro-nuclear faction* includes the authoritarian and the conservative schools. The authoritarian school is a relatively small, but powerful faction consisting of radical conservatives and military and intelligence entities and has increasingly infiltrated the *nazam* (system). It has no objection to the development of nuclear weapons, but sees it as an effective deterrent of existing threats to Iran (Haghighatjoo 2006:4; Samii 2006:82). There is some overlap with the conservative school, which insists on the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. This group currently has political control in Iran and supports the views of Ayatollah Khamenei, which means that it controls the Iranian nuclear dossier. The pro-nuclear faction in general advocates a nuclear option for Iran, stating that it should follow a national security policy based on self-sufficiency and deterrence comparable to regional nuclear actors like Pakistan and Israel. It believes that Iran needs a nuclear deterrent, due to its distrust of the real intentions of the US in the region after the invasion of Iraq, and because Iran's regional neighbours are concurrently receiving arms and nuclear assistance from the US, which necessitates the development of the said Iranian nuclear capability. Iran emphasised, however, that it would stay within international agreements and protocols in order to gain access to civil nuclear technology as is its right, but that it might leave the NPT if threatened and if the Supreme Leader so decides (Lotfian 2008:161-164).
- ii) The *anti-nuclear faction* sees uranium enrichment for the purpose of nuclear weapons as dangerous to Iran, given the current international climate; hence it has advocated a review of Iran's need for nuclear power and nuclear military

technology. It views a WMD capacity as inhumane, wasteful and forbidden (*haram*) under Islam. It is argued that Iran is a developing country, which makes it politically and economically costly to develop this capacity since it could involve Iran in an arms race or conflict with nuclear-weapon states (Lotfian 2008:164-166; Afrasiabi & Kibaroglu 2005:257).

b) The influence of President Ahmadinejad on nuclear policy

The shifts in nuclear policy after Ahmadinejad's election in 2005 related directly to the existence of the two factions and involved changes in approach to the nuclear negotiations and the personnel involved in the various policy committees. A more nationalist-resistance approach became noticeable as the control of the IRGC, Basiji, and other "securocrats" in the *nazam* rise to increasing prominence in the cabinet, the SNSC and in the nuclear negotiating team. WMD Insights (2007:1, 3-4) observed that Rohani, the key nuclear negotiator, was replaced with Larijani, while key negotiators like Naseri and Moussavian were suddenly discredited or imprisoned on charges of espionage for "leaking nuclear secrets to foreign powers". Ahmadinejad also recalled or forced the key Iranian ambassadors (in Britain, France, Germany and at the UN) to submit their resignations, thus causing a deadlock in the negotiations (Samii 2005b:4). The nuclear negotiating team of the Khatami period has effectively been replaced by a group of hard-liners, whose changed negotiating stance was one of the factors that persuaded the IAEA to submit the Iranian nuclear dossier to the UN Security Council in March 2006 (Chubin 2006:xx; 38-39; Iran Focus 2005b:1). Ahmadinejad's general lack of diplomatic finesse and the unfavourable comparison between his new foreign policy team and Khatami's team also adds to the stalemate or failure in the nuclear negotiations (Samii 2005b:2). Another two factors were the marked differences in the negotiating teams: Kamal Kharrazi, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Rohani as nuclear negotiator, were experienced and willing to emphasise Iranian national interests in their diplomatic interactions. Their successor team of Manucher Mottaki and Ali Larijani was in contrast, inexperienced and projected no longer the impression of rationality; they were instead driven by ideology and nationalism, which strengthens the hard-line image of

Ahmadinejad's government and the perceived irrationality of the Iranian negotiating team. Ahmadinejad's policies led to a total membership change in the negotiating team after 2006 and a total makeover of the "joint *Expert Committee*", who formed the core of the Iranian negotiating team. Although these activities were post-2006 and thus outside the scope of this dissertation, it is important to note two critical considerations, namely the growing importance of "securocrats" like the IRGC and the unchanged nature of the institutions (e.g. the SNSC, cabinet and the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran -AEOI) formerly participating in the negotiating team (Alfoneh 2008:1-3; Samii 2006:74-86).

6.5 THE IRAN-E3/EU NUCLEAR DIALOGUE

6.5.1 The nuclear dialogue: a framework for discussion

The section deals with the final question of how the nuclear dialogue was organised as well as the factors that influenced the process. While key elements will of necessity be discussed or at least mentioned in *Table 6.1*, it should be noted again that the focus will be on Iranian behaviour or modalities throughout all the phases of the negotiations, thus answering the first question: "How do Iranian diplomats negotiate?" At this point the development of Iran-EU relations before 2002, that is, when Iran-EU interaction moved from "Critical Dialogue" to "Comprehensive Dialogue", needs to be reviewed for context. Negotiations between Iran and Europe were not unusual before the nuclear crisis. These negotiations were mainly conducted with the object of functional accommodation based upon political, economic and diplomatic necessities (cf. Moshaver 2005:183). Noi (2005:83, 84), Rouleau (2002:147-151) and Moshaver (2005:183) observed that Europe initially followed the US arms embargo after the hostage crisis and that with the exception of Germany, relations between Iran and Europe worsened. Germany assisted as broker to gain the release of US hostages and used the opportunity thus created to improve its relations and particularly its trade with Iran. By contrast, Britain and France were distrusted because Britain had participated in the 1953 *coup*, while France had supplied arms to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War. After the war, during the Rafsanjani presidency, a

new era of re-construction and dialogue started as Iran tried to break out of its international isolation.

Iran's policy changes led to the convergence of the policies pursued by Germany, Britain and France in a "Critical Dialogue" during the 1990s. This was Europe's answer to the dual containment Bill passed in the US, which led to the *Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA)* (cf. 6.3.2.1). Rouleau (2002:143) notes differences between the approaches respectively adopted by Europe and the US, which resided in the fact that Europe opted for the soft diplomatic approach to counter the heavy-handed or "stick" approach of the US. According to Posch (2006:100), the negotiations amounted to a "critical dialogue" since all the prominent concerns at the time - from the Rushdie affair to human rights - were discussed and there was a "dialogue" because Iran listened and was listened to. Europe's key focuses were human rights and terrorism, plus "soft security" issues like immigration, drug-trafficking and organised crime. Nuclear proliferation was only of peripheral concern (Noi 2005:86). The "Critical Dialogue" ended when the EU ministers withdrew their ambassadors from Tehran after the verdict of the Mykonos Trial in Germany, which exposed high-level Iranian involvement in the assassination of Kurdish leaders in exile, which led to the indictment of senior Iranian officials, including Rafsanjani. The election of Khatami in 1997 on a reformist platform restarted a "Comprehensive Dialogue" in 1998 since Europe believed that closer relations with Iran would assist the reform movement. It resulted in major European investments and a Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) in 2001 (Moshaver 2005:187; Tertrais 2006:30-31). The economic dealings, however, ended in 2002 when Iran's covert nuclear programme was revealed.

6.5.2 Linked negotiations

The negotiating environment clearly showed that the Iran-E3/EU nuclear dialogue was part of a complex system of linked negotiations as illustrated in *Figure 6.3*. Moreover, from 2003 to 2006 the Iran-E3/EU negotiations proceeded on two levels: between Iran and the three countries of the E3/EU, and with the IAEA Board of Governors in Vienna, who frequently sent inspectors to Iran for intrusive inspections. In 2006, after Iran's non-

compliance was reported to the UNSC, the E3/EU was joined by Russia, the US and China. The nuclear dialogue also illustrated interactions between *Level II* (the domestic arena) and *Level I* (the international arena) as illustrated in *Figure 6.2* via the nuclear negotiator in accordance with Putnam’s model (1988), which linked domestic negotiations between the international actors mentioned as part of *Level I*. Moreover, *Figure 6.3* shows 12 successive sets of negotiating linkages (A1 to A12). There are also five triangular sets of relationships (B1 to B5), with B1, B2 and B5 as the most important.

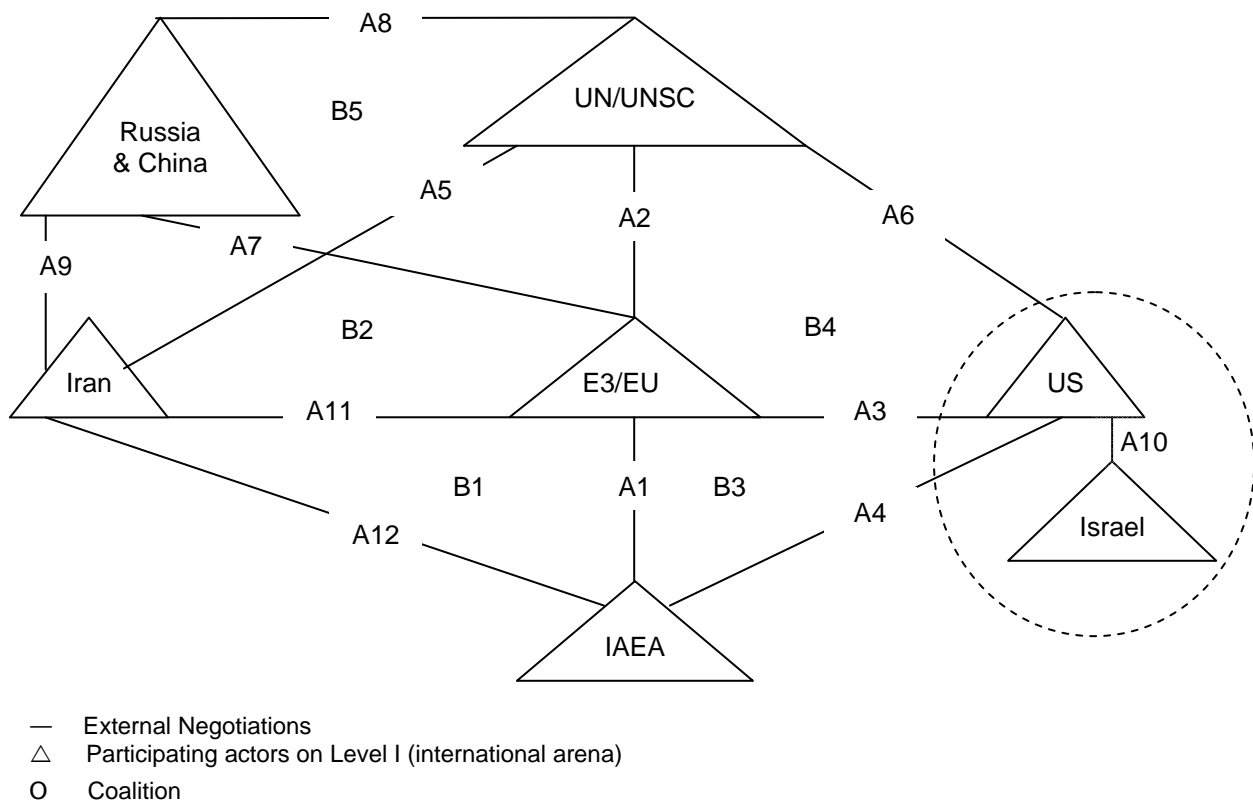


Figure 6.3: A Linked System of Negotiations

Source : Adapted from Watkins & Rosegrant (2001: 19, 58)

While A11 and A12 are the principal negotiating links between Iran and the E3/EU, the principal triangular relationship (B1) between Iran, the E3/EU and IAEA is pivotal from an Iranian point of view. The importance of these relationships is multidimensional in that it provided Iran with the opportunity to counter US pressure on the nuclear programme; prevent the imposition of sanctions and regime change; and protect the Iranian nuclear

programme (Ganji 2005:14; Smeland 2004:45). Europe became the main interlocutor because the US has lost all influence in Iran. The initial US apathy gave Iran the required space to develop its nuclear programme. Consequently, the military threat became a valuable option for the US and Israel as Iran moves closer to its objectives, as shown in A10. Yet at least until 2006, the E3/EU remained unwilling to consider military action.

