

CHAPTER II

C H A P T E R - IIProfile of The Warring Nations.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the historical background of the Persian Gulf and Iran-Iraq the then emerging industrial giants of the Gulf.

The Persian Gulf :

"The Persian Gulf is a shallow arm of the Arabian Sea; its waters, speckled with drilling platforms and oil rigs, touch the shores of eight countries, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. These eight countries possess approximately 370 billion barrels of proven reserves of petroleum-60 percent of the world's reserves".¹ The Persian Gulf is not only famous for its oil reservoirs but is also a region of vital interests for the superpowers. Since the discovery of the vast and giant oil reserves the region has turned into an arena for superpower competition and rivalry. The inhabitants of this region are basically tribals. They believe in the affairs of their own clans and are deeply involved in their own customs and cultures, their own successess and failures.

The total population of the Gulf on the whole is nearly 69 million people. Out of which 61 millions are citizens and remaining are immigrant labourers. Out of the total population of the Gulf, Iran and Iraq account for nearly 80 percent of the population of the Gulf states. This itself proves the significance of these two states. The internal situation and policies of these two countries have always affected the entire Gulf states and would continue to affect even in the future.

Iran :a) Rule of Qajar Dynasty in Iran :

Iran which was called Persia in the ancient times was ruled by Qajars. Qajars remained in power for a century. They lacked in financial, political and military resources. Their financial, political and military system was primitive in nature. As far as their military was concerned, the largest and most politically conscious of the tribes living in