6.5.2.1 Iranian nuclear principles

It is important to highlight a number of key negotiating principles in Iran's nuclear policy before discussing the principal negotiating link between Iran and the E3/EU (A11 and A12) (cf. 6.5.3). These principles cut across both the A11 environment and the principal triangular relationship (B1) between Iran, the E3/EU and the IAEA as well as the US-Israeli coalition (A10) against Iran. The divergence in the views of the West and Iran on the nuclear policy is also important. While the West focused on the tangible dimension (criticism and rejection) and the Western world view, the Iranian position is based on intangible, metaphysical dimensions such as status, prestige, religion and ideology. Moshirzadeh's (2007) discursive approach, which identifies justice, independence and resistance as key dimensions, encompasses these intangible Iranian principles and critically informs the following discussion. The tangible Western point of view is reflected throughout as a contraposition to show the differences in approach or the lack of understanding between the opposing negotiators.

a) Justice

Justice is a key value in Islamic ethics and a pervasive theme throughout the Qur'an, for example Sura IV/135, which calls on believers to stand firm for justice. Iran sees justice as a pivotal element of its approach to the international community where Iran considers itself as being engaged on the "right" side in a perpetual struggle between the oppressed (*mostazafin*) and the oppressors (*mostakbarin*) (cf. Article 154 of the Iranian Constitution and 1.2.3.2 for relevant discussion). It is important to note in this regard that Iran is *not* challenging the broad constitutional order (or principles) generally adhered to by the

international community; rather it inveighs against the injustices of that order since it remains part of the UN and subscribes to international treaties (Hashmi 2001:110). Moshirzadeh (2007:533-535), Zunes (2005:1, 3), and President Ahmadinejad during his address on 17 September 2005 to the UN General Assembly, accused the West of unjust and discriminatory behaviour attributable to double standards. The first three writers in particular criticised the US, because of its use of the bipartisan consensus in Congress, to determine which countries may or may not develop nuclear weapons. Ahmadinejad coined “nuclear apartheid” as a “rubric” for all the discriminatory actions of the West and insisted again on Iran’s inalienable right to have access to a nuclear fuel cycle. He emphasised that the “pursuit of nuclear weapons is prohibited in Iran”, but stressed Iran’s readiness to share its nuclear secrets through a nuclear partnership with other Muslim countries.

Mainly due to the divergence in the two parties’ respective world views since 1979, the West generally rejects the Iranian arguments about justice as irrational and perceives Iran as a confusing society. While the West is more inclined to follow a clinically-legalistic approach, the Iranian position hinges on principles or broad frameworks (cf. chapter 5). Since the Iranian approach is based on its identity (history and religion) it is imbedded with hidden meanings, which make agreements and compromises difficult, if not impossible to reach. Iran has nonetheless been successful (cf. Moshirzadeh 2007:535) at persuading the IAEA Board of Governors, who represent members of the developing world and are thus more concerned about justice, that it has a viable case. Ahmadinejad’s observation about the unjust practices of the US also appears to be correct since Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary of State (cf. Rice, 19 April 2006:10 during a Q&A Session with the Council on Foreign Relations CFR), acknowledged the existence of a double standard.

b) Independence

The independence discourse of Iran connects closely with the principles of self-reliance and the rejection of foreign interventions (*Gharbzadegi*), explained by Moshirzadeh (2007:529-531) and Al-e Ahmad (1982). Self-reliance has been a key policy since the Iran-Iraq War, and Article 3 of the Iranian Constitution stresses “*the attainment of self-*

sufficiency in the scientific, technological, industrial, agricultural and military domains". Respect and sovereignty are central as noted where prestige was discussed as nuclear driver. The related argument about respect is also vital and is emphasised by Iran to the extent that it has become an immovable principle informing its nuclear dialogue with the E3/EU (Tertrais 2006:26; Pollack 2004:396).

The principal element of the Iranian nuclear policy is the *legal argument*. It emphasises sovereignty and independence and is based on Iran's membership of the NPT and particularly Article IV, which asserts the principle of a "peaceful nuclear program", especially the "inalienable right of all Parties to develop, research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination" (IAEA, INFCIRC/140 of 22 April 1974: 3). Two additional statements respectively made by Kamal Kharrazi, the former Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the 7th NPT Review Conference on 3 May 2005, and by the Islamic Republic of Iran on Peaceful uses of Nuclear Energy at the NPT 2005 Review Conference (19 May 2005:1-2), also stressed this issue as well as the IAEA's functions regarding the provision of assistance with the development of nuclear energy for peaceful uses and adequate technology transfers, from which Iran has hitherto been barred by the US. Moreover, Iran regularly repeated that its nuclear-energy research is under intrusive IAEA surveillance and that it has signed the agreements prohibiting the production and storage of nuclear and chemical weapons. In any case the IAEA has failed to produce any firm evidence that Iran has a military nuclear programme, and besides Iran is a signatory to the Additional Protocol Agreement to the NPT dated December 2003 and verifiably adheres to the spirit of the agreement despite the failure of the Majlis to ratify the protocol and make it legally binding (Aras 2000:156; Chubin 2006:xvi; Kemp 2003:51).

The second argument is based on the energy issue, an increasingly important element of official policy. In this regard, Iran has failed to convince the international community with arguments citing economic considerations and a need for promoting self-reliance, and the same fate has befallen Iran's insistence on the civilian or non-military nature of its programme. The general argument has failed, therefore, and is usually countered by

emphasising Iran's large oil and gas reserves and the enormous cost of producing nuclear energy as a compelling reason to close down its enrichment programme and rather import much cheaper nuclear fuel (Moshirzadeh 2007:524). The Iranian argument regarding self-reliance, which is based on Iran's distrust of the West, is either not fully understood, or simply ignored. To the Iranian mindset this perceived indifference is indicative of Western ignorance and double standards and an intention to keep Iran poor and dependent.

Criticism and condemnation of the Iranian nuclear programme in general is the result of mistrust, conflicting views and a total lack of understanding on both sides. Three key arguments have been advanced in this regard: First, the West, primarily the US, was baffled by the ambiguous nature of the Iranian programme and condemned Iran for attempting to acquire the "full fuel cycle" including uranium mining, uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing. It is generally held that Iran intends to "weaponise" its nuclear capability (Chubin 2006:24-25; Squassoni 2006: CR-4). Elements that are either criticised or perceived as evidence of "weaponisation" include: the vast scope of the Iranian programme, its covert nature, the role of the IRGC (a sign of military control), the cost, and Iran's massive oil deposits, all of which raise a question mark over the aim of Iran's nuclear programme. The West argued that other countries who have sought nuclear energy did not acquire enrichment capabilities and that if Iran wanted to acquire only civilian nuclear power it should have done so openly within the framework of the NPT, instead of violating the treaty by using the A.Q. Khan network, which was known for selling equipment and know-how to countries intent on "weaponising" a nuclear capability (Pollack 2006:9).

Although the *National Intelligence Estimate (NIE)* of November 2007 overturned US intelligence views of 2005 when it judged with "high confidence" that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons programme in the fall of 2003, and even the IAEA failed to identify any "steps that Iran has taken towards weaponisation", the Bush administration persisted with its anti-Iranian policies and military threats (Venter 2005:85). The possible presence of a "smoking gun" and Iran's continuous pursuit of the fuel cycle, however, are taken as sufficient evidence by the US that Iran is seeking a nuclear weapons capability. The US

rejects Iran's insistence that it will not abandon its nuclear programme, especially its uranium enrichment activities, since *the* US in particular wants Iran to permanently end its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities. Iran's admission that it was only guilty of not fully disclosing the details of its nuclear programme to the IAEA and its insistence that it had been cooperating fully with the IAEA, and has also observed all international standards and commitments, are rejected as a continuing smokescreen by the US (Moshirzadeh 2007:521; Saikal 2006:194; Pollack 2006:8). The US finds the prospect of a nuclear Iran unacceptable and President Bush has stated explicitly in this regard (cf. Berman 2004:46) that "the US will not tolerate a nuclear Iran". The issue was clarified by Rice 2006:7, the US Secretary of State, when she noted during a Council on Foreign Relations Questions and Answer Session in April 2006 that the US mistrusts Iran, given its deception of more than 18 years and Iran's covert nuclear activities. Moreover, while Iran has the right to develop civil nuclear power, that "right" cannot include the ability to enrich and reprocess fissile material on Iranian territory, because such technological know-how will enable Iran to produce nuclear weapons.

Another reason why the US condemns Iran is the latter's lack of transparency borne out by its contradictory policies, or what it sees as Iran's strategy of nuclear deception employed by senior Iranian officials as illustrated below:

- The *fatwa* (religious ruling) of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, which prohibits the production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons (IAEA, INFCIRC/657 2005:21).
- Former Foreign Minister Velayati's view that distrust of the superpowers was the key reason why Iran had to build its nuclear programme covertly because these countries would assume that Iran was pursuing a nuclear weapons programme (Ganji 2005:2).
- The declaration of 9 February 2003 by the reformist President Khatami that Iran aspired to have the full nuclear cycle (Reissner 2006:118).

The West thirdly perceives that a nuclear Iran would be a destabilising factor in the Middle East. This assessment is based on the dual threat emanating from Iranian nuclear proliferation and its missile programme, since Iran's *Shahab -3/3M* missiles could also be used as a nuclear delivery system to target mainly Israel, US troop deployments in the region (e.g. in Iraq and southern Europe) (IISS Strategic Dossier 2005:100; Kaye & Wehrey 2007:111-113, 117; Thränert 2005:3; Pollack 2006:10-11). Apart from the potential threat of a nuclear capability there is also growing concern in the West about Iranian sponsored terrorism (including nuclear terrorism) and Iran's new confrontational strategic doctrine of "deterrent defence", which is designed to confront a "broad spectrum of threats to Iran's national security, which include foreign aggression, border incidents, espionage, sabotage, regional crises derived from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), state terrorism and discrimination in manufacturing and storing WMD" (Berman 2004:45).

Iran's reaction to attempts at foreign intervention and criticism were to reemphasise its inalienable right to a peaceful nuclear programme. It has also frequently stated that its covert and indigenous nuclear programme is intended to counter the US policy of denial, which thwarted all Iranian requests for the continuation of international nuclear assistance after the revolution of 1979. US criticism about deception and lack of transparency is explained, probably correctly, as reflecting the stance of a fragmented Iranian polity on the nuclear issue. While statements probably are intended to confuse as part of the Iranian negotiating strategy, one can nonetheless accept at least part of Iran's explanation if measured against the number of formal and informal leadership structures involved in nuclear decision making. Iran has adopted the strategy of "deterrent defence", explaining that it is part of total strategy initiated by Iran to develop its diplomatic relations, links with terrorist groups and its conventional military capacities as part of a "spoiler strategy" intent on opposing Israel and the Middle East peace process and forcing the US from the region. Iranians have implied that the drive to achieve nuclear deterrence is aimed at the US presence, since the realisation of such a scenario means that Iran will never have to fear US retaliation (Pollack 2006:11).

While international perceptions have coalesced since 2005 into an increasingly coherent anti-Iranian policy under the Bush administration, the opposite was true during the period between 2003 and 2005, when Iran-E3/EU nuclear negotiations were intense, but cooperative. During this period there was a clear difference in approach between the US, Israel, occasionally Britain, and France and Germany as the other members of the E3/EU. The E3/EU generally preferred a “soft power” approach and opposed military action, but the opposite is true of the US, which has preferred since 2002 a dual policy of pressure through its policies of denial, support of regime change in Iran, and a relentlessly sustained threatening posture to use the military option with the support of Israel. Since the US has no influence in Iran, due to the absence of relations and sanctions, the US, was according to President Bush, forced, to “outsource” negotiations to the E3/EU (Bahgat 2006:320; Martin 2007:70-71).

c) Resistance

The resistance and independence discourses are directly connected and reflect an Iranian abhorrence of any attempt at foreign intervention. Resistance has become especially prominent in the changes in the nuclear negotiating team after the election of President Ahmadinejad in 2005 when it became the main feature of his presidency as international pressure increased. Resistance contrasts sharply with Khatami’s nuclear policy, which was based on cooperation. The “securocrats” became prominent and emphasised an uncompromising “self” or *zاهر* against their internal opposition. This is part of the constant *baten-zاهر* interplay (cf. 3.3.2.1) with *baten* referring to the inner core of human feelings and emotions where it is safe from the outside world, while the *zاهر* in this particular case refers to the negative characteristics in Iranian culture, namely suspicion, cynicism, shrewdness, opportunism, hypocrisy and insincerity (Beeman 1986:11; Bar 2004:5).

Resistance contains a political-religious element and is related to the justice discourse. It also deals primarily with US discrimination against Iran. According to Iran the real problem of the US with Iran is not the nuclear issue, but rather its theocratic government, which the US refuses to accept. The US therefore backs “regime change” on the pretext of

dealing with the nuclear issue. Iran was ruled before the revolution by pro-US elites, with the result that the US was treated with deference in Iran. After the religious take-over and hostage crisis, Iran became pigeonholed as a country run by an irrational leadership (Tarock 2006:650-651; Saikal 2006:195). The US felt humiliated with the result that successive generations of US leaders follow costly, self-defeating and inflexible policies towards Iran (Halliday 2006:62).

6.5.3 The Iran-E3/EU nuclear dialogue: A two-phased process

6.5.3.1 Phase I: Preliminary negotiations

a) Timeline

Phase I effectively started in August 2002 with the revelation of Iran's covert nuclear programme and ended in October 2003 with the signing of the *Tehran Agreement* between Iran and the Foreign Ministers of Britain, France and Germany to establish the principal negotiating link between Iran and the E3/EU (A11) (cf. *Figure 6.3*).

b) Trigger factors

The crisis was triggered when the US rejected an Iranian offer to discuss a “grand bargain”, including the possibility to address concerns about its nuclear programme and its alleged support of terrorism, in exchange for normalising relations and lifting economic sanctions. The offer was ignored by the US after its success in Iraq and because it did not trust Iran (Harnisch & Linden 2005:45; Thränert 2006:28-35). The US instead increased pressure on Iran after the IAEA Board of Governors' Statement of June 6, 2003 (IAEA GOV/2003/40), asserting that Iran “has failed its obligations under its Safeguard Agreement with respect to the reporting, of nuclear material, the subsequent processing and use of that material, and the declaration of facilities where the material was stored and processed”. The US wanted to take the Iranian dossier to the UNSC without further

delay, but the other Board members argued that Iran should be allowed the time to correct its mistakes as in other similar cases (IISS Strategic Dossier 2005:17).

c) The main reasons for European mediation

Europe had several reasons for its involvement, including political, economic and security reasons. On a political level, Europe wanted to prove the strength of trans-Atlantic cooperation after the US “outsourced” the mediating role with regard to Iran. The Iranian case also presented Europe with the opportunity to test its mediation skills and gain greater political cohesion among the EU members and in the institution, which was being restructured at the time. Involvement was furthermore seen as leading to improvements in the advancement of Iran’s democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Because the key European countries (Germany, Britain and France) already had a working relationship with Iran due to the “Critical and Comprehensive Dialogues”, they were able to fill the need for neutral interlocutors. Economic reasons also primarily resulted from the mentioned “dialogues” and have elevated Europe to the position of being Iran’s most important trading partner. Iranian oil or more specifically the accessibility of oil from the Persian Gulf region for Europe also emphasised the importance of a stable and secure environment in its adjacent regions. The possible security threat from a purported Iranian nuclear capability and the Iranian missile threat, especially due to Europe’s proximity to Iran, made it vital for Europe to become involved. Moreover, the EU wanted to test its new Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) initiative, which was then being approved, in mediation with Iran (Bailes 2005:1-2; Smeland 2004:42-44). Harnisch (2007:6) notes that Russia, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the IAEA favoured European mediation because they believed that the Iranian nuclear issue should be dealt with outside the UNSC, and that the US, fresh from its ‘victory’ in Iraq, should not be allowed to get involved. Thus the EU approach throughout 2003 was focused on investigating if Iran has transgressed any of its obligations under the NPT Safeguard Agreement (cf. IAEA GOV/2003/40). Failure in this approach was perceived by the mentioned countries as tantamount to the

trigger for an escalation, which could push Iran towards the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

d) Iran and EU mediation

The Iranian motivation relates directly to its security calculus, its specific political objectives, and the key drivers discussed in 6.2.1.1. The negotiating relationship created in this way was part of a gradualist Iranian approach to negotiations in which Europe was just the first step towards negotiating directly with the US. Iran methodically selected Europe as mediator because (cf. Beeman 2006:95-96) personal estrangement in Iran (colloquially known as *qahr*) can only be dissolved when a group of mutual friends or relatives step in to force reconciliation (*ashti*). Tehran selected Germany, France and Britain as interlocutors due to the trust that existed between these countries and Iran. However, when the E3/EU adopted the US hard-line approach according to Iran, that is, the highly critical policies of the US regarding Iran's nuclear energy development, the E3/EU lost its image of credibility, trust and influence in Iran. As the US raised its involvement from mere proxy status to a more active role, the Iranian negotiating environment became more complex since Iran had to interact at once with the E3/EU (A11/12), and the E3/EU and IAEA, the US, Russia, China and UNSC in terms of the B1 to B7 triangular relationships (cf. *Figure 6.3*).

e) The negotiating process

It was a relatively brief process, with only a number of key events such as the “linked” nature of the negotiations highlighting the period. The EU (the E3/EU was not yet in existence) believed in “soft power” or “conditional engagement”, excluding threats or the military option adopted by the US. In terms of specificity the European countries linked the signing of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) - which Iran needed because the US was blocking its attempts to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO) - to the signing by Iran of the IAEA's Additional Protocol on Safeguards (Bahgat 2006:325; 2005:33). Since the Additional Protocol (despite its voluntary nature) gives the IAEA the

right to conduct intrusive inspections to find more nuclear material and infrastructure, Iran refused to sign this Protocol, with the result that it was punished. Bilateral discussions on the TCA were suspended in June 2003, although the decision caused some division within the broader EU. The decision was reflected by IAEA Statement GOV 2003/40 (see above), which dwelt on Iran's transgressions, again formally asking it to sign the Additional Protocol. The problem according to Sauer (2007:618) was not the fact that Iran as a NPT member was involved in nuclear activities, but that it failed to meet its obligation to declare these activities to the IAEA. When Iran admitted in August 2003, after a time-delay, that it had received foreign assistance with its nuclear programme, the IAEA Board of Governors adopted GOV/2003/69 on 12 September 2003 in which Iran was ordered to comply with its safeguards agreements by "providing a full declaration of all the materials and imported materials and component parts relevant to its enrichment programme as well as unrestricted access" before the end of October 2003. A stalemate ensued and as the crisis was building the Foreign Ministers of Britain, France and Germany in concert wrote a letter to the Iranian leaders, offering to mediate. The ministers finally visited Iran to conclude the *Tehran Agreement*, promising that in return for Iran signing the Additional Protocol, Europe would negotiate with the international community and renew economic and trade deals with Iran. The agreement countered US initiatives of taking Iran to the UNSC and ended Phase I (Sauer 2007:618; Posch 2006:103).

f) Methodology

Although Iran's negotiating style or behaviour was not clearly developed at the time it is possible to identify at least three characteristics that are integral to Persian / Iranian diplomatic tradecraft. Firstly, it can be argued that Iranian diplomatic interaction displayed a zig-zag pattern as it evaded increasing Western pressure through limited cooperation. Secondly, from an Iranian point of view the long periods of procrastination amounted to the application of the offensive Shī'a strategy of *tanfih* (a strategy of aloofness or judiciously doing nothing, since it is the doers who will eventually make the mistakes). Thirdly, it is obvious from an analysis of IAEA GOV/2003/40 (when Iran

admitted the validity of the IAEA's criticism and promised to rectify the situation) that Iran also practised both the strategies of *khod'eh* (telling half-truths to the disadvantage of its enemy) and the strategy of *kitmān* or the current form of *taqiyyah* (cf. 3.5). Due to the perception that history was repeating itself, Iran has claimed the right to use any method as a negotiating position because of its traditional weakness when compared to the foreign powers.

A related argument focused on Iran's insistence on its "inalienable right to have a civil nuclear programme" and the fact that it was initially unprepared for Western intervention in its internal affairs. It consequently felt threatened as the Iranian leadership created the essential nuclear negotiating structures and appointed a single nuclear negotiator. The policy statements of Rohani (2005:5) reflect this fact and acknowledged the cost of Iranian concealment, thus admitting the existence of a covert nuclear programme. He also emphasised that Iran knew as early as 2003 that indirect proxy talks with the E3/EU would not be enough and accepted that referral to the UNSC would be inevitable regardless of the policy it adopted. As part of a deception strategy, however, Iran decided to negotiate with a view to playing for time to finish key nuclear projects (Rohani 2005:33; Kane 2006:6).

6.5.3.2 Phase II: From the Tehran Agreement until the breakdown in March 2006

a) Timeline

Although most authors (cf. Sauer 2007:616-617; Harnisch 2007; Harnish & Linden 2005; Davidson & Powers 2005) divided Iran's nuclear negotiations with the E3/EU in four phases³¹, this author will discuss the negotiating period as one continuous phase. The focus will not be on the detailed, linear development over time of the nuclear negotiations, but on the development of Iran's nuclear methodology throughout the

³¹ The phases are firstly, the revelation in 2002 of the programme; a second phase starting in October 2003 with the Tehran Agreement until the negotiations ended in August 2005; then thirdly, escalation of IAEA activities lasting until February and finally referral to the UNSC in March 2006.

negotiating phase (cf. *Table 6.1*). Phase II started in October 2003 with the signing of the Tehran Agreement and ended with the breakdown of negotiations in March 2006 when the E3/EU finally reported Iran to the UNSC. The broadening of the dialogue is reflected in the relationship between Iran, the E3/EU, the IAEA, and the US as well as the trilateral interaction between Iran, the E3/EU, IAEA, US and the UNSC illustrated as B1, B2, B3 and B4 (cf. *Figure 6.3*).

It also needs to be emphasised that the E3/EU negotiating structure had in October 2003 not materialised ahead of the three European ministers' visit to Tehran. They actually presented their compromise resolution,³² without EU consultation (Harnish & Linden 2005:46). Iran initially delayed its invitation because of its distrust that three independent European countries would join forces to visit a non-European country; after all it was quite unprecedented (Rohani 2005:6). The trilateral undertaking evolved into the E3/EU when Javier Solana, the High Representative of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), joined the group to become the direct counterpart of the Iranian nuclear negotiator. While the E3/EU would be driving EU policy, it took until October 2005 for the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) of the EU to confirm that the EU formally supports the E3/EU approach towards Iran (Solana Statement, SO304/04 of 15 November 2004; Harnish 2007:4).

³² It demanded Iran's full acceptance of the Additional Protocol, a suspension of further activities related to uranium enrichment, including the introduction of nuclear material into Natanz.

Table 6.1: THE ZIG-ZAG PATTERN OF IRAN-E3/EU NUCLEAR NEGOTIATIONS AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE INTERACTIVE BARGAINING PROCESS BETWEEN THE PARTIES BASED ON A NUMBER OF KEY EVENTS

E3/EU ACTION / THREAT	DATE	IRAN COUNTER-ACTION
KHATAMI ADMINISTRATION OCTOBER 2003-AUGUST 2005		
European representatives visit Tehran to sign Agreement. [A]	<p style="text-align: center;">July 2003</p> <p style="text-align: center;">October 2003</p> <p style="text-align: center;">November 2003</p>	<p>Iran tests Shahab-3 Missile, thus threatening the West. [B]</p> <p>Iran accepts Agreement and agrees to fully declare outstanding issues about its nuclear programme to IAEA. [BB]</p> <p>Iran <i>signs</i> the Additional Protocol to the NPT, but it remains to be ratified by Majlis. [BBB]</p>
E3/EU realises that Iran has violated Tehran Agreement and warns Iran about the gaps in its “full declaration” [C]	March - May 2004	Iran unhappy about “carrots” it had obtained from the E3/EU, threatens to resume uranium conversion and to build heavy-water plant. [D]
El Baradei, then head of the IAEA visits Iran to persuade it to make a “full declaration”. A week later the Board of Governors reports that Iran’s cooperation was not as full and cooperative as it should have been. [E]	20 May 2004	Iran responds by announcing that it will resume the production of centrifuges. [F]
The E3/EU raised the stakes and demand that Iran cooperates with the IAEA before the end of October 2004. [H]	September 2004	<p>Iran starts converting uranium into uranium gas. [G]</p> <p>Iran responds positively to the E3/EU ultimatum and agrees to suspend its conversion operation for a couple of months. [I]</p>
<p>The E3/EU proposes a comprehensive new deal with Iran, which includes the start of negotiations on economic benefits and the delivery of light water reactors. It was formally signed on 14 November 2004 as the Paris Agreement. [J]</p> <p>The US shifts its policy on Iran to backing the E3/EU stance and offers of economic incentives (WTO membership and spares for Iranian civilian aircraft) if Iran abandons its nuclear programme. [L]</p> <p>E3/EU threatens to break-off negotiations. [N]</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">21 October - 14 November 2004</p> <p style="text-align: center;">December 2004</p> <p style="text-align: center;">March 2005</p>	Iran responds <i>positively</i> to the creation of three working groups dealing with technology transfer; security; security and trade co-operation. It however became frustrated because the nuclear dossier was repeatedly placed back on the IAEA’s Agenda by the Organisation. Iran also believes that the E3/EU broke its word by not closing the dossier before June 2004 as promised. [K] Its frustration leads to threats to resume enrichment if negotiations fail. [M]



THE IRANIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE AHMADINEJAD ADMINISTRATION IN JUNE 2005		
Contrary to expectations of E3/EU and the US, it was President Ahmadinejad and not the more “pragmatic” Rafsanjani who came to power. [P]	June 2005	President Ahmadinejad came to power with overwhelming support of the IRGC and the Basiji. [O]
E3/EU promises new negotiating package. [Q] The E3/EU consequently ends the negotiations. [S]	August 2005	The new Iranian nuclear negotiating team projects a more radical or hard-line stance and rejects the E3/EU proposals. It announces Iran’s right to have an indigenous full cycle capability (including enrichment and reprocessing) as well as Iran’s intentions to resume uranium conversion. [R]
	12 September 2005	Ayatollah Khamanei issues <i>fatwa</i> that the production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons are forbidden under Islam and that Iran shall never acquire these weapons. [T]
The E3/EU views Iran’s conversion of uranium as “red line” and compiles resolution to the UNSC. For the first time China and Russia were not persuaded to utilise their veto. Resolution finds Iran non-compliant and warns that its dossier will be forwarded to the UNSC in November 2005 at the next IAEA Governors Meeting. E3/EU again states that negotiations can only proceed if Iran suspends its enrichment program. [U] E3/EU finds compromise between the Iranian, US and Chinese / Russian positions. [W]	24 September 2005	Iran produces sufficient documentation to counter E3/EU initiatives and despite Ahmadinejad’s statements on Israel, succeeds in keeping the Iranian dossier from the UNSC. [V]
	October 2005	
	November 2005	
Negotiations in stale-mate. The E3/EU forwards the nuclear dossier to the UNSC. [X]	December 2005 – January 2006	Iran threatens to resume uranium enrichment and actually crosses this “red line”. Iran also threatens to end its cooperation with the IAEA and to accelerate its nuclear programme from research to the industrial level. [Y]
The E3/EU formally sends nuclear dossier to the UNSC. [Z]	2-3 February, implemented in March 2006	Iran executes its threats and suspends its voluntary cooperation with the IAEA and accelerates its nuclear programme. The nuclear negotiations with the E3/EU formally ends. [ZZ]

b) Methodology

Iran persisted with the tradecraft of evasion, procrastination, limited or no cooperation, and walk-outs (see above). However, based on a review of key issues (A-ZZ) in *Table 6.1* showing the interactive processes that influenced Iran-E3/EU nuclear negotiations between October 2003 and March 2006, Iranian methodology reflects a higher degree of variation and became at once comprehensive, more defined and obscure. The argument is supported by the following observations:

- i) Iran bargains in typical Middle Eastern fashion and IAEA officials have described Iranian negotiators as “sharp, formidable and skilful”, stop-start as well as “relentless and focused”, reflecting its Middle Eastern bargaining tradition (cf. 3.4.2), which is largely foreign to and vastly different from the clinical Western approach (Venter 2005:23). Firstly, Iranian negotiating style shows a high tendency to focus on principles and legalistic detail. Secondly, it uses a “filtering process” where the message is concurrently framed in the linguistic ambiguities of Farsi and projected through the Iranian communication techniques of *zeraengi* and *tae’arof* (cf. 3.4.1 and 3.6.1.2), whose primary focus it is to confuse the foreign power or opponent. Vital elements of information are always kept back, while deals or agreement are never really closed so as to be able to counter the West (Bar 2004:41). According to Chubin (2006:64) Iran always seeks to win every round of negotiations, frequently fabricates crises and deadlines, renegotiates arguments, makes last-minute demands and redefines obligations, which instead of strengthening its positions actually weakens any advantage Iran might have gained from the nuclear negotiating process with the E3/EU and IAEA. An excellent example of Iran’s erratic behaviour was prior to and during the negotiations leading to the Paris Agreement.
- ii) The erratic or *zig-zag* behaviour of Iran’s negotiating team throughout the negotiations period. While in most cases it seems as if the E3/EU sets the pace in the negotiations, Iran equally leads the action or raises the stakes to promote its

- objectives or interests. Moreover, the objectives pursued in Iranian negotiations are multidimensional (e.g. combinations of political, diplomatic, economic, military and / or religious). To quote Rohani, Iran has “a policy which is proceeding in [all] directions simultaneously” (Savyon 2004:3). The Paris Agreement (see *Table 6.1-J-M*) illustrates the irregularity of Iran’s negotiating behaviour: For example, speeding-up the uranium enrichment process *before* signing the Agreement → requesting the exclusion of 20 centrifuges for R&D purposes → acceptance → and showing and selling the Agreement to all and sundry as a “victory” for Iran (Chubin 2006:69).
- iii) Iran’s receptivity to E3/EU pressure and willingness to cooperate (even if only partially) with the IAEA has fluctuated as its sense of vulnerability and confidence rises and falls, as shown in *Table 6.1 (D, E and H)* (Chubin 2006:64). *Table 6.1 (U)* also illustrates the importance of the five triangular sets of relationships shown in *Figure 6.3* (B1 to B5) with B1, B2 and B5 as key elements. B2 and B5, respectively representing the relationships between Iran, the E3/EU and the IAEA as well as B5 (Iran, the UN/UNSC and the key roles of Russia and China). It illustrated Iranian attempts to keep the nuclear dossier as an IAEA mandate as well as its failure since the case was sent to the UNSC when the E3/EU convinced China and Russia not to block the initiative.
- iv) A wait-and-see approach to economic incentives. The Tehran Agreement of October 2003 is one of many examples. Iran accepted the Agreement as set out in *Table 6.1 (BB)* and even declared that it would follow its provisions, but *delayed its implementation* after the IAEA issued GOV/2003/81 on 26 November 2003, which deplored Iran’s “past failures and breaches” although Iran was not found non-compliant. It illustrated the importance of E3/EU “bridge-building” exercises which would often be repeated until 2006 in compliance with E3/EU promises to Iran “to resist US pressure” on Iran’s behalf for the duration of the negotiations (Posch 2006:103). In this regard Smeland (2004:51) notes the limits of threats in diplomacy with Iran while at the same time emphasising the importance of

economic incentives for Iran. The relative weakness of the Tehran Agreement (lacking in specific detail regarding the duration, scope and suspension issues), led to conflicting interpretations and allowed Iran ample manoeuvring space to continue with its programme (Harnish & Linden 2005:47). Iran nonetheless continued with negotiations because it was aiming for the ultimate reward, namely to bargain directly with the US and thus limit the pressure of the military threat represented by the US.

- v) Iranian pride and prestige (or its insistence on being treated with respect) compared with the E3/EU's policy of "zero tolerance". This element, though difficult to quantify, lies at the heart of Iranian negotiation style. Iran's insistence on being treated with respect has resulted in the status issue becoming integral to Iran's negotiating strategy. The E3/EU in turn insisted on "zero tolerance" and wants Iran to permanently end uranium enrichment as well as its construction of a heavy-water reactor at Arak where Iran intends to produce plutonium. Since Iran is proud of its indigenous technological breakthroughs it differs sharply with the E3/EU about the duration of the "indefinite suspension" period and actually resumed enrichment (cf. *Table 6.1 M*). The key problem is twofold: Firstly, the E3/EU's insistence on the cessation of enrichment as noted in (J & L). Although the parties agreed and signed the more comprehensive Paris Agreement, they differed in their interpretations of the "objective guarantees" mentioned in the Agreement. The E3/EU perceived it as meaning complete abstention from the fuel cycle, while Iran's counterproposal of uranium enrichment and reprocessing under full-scope IAEA safeguards in Iran were rejected by the E3/EU because of the expectation that a new Iranian President (Rafsanjani) would be more receptive to the E3/EU's views (P). Secondly, since Iran knew that the E3/EU was increasingly negotiating as a proxy of the US, and since its compromise proposal had been rejected, the Iranian political elite too became more intransigent and refused to back down on the enrichment issue, which became a symbol of sovereignty, especially after Ahmadinejad's election (as shown in P and O) when any compromise, came to be seen as dangerous, tantamount to a "loss of face", or

- culminating in “regime change” (Tetraais 2006:34; Borda 2005:7, 10; Chubin 2006:74-75; Harnisch & Linden 2005:49). Even “synergistic linkage” [a concept of Putnam (1988) used when the negotiator creates new policy options to overturn the outcome of the initial negotiations or “win-sets”] was rejected. An example was the “Russian option”, discussed between Iran and the E3/EU, where Iranian nuclear conversion could take place in Russia as a way to break the impasse on the reprocessing issue.
- vi) As pressure increases on Iran to rectify all outstanding issues, Iran in turn has used military threats and an increasingly belligerent tone to counter Western initiatives. Two examples are relevant: As illustrated in *Table 6.1 (B)*, Iran test-fired its Shahab-3 missile (with a range of 1500 km) in July 2003 as a display of its capabilities to show that Iran would not be pushed around. This gesture was especially significant since the missile could be adapted for nuclear delivery, which was one of the key reasons why the E3/EU interceded in October 2003 to stop the US, which was forcing the issue of Iranian “non-compliance” through IAEA Resolution GOV/2003/69 (2003:1). The resolution demanded that Iran rectify all outstanding issues by October 31 2003 or face referral to the UNSC (Davidson & Powers 2005:409). Since then Iran has frequently deployed military threats as an element of its political and psychological warfare when it showcased new weaponry. A second example, related to the first, is that of the incessant threats to strike at US and “Zionist” (Israeli) interests in case of an attack on Iran. What Iran is doing is to create a “balance of fear” with the West and Israel since Iran has attained effective deterrent power against its enemies, including the US in the region (Savyon 2004:11, 13).
- vii) The existence of contradictory nuclear schools in Iran (cf. 6.4.4.4) has particularly influenced the nuclear negotiations in 2005 after the election of President Ahmadinejad. Contrary to the conciliatory and pragmatic strategy followed by the nuclear negotiating team of Hassan Rohani during the Khatami administration, the new hard-line negotiating team led by Ali Larijani hardened most of Iran’s

- negotiating positions. The strategy prominently reflected the resistance narrative (and a higher degree of self-confidence, “grandstanding” and brinkmanship) (cf. 6.5.2.1 and illustrated in *Table 6.1(R)*). It also demonstrated what the ICG Middle East Briefing Report (2004:10) and Chubin (2006:34) describe as Iran and Ahmadinejad’s “simulated irrationality”, primarily as evidenced by his statements on Israel and the holocaust. Although it did him no harm in the Iranian political context to express a view long held by the extremist elements of the “Iranian Street”, negotiations became more cumbersome after his election. The Iranian polity became more cartelised and the international community had to deal with confusing, often contradictory statements made at critical times by the Supreme Leader, President and nuclear negotiator about nuclear negotiations.
- viii) The negotiations also reflect two contradictory communication protocols. The E3/EU and the IAEA always demand more “full declarations” or more access to Iran’s nuclear facilities and would then cast doubt on Iran’s lack of transparency. Hostile Western media in particular play a key role here projecting an image of Iran and its negotiators as thoroughly duplicitous. Iran counters with innuendo and ambiguous language. For instance Iran claimed the E3/EU action as a victory for itself when it successfully prevented the IAEA from labelling Iran as “non-compliant” with its obligations. Such “victories” are automatically attributed to a strategic failure of the US in association with Israel although the latter had nothing to do with the nuclear negotiations (Noi 2005:91; Venter 2005:87-88).
- ix) Religious diplomacy is crucial since Khamenei as the Supreme Leader, above all regards nuclear weapons as “unlawful” (*haram*) (IAEA INFCIRC/657 2005:21). He has therefore issued a *fatwa*, against the production, stockpiling, and use of nuclear weapons by Iran (cf. 6.5.2.1). However, the *fatwa* (cf. *Table 6.1 T*) is regarded with scepticism for example by Melman and Javedanfar (2007:98) who simply think of it as a typical Shī’a deception technique *taqiyyah* (cf. chapter 3). Given the timeline of the *fatwa*, which came only three months after Ahmadinejad’s election in 2005 when Iran was under immense international

pressure, it is argued that the *fatwa* was temporary and only employed to safeguard Iran's national interests.

The critical difference in world views by the two sides is also reflected in their views regarding negotiations. For example, it is evident from a paraphrase of President Khatami's Dialogue amongst Civilisations (cf. Esposito in Solomon & Butler 2005:101) that this is not a dialogue in the sense understood by many in the West, but a competitive strategy for strengthening and transforming Islamic civilisation. Khatami's "Dialogue" projects a militant vision of *jihad*, a way to avoid destructive conflict with the West. It also holds the hope that as the West evolves and possibly declines, Islam will regain its position as the foremost among progressive world civilisations. President Ahmadinejad expressed similar views in 2005 when he detailed Iran's forthcoming "*clash of civilisations*" in which Iran, as a *tolu'ee* (sunrise power), is destined to supersede the US as an *ofuli* (sunset power), thus reshaping the world by waging a *jihad* (Campbell 2006a:31-32).

Iran regards diplomacy or negotiations as a game of "diplomatic chess" during which the country used a combination of religious and non-religious tactics including *khod'eh* (half-truths), *tae'arof* (to mislead to keep a secret or where one's "yes" could be "yes", "maybe", or even "no") and *taqiyyah* or *kitman* (deception) to realise Iran's objectives (cf. Rohani 2005:16-17; Campbell 2006a:33-35 as well as Glossary). For instance, Rohani was quite satisfied with the state of the negotiations in September 2005 since these were advancing at a "slow pace", thus providing Iran with sufficient time to finish the crucial Esfahan Nuclear Technology Centre, where light-water and heavy-water reactors were already operational. The US criticised Iran for its deception, while the E3/EU believed contrariwise that Iran was a normal state that will adhere to diplomatic rules, not realising the traditional fusion between diplomacy and *taqiyyah* in Iran (Campbell 2006b:12). This was probably why President Bush rejected

Ahmadinejad's letter of 5 August 2006; in fact the US has yet to acknowledge that religion is inseparable from Iranian diplomacy.

6.5.3.3 The outcome of nuclear negotiations

The Iran-E3/EU nuclear negotiations ended abruptly when the E3/EU referred the nuclear dossier to the UNSC in February 2006. Negotiations would continue, however, but with the E3/EU now part of a broader multilateral sextet of countries (the P5+1, i.e. the UNSC permanent members and Germany). The Iran-E3/EU negotiations would in future reflect two opposing strategies that were closely related to and overlapped with this new sextet.

a) The E3/EU provided an important linkage between the US and Iran. However, since it acted as a proxy of the US and lacked the power to execute its threats (without the US, IAEA, China and Russia), its negotiating positions were limited to the use of soft economic incentives. The E3/EU nonetheless succeeded in gaining more than two years for the West to create an effective anti-Iranian campaign as they attempted the diplomatic option in Iran, while the US, China, Russia, South Korea and Japan focused on stabilising the North Korean nuclear issue. Increasing US intervention, however, added constraints as the US declared that the addition of further nuclear states to the existing number should not be allowed, which reinforced the Iranian conviction of being subjected to Western discrimination.

b) Since Iran admitted as early as 2003 that it would eventually be referred to the UNSC, it used the time to slow the pace of negotiations with the E3/EU, finalised critical programmes, and gained “full fuel cycle” capability.

c) The Tehran and Paris Agreements respectively stressed key elements of states' rights and obligations under the NPT and can be viewed as a “success” of the E3/EU dialogue. However, Iran has persistently insisted on the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme and has never disputed the question whether it is right to possess nuclear

weapons. What is disputed is Iran's right to enrich uranium, which is its right as a signatory under Article IV of the NPT.

d) Negotiations eventually failed because the E3/EU could not impose binding or non-binding decisions on Iran. It also became too demanding for a multilateral structure such as the E3/EU (only three countries) to resolve the vastly different policy positions of two irreconcilable negotiating parties, especially on issues such as permanent suspension of enrichment as demanded by the E3/EU and voluntary and limited suspension by Iran.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The chapter extensively explores the E3/EU nuclear dialogue, and particularly the three key propositions of: how the Iranian decision making unit is constituted, how the nuclear dialogue is organised, and most crucially how Iranian diplomats negotiate. The current Iranian nuclear programme is briefly contextualised since it builds on and overlaps with the Shah's nuclear programme of the late 1950s. Of particular relevance to the current nuclear debate are the allocation of US aid to and the covert element of the Shah's programme - agreed to by the US. It is equally important that the principle of uranium reprocessing, which was then done by and in Iran, was already a non-negotiable issue for imperial Iran and disputed by the US. This right to reprocess on Iranian soil is an argument that Iran still actively pursues. Without repeating the well known facts it is sufficient to say that Iran's position is unchanged and that only the international community have changed positions on nuclear aid to Iran. The key drivers assert that the two programmes were exactly the same with security, prestige and political preservation cutting across both programmes, while the Islamic government only added an economic dimension, given its need for a sustainable source of energy. It is also impossible to assess Iranian negotiation strategies without acknowledging the key role and influence of Iranian history, religion, culture and identity on its world view compared to the Western view. Of particular importance are the continuing influence of the Iran-Iraq War on Iranian politics and the conviction that a nuclear deterrent was essential. Western bias and support for Iraq after Iran was attacked with chemical weapons has enhanced the Iranian

perception that the West cannot be trusted. This view received further credence when the E3/EU - which was handpicked as mediator by Iran - switched sides to join the US in the current anti-Iranian campaign. The result was that Iran began to give precedence to the resistance-independence discourse in its world view and shaping its negotiating approach after the election of President Ahmadinejad. The net effect has been that Iranian viewpoints have hardened and focused increasingly on justice and respect as the intangible core of the Middle Eastern style of negotiations, elements a Western negotiator found difficult to comprehend.

Chapter 6 illustrates various key elements of the two-level game theory of Putnam (1988), especially the key role of the nuclear negotiator, and the leadership theory of Hermann *et al.* (1987). Since the chapter focuses on the Iranian methodology of negotiation and not on the detail of the Iran-E3/EU nuclear negotiations it follows that during this period Iranian behaviour was visibly characterised by attempts to use negotiations with the E3/EU as a way towards direct talks with the US. Iran's diplomatic tradecraft during this period mainly comprise of techniques of evasion, procrastination, and limited or no cooperation as it follows a zig-zag pattern in its dealings with foreign powers in order to counter the pressure they exert. Iran's negotiating approach is influenced by the Middle Eastern bargaining style, exemplified by the stop-start tactics it affected with the IAEA and the E3/EU. Contrary to Westerners, who have a more clinical approach of "getting things done and on time", Iran's more traditional bargaining process is foreign and confusing to the West. Equally different are Iran's primarily religiously driven negotiating styles and techniques, such as *taqiyyah* or *kitman*, *tanfih*, *khod'eh* and *tae'arof*, which have been discussed throughout the previous chapters and were again found to be directly relevant during the Iran-E3/EU nuclear negotiations.



CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The object of this dissertation has been to ascertain “how Iranian diplomats negotiate.” To provide the relevant context, three key questions were formulated that critically informed the argumentation presented throughout the dissertation. The questions read as follows:

- Who, during the two periods of negotiation – the hostage crisis and the nuclear discussions - constituted the “ultimate decision making unit” in Iran?
- How were the two sets of negotiations organised and what factors influenced these processes?
- How have Iranian negotiating processes, as applied during the 1979 hostage crisis changed in comparison with the nuclear negotiations that were conducted during the period from 2003 to 2006?

7.2 WHO, DURING THE TWO PERIODS OF NEGOTIATION – THE HOSTAGE CRISIS AND THE NUCLEAR DISCUSSIONS - CONSTITUTED THE “ULTIMATE DECISION MAKING UNIT” IN IRAN?

The question of the “ultimate decision making unit”, which is a key element of the leadership typology proposal by Hermann *et al.* (1987), is addressed in case studies I and II. However, an exploration of the “who” question is broader than just the leadership typology since it indirectly includes the application of key elements of Putnam’s two-level game metaphor (1988) in both case studies. This provides credence to the author’s view that the leadership typology of Hermann *et al.* (1987), rather than just complementing Putnam’s theory, carries sufficient weight in its own right since elements of the two theories are either discussed in concert or in close rotation to emphasise key elements of the dissertation.

Case study I (chapter 5) focuses on the hostage crisis and illustrates the existence of a cartelised Iranian decision making process. While a plethora of “decision making units” thus existed it was clear to those inside the Iranian system that Khomeini was fast becoming the predominant leader (cf. terminology of Hermann *et al.* 1987). Looking from the outside, however, the US was either ignorant of or preferred to ignore Khomeini’s role while attempting to create a dialogue with the other sets of multiple autonomous actors (i.e. various sets of moderates, the Majlis, the Revolutionary Council and even the Militant Students who were holding the hostages). Proof of Khomeini’s ultimate control became obvious beyond any doubt during the onset of the Algerian mediation when Khomeini took the final decision in this regard. A shift to the theoretical concepts of Putnam (1988) occurs when Khomeini became more visible as ultimate or predominant leader and “chief negotiator”. While he never fulfilled the negotiating role himself, a solution only became possible when the framework for a solution was agreed to by Iran and Germany. Afterwards, the settling of the technical detail between the US and Iran was a matter of time and mere routine. It was only at this stage when official consensus already existed inside Iran, that Khomeini appointed an official Iranian chief negotiator (Behzad Nabavi) to finalise the process and gain ratification at Majlis level. The final two steps thus clearly reflect the theory of Putnam as discussed in chapter 2.

Case study II (chapter 6), which again amalgamates the theories of Hermann *et al.* (1987) and Putnam (1988), offers a review of the 2003-2006 Iranian nuclear negotiations with the E3/EU. The “who” question in this case deals with Iran’s formal institutions and networks, which constitute the “ultimate decision making unit”. With the formal institutions referring to the regular political structure of Iran, nothing really differs from other countries, except probably the key role of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) as the crucial decision making structure for defence and foreign issues, including nuclear issues. Of key interest, however, is the vital role played by the pervasive, omnipresent informal networks that are ultimately linked to the Supreme Leader and his Office. An in-depth analysis has revealed that informal networks transcend all boundaries and are very fluid and pervasive, permeating the political, religious, business, personal, military and educational levels of Iranian society. A close reading of the discussion of

Iranian culture, religion, political identity and history in chapter 3 above provides essential context for an understanding of informal networks in Iran.

Ayatollah Khamenei, the current Supreme Leader remains, the predominant leader in Iran, thus reflecting a key element of the leadership typology of Hermann *et al.* (1987). Putnam's two-level game metaphor (1988) also became applicable when the Supreme Leader besides his role at the apex of foreign policy making, directly controls the nuclear decision making structure. He is the ultimate decision maker who "guides" the chief negotiator and oversees the three sets of committees who set policy for the chief nuclear negotiator (i.e. the Council of Heads, the Ministerial Committee and the Expert Technical Committee whose members double as participants of the nuclear negotiating team). The negotiating process has thus been rendered transparent, and the option of ratification by the *Majlis* is available to formalise the process. The refusal by the *Majlis* to ratify vital agreements made by the chief nuclear negotiator after Iran's signing of the Additional Protocol to the NPT, is an example of Putnam's concept of *involuntary defection*. This applies where the domestic constituency or *Majlis*, on the internal level (*Level II*) vetoes the actions of the chief nuclear negotiator on *Level I* (the international arena).

Two closely linked findings are made when assessing question 1, namely: The Supreme Leader (*faqih*) became the predominant leader during the 1979 revolution and hostage crisis, and his role has been confirmed in the meantime. He now bears final responsibility for all key decisions in the SNSC, and particularly remains in control of the nuclear decision making process.

7.3 HOW WERE THE TWO SETS OF NEGOTIATIONS ORGANISED AND WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCED THESE PROCESSES?

Both sets of negotiations are characterised by a phased negotiating process, either three phases in the case of the hostage negotiations (case study I) or two phases in the nuclear negotiations (case study II). The theories of Hermann *et al.* (1987) and Putnam (1988) are also again relevant and key elements are discussed together where applicable.

The hostage crisis reflects Putnam's two-level game metaphor when the contrasting foreign environment (*Level I*) and the chaotic internal Iranian scene (*Level II*) at the time are discussed. It also shows the increasing role of Khomeini as he gradually assumes the stature of predominant leader (cf. Hermann *et al.* 1987) on the "ultimate decision making unit". The fact that Khomeini frequently overruled any attempt by Iranian moderates to negotiate with the US, resulted in involuntary defection which precluded ratification. This situation confirms two key principles of Putnam (1988). The hostage crisis is of particular importance since it clearly reflects two divergent approaches to negotiations. On the one hand the US wanted the release of the hostages as a prerequisite for any discussion or negotiations. Iran in contrast wanted its demands to be met simultaneously with the release of the hostages. Moreover, Khomeini only appointed a chief negotiator during the final phase of the hostage crisis.

The US was eventually forced to use intermediaries and negotiate indirectly, which went against its traditions and diplomatic tradecraft. Case study I also emphasised three key elements unbeknown to the US: Germany laid the initial groundwork for a solution with Iranian intermediaries. Algeria did the final mediation – not arbitration – because it was acceptable to both the US and Iran. Trust, religious openness, linguistic ability, culture and revolutionary credentials were critical factors in gaining acceptability for both countries as mediators, while Algeria even went a step further by allowing the contending parties to sign their "declarations" with the Algerian government, while the Bank of Algiers acted as guarantor for the financial accords.

As indicated, the nuclear negotiations (case study II) are a two-phased process, with interactions between Iran, the E3/EU and the IAEA as part of the linked dialogue (cf. *Figure 6.3*). Key elements of the theories of Hermann *et al.* (1987) and Putnam (1988) are again present, for example the predominant leader, the "ultimate decision making unit" and a key role for the chief negotiator. The presence of these actors, however, have become more accentuated as the Supreme Leader's control rose into prominence and a chief nuclear negotiator was appointed in 2003 to function together with well-defined committees (cf. 7.2). The role of multiple autonomous actors (e.g. the SNSC, AEOI,

MOFA and IRGC), as key players on their respective levels in the negotiating process also became clearly defined.

The two phases of the negotiations lasted from August 2002 until March 2006 when the E3/EU reported Iran to the UNSC. Iran picked the E3/EU as the principal interlocutor because of the European history of “dialogue” and the latter’s preference for soft power, not threats like the US, and because Iran believes the E3/EU could arrange reconciliation with the US. The E3/EU failed, however, in that it took sides with the US, heightening the threat to Iran as perceived by that country. The possibility of failure was always high, however, and Rohani (2005) has stated that Iran used the negotiations with the E3/EU to play for time in order to finish key programmes, although it was aware that it would be reported to the UNSC. Iran sought to pursue its objectives successfully in these circumstances by resorting to a range of typical tactics: *khod’eh* (half-truths), *tae’arof* (mislead to keep a secret or where one’s “yes” could be “yes”, “maybe” or even “no”) and *taqiyyah* or *kitman*, (deception) to realise Iran’s objectives. Iranian negotiations are characterised as before by a zig-zag pattern of behaviour as its willingness to cooperate fluctuate and its sense of vulnerability increases or decreases. For example, Iran reacts with threats, violations, resumptions, suspension of activities, *fatwa’s* and the cessation of negotiations, warnings, criticism and condemnations, continuing demands for suspension of conversion activities, proposals of new deals (which are then easily reneged upon), broken promises (economic incentives) and new compromises to counter foreign threats.

The critical factors influencing negotiations in both instances (the hostage crisis and the nuclear issue) have to be known and understood in order to understand how the negotiations in both case studies were conducted. Chapters 3 and 4 prepare the ground in this regard, with particular reference to Iran’s history, its foreign subjugation to foreign suppression (*gharbzadagi*), political identity, national character, world view and self-image, language and communication systems, culture and the crucial role of religion (mysticism, belief in the occultation of the 12th Imam and the martyrdom myth) as well as the importance of cyclical leadership patterns (cf. 3.6). Religion was inevitably elevated to the principal driving force in Iranian domestic politics in 1979 when Khomeini

introduced his *Hukumat-i Islami* (Islamic Government) in Iran. The resulting fusion between Iranian culture (with its roots links in the Persian Empire and Zoroastrian religion) and modern-day Islam created a new religiously driven diplomacy in Iran and added religion as a new dimension of international political statecraft. This was not only surprising, but largely alien to the West where knowledge of Iranian history, culture and Twelver Shī'ism was limited with the result that the West lacked the judgement to appreciate when Iran was employing the Islamic technique of *Ijtihad* (cf. 3.5.1) or the Perso-Iranian negotiation methods of *taqiyyah*, *tanfih* and *khod'eh* (cf. 3.5.2 to 3.5.4).

7.4 HOW HAVE IRANIAN NEGOTIATING PROCESSES, AS APPLIED DURING THE 1979 HOSTAGE CRISIS CHANGED IN COMPARISON WITH THE NUCLEAR NEGOTIATIONS THAT WERE CONDUCTED DURING THE PERIOD FROM 2003 TO 2006?

While it was never the intention to compare the two negotiating processes there are similarities between them that are worthy of consideration (i.e. organisation, process and negotiating style). With regard to differences it should be noted, for example, that whereas the hostage crisis was a “closed” process, with a clear start on 4 November 1979 and a definite ending on 20 January 1981, the nuclear negotiations are “open” and still continuing although only the specific period from 2003 to 2006 was assessed. Key concepts associated with the theory prepared by Hermann *et al.* (1987) (i.e. the “predominant leader / the “ultimate decision making unit”, multiple autonomous actors) and with Putnam’s two-level game metaphor specifically (e.g. the “chief nuclear negotiator”, “ratification” and “involuntary defection”) are discussed in both Case studies, which function on a bilateral as well as a multilateral level. A key shift in negotiating style occurred in 1979 during the hostage crisis when Iranian foreign policy changed to a religiously driven diplomacy, which was then newly emerging. Iran and its institutions, particularly Khomeini as predominant leader or “ultimate decision making unit”, were not yet settled, while he was eliminating non-*Tawhidi* multiple autonomous actors. Furthermore, a negotiator was only appointed just before Algeria became involved in the final mediation process.

The situation during the nuclear negotiations was markedly different. Iran was a settled country with formal institutions. Even its informal networks, despite their intangible roles, had clear and explicit (e.g. in religious, political or military) structures. In contrast to the time of the hostage crisis, the respective positions of the predominant leader or the “ultimate decision making unit” have also been clarified, and the Supreme Leader and his Office are currently firmly in control of nuclear decision making. Again unlike the hostage crisis, there is a chief nuclear negotiator who shares responsibility for the process of nuclear negotiations with the SNSC and a well-defined supporting set of Committees (cf. 7.2), and above all, the Supreme Leader as predominant leader. The issues of ratification and involuntary defection remain unchanged, but “synergistic linkage”, (whereby a negotiator creates new policy options to overturn the initial negotiations or “win-sets”) another concept of Putnam (1988), became prominent during the interactions between Iran and the E3/EU. The nuclear negotiations also reflect a clear shift in approach after the presidential election in 2005 and the change from pragmatism to a hardening in Iran’s nuclear position. The nuclear negotiating team, from the negotiator downwards, were comprehensively replaced with ideological hard-liners or IRGC members and former intelligence personnel. The change introduced an element of “*involuntary irrationality*” into negotiations with the E3/EU and made continuation or breakthrough almost impossible.

Although *taqiyyah* or *kitman*, *tanfih* and *khod’eh* became identifiable as elements or strategies employed by Iran in conducting negotiations during the hostage crisis, they remain largely obscure. Currently more light is being shed on these methods as knowledge increases, but definitive identification remains elusive. While the tradecraft of monarchical times has changed noticeably, the 1979 revolution did not fully replace the traditional diplomatic tradecraft of Persia. Elements such as procrastination, emphasis on independence, sovereignty, respect, pride and the resurrection of Iran as a great power remain critical considerations and were added to the new religious motif. The revolution also added a new religious vernacular to Iranian society and conscience, depicting for example, the US as the “Great Satan” that must be eliminated. Viewing the situation through Iran’s religious prism, it also shifted the accent to the intangible and

metaphysical level by elevating the principles of justice, resistance and independence to the centre of its political discourse with the international community.

7.5 EVALUATION OF SOURCE MATERIAL

The research is largely based on a mix of primary and secondary sources, with the emphasis on the latter due to constraints of language and the closed or secret nature of the Iranian decision making system (*nazam*). Both problems were acknowledged at the outset of the research. A large number of crucial primary sources were nonetheless uncovered and utilised. These include books, writings, declarations, Khomeini's will and testament, letters, statements, speeches, historical texts, mythical stories, the Holy Qur'an, the Iranian Constitution, and interviews with former and current Iranian leaders such as the last Shah (Mohammad Reza), Imam Khomeini, Presidents Khatami and Ahmadinejad, former Foreign Minister Kharazmi, Kianuri, the leader of the Tudeh, and Hassan Rohani, the first Iranian nuclear negotiator. Other material include two types of data: firstly, directly applicable resolutions from the IAEA, UN, UNSC, EU and material from the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI) on the nuclear negotiations; and secondly, declassified material from the CIA, the US State Department as well as the Tehran Embassy or "Spies Den" relating mostly to the 1953 *coup* and the hostage crisis.

Exhaustive analysis of secondary sources has been used to compensate for the restricted access to primary sources. This effort has been rewarded with more than adequate material relating to the issues, questions or topics addressed. Propagandistic material that is clearly biased or hostile towards Iran was excluded (cf. reference to Kramer 2001 in section 2.4.1). The intention was not to present a rosy picture of Iran, but rather a more balanced or objective one. Where biased material, mostly from the US, was used it was strictly out of necessity or to present the US position as a counterpoint to the Iranian policy position. The most useful US data were unbiased US textbooks relating to the two theories employed in the dissertation. To compensate for the mentioned exclusions, the net was cast wide throughout the Middle Eastern region and English texts were sourced from Iranian, Arabic, Turkish, Israeli, Greek, Russian, Japanese, Indian, German, French,

South African and numerous English (UK and US) authors. Some material was translated from German. It should also be noted that the Iranian material includes data from the Pahlavi era, the Iranian left, former *Majlis* reformist members, nuclear officials, US based Iranian academics of both alignments (pro-US and pro-Iranian), as well as the MEK leader who alerted the West to the “comprehensive nature” of the Iranian nuclear programme in 2002. The material moreover transcends the international political or negotiation / mediation terrain and includes studies in religion, psychology, law, culture, anthropology, history, geography, economics, intelligence and military affairs in general.

While most primary and secondary sources were of a current nature, some seminal material dealing with historical themes was used as source material for chapters 3, 4 and 5 or case study I. The more recent nuclear negotiations, discussed in chapter 6 in the context of case study II, was largely based on current data as (unlike the hostage crisis) the event is still in progress. In conclusion, the upshot of the survey of available primary sources and the large number of secondary sources was that the original hypothesis was confirmed, namely that in the absence of sufficient data regarding Iranian negotiating techniques, gaps had to be filled by inference.

7.6 KEY ASSUMPTIONS

It is believed that the analysis achieved the objective of determining how Iranian diplomats negotiate. The problem was clearly demarcated and the complexities of the process, style and modalities as they emerged since 1979 were explored. While there might be scope left for a Farsi speaker to proceed with the research of particularly the Iranian negotiating techniques, it is believed that a valuable contribution has been made to the field of international politics and specifically a broader Western understanding of the relatively unknown Iranian negotiating techniques. Currently there is widespread ignorance in the West about the crucial roles that well-known Islamic mediation techniques regarding conflict resolution and conciliation can play in international negotiation. There is much to be gained from this type of research, therefore, given the importance of religion and culture as relatively “under investigated” dimensions of

international politics and negotiations, a field that has received relatively little attention until now. It is suggested, therefore, that more training specifically related to political negotiations be provided at universities and not only courses relating to negotiation, mediation and arbitration in business or conflict resolution. The usefulness of the theories of Putnam (1988) and Hermann *et al.* (1987) has finally also been proven, although they were found to be of equal relevance and not in a hierarchic order as originally thought.

7.7 A MODEL FOR NEGOTIATING WITH IRAN

The data presented in the previous chapters will now be used to create a framework or model that can be used to identify additional dimensions of research and to serve as a broad guideline for negotiations with Iran. It will also fill critical gaps left in the negotiation literature, for example by the absence of studies dealing with Iranian negotiating style and religiously driven statecraft. Although the principal focus of the dissertation is Iran, the model is dyadic since it assesses the attitudes and behaviour of both Iran and the US as they interact with each other. The relevant theory discussed throughout the dissertation and informing the model are mainly derived from the works of Harris *et al.* (2004); Walker and Harris (1995); Gelfand and Cai (2004); Fischer and Ury (1999); Gelfand and Brett (2004); Adair and Brett (2004) and Salacuse (2003; 2004). Personal experience has also been reflected. While the constructs have been regrouped or reformulated to reflect Iran's cultural-religious environment, a clear separation enabling a wholly independent discussion of Iranian communication methodology was not always possible since communication is naturally culturally driven. Despite this difficulty, communication is discussed separately for purposes of clarity. Given its cultural-religious approach the model can nevertheless be used to good advantage for analytical purposes where other, similar countries are concerned.

7.7.1 Preparation for negotiation

The key to negotiation is *preparation*. Without it the negotiator and his team will be literally "lost" in terms of the practical background issues related to the country and the

substance or technical issues relating to the problem and agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) to be negotiated. A number of critical and sensitive issues, largely based on the preceding chapters, have been identified causing the most embarrassment in the Iranian environment.

Background issues

- Iran is a theocratic country with a hierarchical command system (*nazam*), which is ultimately controlled by the Supreme Religious Leader who guarantees full religious control and provides Iran with a religiously driven diplomatic style and set of negotiating techniques, including *taqiyyah* or *kitman*, *tanfih* and *khod'eh*. The *fatwa* and *jihad* are at times used to gain certain advantages.
- Iran is Shī'a country adhering to Twelver Shī'ism, the Imamate and the occultation of the 12th Imam, as well as the theocratic principles of the *vilayat-i faqih* of Imam Khomeini who fused the religious and political authority in the country. (Only three other countries in the Middle East³³ subscribed to variations of Shī'ism). Iran as a whole is also steeped in mysticism and driven by a “martyrdom mentality” which was created in 680 AD when Imam Husayn ibn Alī killed or “martyred” near Karbala.
- Iran is a non-Arabic country with Farsi as the dominant language of its population. References to the country as “Arab” reflect a popular misconception that causes considerable annoyance in Iranian circles, particularly where international negotiations are concerned.

Hospitality and respect

- *Hospitality is a reflection of the rich Iranian culture.* Most meetings are therefore accompanied with the sharing of refreshments (tea, coffee, fruit, cakes, dates etc.) Since hospitality is valued and refusing it is seen as an insult, a guest must be

³³ The others are Bahrain, Azerbaijan and Iraq (Pelham 2008: 204-205, 225).

careful to accept refreshments in deference to the hospitality code. A guest should at least sip a beverage offered and then put it aside, but must not refuse outright.

- *Greetings are part of the broader hospitality concept*, and there are clear distinctions between formal and informal greetings. Informally, in familiar surroundings within small groups of men, even with foreigners they meet for the first time, Iranians will hug and touch the cheeks of their friends and the foreign guests. Formally, however, for example before a meeting, Iranians tend to shake hands or just bow. *Women are unlikely to be present, and if so, their hands are never touched, especially in public.* Western women should also always cover their hair and dressed modestly (see Glossary – hejab). Business cards can be prepared and kept at hand but may only proffered when requested. Iranians prefer to get to know each other at the start of conversations as a way of establishing trust and a long-term personal relationship.
- While most young Iranian women are highly skilled, they are not included in official delegations. It has happened that Iranian leaders either refuse to meet with delegations that are headed by women or just refuse to shake hands with them. Intense protocol discussions prior to such meetings are in these cases essential.
- *Respect* for the Iranian dress code also reflects respect for Iranian history, culture, religion and the political changes of 1979. It is customary to wear a business suit, but without a tie, which is seen as un-Islamic and representative of Western oppression.
- Prior to meetings / negotiations non-Iranian negotiators should learn some basic greetings and key sentences to indicate some interest and respect.

7.7.2 Key constructs

Key constructs reflect Iran's situation and are clustered to address four principal issues: the levels of authority; the primary and all-inclusive concept of culture; communication and language methodology; and the form of the agreement. The US / Western constructs are reflected to illustrate the opposing position to the Iranian approach.

a) Levels of authority

The objectives of the negotiation: The objective of Iran's negotiations is not always clear; alternatively, what is shown to the *ghair-e- khodi* (outsiders) reflects only one part of the picture. In the case of the hostage crisis, for example, the real Iranian negotiators only presented themselves when Khomeini, the Supreme Religious Leader at the time, gave his blessing mere months before the end of the Carter administration. In other words, Iran decided the timeline. While Ayatollah Khamenei, the current Supreme Religious Leader (*faqih*), remains as ultimate decision maker on the current nuclear negotiations, a similar duality is reflected. Only Iranian *khodi* (insiders) are informed about Iran's real intentions with its nuclear programme, while its leaders such as Rohani have acknowledged the use of deception techniques, particularly *taqiyyah* or *kitman* and *tanfih*, during the negotiations with the E3/EU to buy time while Iran finalises urgent nuclear development and construction work. Iran's objectives can thus be described as ambiguous and obvious, only to *khodi*, in contrast to the US's more open and transparent approach, which is clear to outsiders and non-participating members.

Team organisation: It refers to the levels of decision making involved inside Iran and inside the negotiating team, which could influence team decisions. Given the ultimate decision making role of the *faqih* (discussed throughout the dissertation), the Iranian concept of authority on the national level is narrow or focused. The system also reflects an intrinsic duality with comprehensive religious supervision superimposed on the political dimension. This duality is reflected inside the negotiating team where the members are representatives of both dimensions. Individual decision making as in the US

is rarely allowed, given especially the role of the Supreme Leader's representatives, who not only make individual approaches impossible, but could also counter attempts at consensus decision making. Sometimes, however, the Leader's representatives do provide direct or back channels to the *faqih*, which eases negotiations in general and promotes consensus inside the negotiating team. To ease negotiations it is essential to identify the key authorities inside and outside the negotiating team before the start of the negotiations. Moreover, if one team provides such data it must insist on reciprocity.

b) The concept of culture

- Individualist *versus* a collectivist cultures

Direct-indirect: Iran is part of a broader Middle Eastern *collectivist* culture, which emphasises social harmony, networking and the need to consider other peoples' interests. The Iranian approach is therefore *indirect* with the focus on keeping individual personalities out of the equation, getting the message across and avoiding being disrespectful. A telling example is the initial unofficial German mediation (discussed in context with the time concept) together with the German assistance to Tabatabai as the lone Iranian negotiator, when they provided him and Warren Christopher, the senior US negotiator, with the time and place to meet "face-to-face" without other officials. The rest of the huge US diplomatic contingent was purposefully given the wrong address by Germany so that Tabatabai would not be swamped by numbers (cf. 5.3.1.3). This approach is indirectly confrontational since opponents rarely oppose each other directly, but instead uses intermediaries or mediators (Brett & Gelfand 2005:5). The US in contrast is part of an *individualist* culture where self-interest is placed first. An example is the US refusal to negotiate without prerequisites on the issue of nuclear negotiations, with the result that the US approach is confrontational.

Formal-informal: These two dimensions relate to the different negotiation positions, with Iran seeing negotiation as a longstanding relationship, while the US regards it as a quick deal that needs to be fixed. Iran adheres to the principles of hospitality, using a mixed

formal-informal system with the focus on respect and relationship development. The approach tends towards informality reflecting Iran's cultural premises. The US in contrast is more formal in terms of dress code, forms of address, and interaction, thus keeping a distance and not creating close relationships.

- Emotion during negotiation

Emotionality: Countries either openly show or hide their emotions during negotiations. The US is less inclined to be emotional than Iran, which has moved through various stages since 1979. It is also important to acknowledge the use of emotional leverage outside the negotiating room. During the hostage crisis a high level of emotion was generated with anti-US or anti-imperialist vernacular frequently used to describe the US as *mostakbarin*, oppressors and “Satanic worshippers”. The populace were also directly involved in negotiations through *tabarra*, cursing and vilifying their enemies as well as *ta'zyeh* or Iranian passion plays at the US Embassy. The images were carried in both the Iranian and international media, creating a “media circus” and derailing more than one US negotiating attempt. The nuclear negotiations lack this high emotionality, given the settled nature of the Iranian state and its initial pragmatic approach, but a more emotional and hard-line approach became evident after 2005 when Ahmadinejad changed the Iranian negotiation team and reemphasised the principles of independence, justice, and particularly resistance (i.e. assertions of an inalienable right to develop a peaceful nuclear programme) as focal points in Iran's foreign policy. The hardening approach occurred as US-E3/EU prejudice became more prominent. The emotionality projected also depends on the personality of the negotiator and his power-distance from the Supreme Leader; the closer he is to this primary source of power, the harsher the negotiator's statements tend to be, but time and general objectives may also have a conditioning effect in this regard.

- The time concept

Iranian and US interpretation of time differ sharply since it depends largely on their respective cultural predispositions. Iran spends time on developing a personal relationship of trust with its opponent, thus turning it into a friendship. In other words, it invests in the negotiating process, while the US wants a relatively quick deal, depending on the goals being pursued. Given this mindset the US tends to become impatient, thus forcing issues, for example during the hostage crisis when it briefly reverted to the military option when the diplomatic track failed to produce a quick diplomatic fix. On the other hand Iran is infinitely patient by comparison (cf. Campbell 2006a:32). Consider in this regard a quote of a key adviser of President Ahmadinejad: “We know how to be patient since we have been weaving carpets for years”. He thus stressed the principle of *tanfih*, a strategy of judiciously doing nothing and *waiting* for the doer (the US and the E3/EU in the two case studies) to make the first move and thus the first mistake.

- Relation to risk

At issue here is Iran’s (un)willingness to take risks: Unlike the risktaking approach of the US, Iran is risk averse. Iran’s current control system (especially the built-in checks and balances of the religious supervisory system), constrains unnecessary risktaking since the *faqih* has the ultimate authority.

c) An Iranian communication methodology

As noted communication and language are intrinsically conflated in Iranian culture, but are discussed separately to focus on the context and modalities (techniques) of negotiations. The approach, methods and techniques adopted towards communication and language vary from culture to culture.

High context or low context: Communication in a high-context culture mainly depends on nonverbal forms of expressions, such as body language, manual gestures, figurative speech, symbols, metaphors, questions, and vague proposals. Iran is an exponent of this indirect approach, which causes friction since its rejection of definite proposals is sometimes perceived as an indication of duplicity. Low-context countries' culture depends on more explicit verbally expressed communication. Communication is clear with definite responses to questions and proposals. However, typical US directness is regarded as aggression by its opponents.

The importance of context and meaning: Farsi, which in itself presents a barrier to foreign negotiators, is also loaded with hidden meaning (cf. discussion on *zeraengi* in chapter 3). The lack of a common, mutually acceptable terminology and general mode of discourse in which to couch such verbal interactions between Iran and the West for purposes of negotiation, mediation and arbitration also cause confusion. It is also difficult to ascertain whether the message has been understood since it is quite likely to be ignored if it has not been understood.

In light of the said language problems it became essential to employ a translator, preferably hired on a personal basis, since the opponents' translator and translations can be open to manipulation. The services of a translator without links to Iran but who thoroughly understands the host country (Iran) can also provide essential background regarding non-substance issues to a negotiating partner of Iran. Translators provided by Iran are rarely without links to the *nazam* and should not to be trusted during critical negotiations. Translators should be thoroughly neutral and adequately skilled to translate the technical work associated with the agreement at issue and to assist with the final agreement since English and Farsi texts are finally required to preclude future disagreements.

Soft power versus hard power: This instrument refers to the use of threats (hard power) that might be verbal or military or soft power (mainly diplomatic and economic instruments or incentives). Given the indirect approach characterising Iranian society,

most of its diplomatic techniques (*taqiyyah* or *kitman*, *tanfih* and *khod'eh*) are indirect, but they are just as likely to use threats like missile testing to increase pressure. However, even this threat is merely another form of indirect diplomacy or communication.

d) The negotiating process: The agreement

Opening positions and preconditions: The opening positions of Iran and the US are diametrically opposed in that Iran represents an extreme and the US a more moderate position. The US insists on going into negotiations with preconditions, for example the Bush administrations' demand that Iran ceases its uranium conversion and, effectively, its nuclear programme before negotiations start, while Iran wants negotiations to start first before it suspends its nuclear activities.

Willingness to compromise, deadlines, renegotiations and a win-lose situation: Iran is a honour-bound society that could not make concessions since it would then amount to a betrayal of its history, revolutionary ideas etc. Using the Islamic technique of *Ijtihad*, Iran does "reinterpret" policies and ideas, however, to fit its national agenda. Compromises are actually illusory; in fact, it once investigated the so-called "Russian option" arranging for Iran's nuclear enrichment to be done in Russia, which is an example of using Putnam's (1988) "synergistic linkage" concept of broadening Iran's limited negotiating options. The US is willing to reciprocate and present its compromises or concessions. Given the US approach to negotiations, deadlines are usually tight and Iran is given little or no room to manoeuvre, while conversely, Iran prefers open or casual deadlines, and has even reneged on deadlines and agreements after they were signed, for example during the Algerian mediation when Iran raised the most outrageous financial claims at the last minute just before the final signing, which almost derailed the whole process. The same tendency persists currently in Iran's nuclear dealings as it holds back information and in essence never effectively closes a deal. A hallmark of its negotiating style is to create crises, redefine obligations, make last-minute demands, and somehow win at all costs.

The form of the agreement too differs sharply: The US and the West in general prefer a written contract with specific detail clearly stipulated since the deal (or contract) is equal to an agreement. The US approach has been described as top-down with compromises or concessions as US negotiators continue to formulate an agreement. Iran in contrast prefers a dual approach: entailing agreement on a basic set of principles to be used as a framework for the negotiations, accompanied by negotiations by technical teams to deal with the substance or technical detail. This approach is thus both “top-down” and “bottom-up” if Salacuse’s (2004:4) terminology is applied. A telling example in this regard is the unofficial German mediation between Ambassador Ritzel and Sadegh Tabatabai (cf. 5.3.1.3), when the two parties drafted a framework and key principles before informing the US and Iran.

Iran is also status oriented: Iran expects senior members (or high-ranking members) to attend meetings, particularly the first meeting when the broad principles or framework for the negotiations and follow-up meetings are set. The follow-up meetings are then left to technical specialists who deal with the detail. Since high-ranking Iranian members are expected to deal with the negotiations almost single-handed, they mostly pose the questions and answers preferably those that deal with policy and not with detailed substance or technical issues. A negotiation team is also clustered around the most senior ranking member or leader, thus showing respect for his seniority and status.

7.7.3 General recommendation

7.7.3.1 Based on the dissertation, it is possible to suggest the following key recommendations, which negotiators should take cognisance of in dealing with Iran:

- a) *Planning:* Analyse your own and Iran’s Best Alternative to a Negotiation Agreement (BATNA) in order to clarify policy positions and intentions on both sides. (It is important to remember that Iran frequently adopts negotiating positions beyond its reach or means. This has resulted in irritation and conflict).

- b) *Authorities:* Before negotiations start, identify with whom final or full authority resides regarding any agreement, inside the negotiating team as well as outside on the national level. Insist on reciprocity if your side has identified your authorities and Iran has failed to do so.
- c) *Ratification:* Clarify if this is possible or would the process fail because of involuntary defection as in the case of Iran's adherence to the Additional Protocol.
- d) *Negotiating tactics:* A basic knowledge or awareness of Iran's religious premises is essential since Iran's negotiating techniques (*taqiyyah* or *kitman*, *tanfih* and *khod'eh*) are faith-based.
- e) *Be aware of linguistic ambiguities:* Various deception techniques are found in Farsi, and answers to questions are rarely "Yes-or-No". In keeping with the principle of *tae'arof*, Farsi, and Iranian negotiations reflect concealed facts, half-truths and outright lies. From Iran's point of view *tae'arof* is not a matter of lying but rather a chance to offer knowingly false promises based on false premises.
- f) *Creation of new strategies:* Using the various negotiating techniques, Iran frequently creates new strategies / tactics (e.g. the Russian option), which chiefly means slight shifts or repackaging of old propositions.
- g) *Respect and commitment:* A negotiator should show respect to Iranian history and culture / religion, and that he is capable of becoming part of a valuable long-term friendship. Even if you differ sharply in terms of ideology and do not like Iranians, it remains essential for success to treat Iran with respect, acknowledging its sovereignty and independence. Moreover, listen actively and assume nothing. When a third party acts as mediator where Iran is involved, it is important to be absolutely neutral and show that you can be trusted. Keeping the content of negotiations secret, as Algeria has done with the hostage issues, is another prerequisite to win Iranian trust.

- h) *Flexibility and trust:* Trust is an absolute prerequisite. It should be accepted, however, that as a result of its specific command system of government Iran will not always be able to respond as required by the West. Iran should therefore be allowed to save face by investigating alternative options that can keep the negotiations on track. However, a negotiator must never appear to be too eager to appease the Iranians in an attempt to create a win-win scenario since, regardless of its current aspirations to become a “rising power”, it is also part of an Iranian tradition to appear weak. A negotiator must therefore ensure that Iran’s limitations are real and not illusory as part of its diplomatic tradecraft.
- i) *Accept Iran as a normal state:* The traditional tendency of countries to perceive Iran as an irrational, immoral and even terrorist state must be set aside. Negotiate as with all other interlocutors, and acknowledge only in your own preparation that Iranian behaviour might occasionally become irrational. However, never react to anticipated irrational Iranian behaviour; instead concentrate on finding common interests and ways to advance the negotiations.

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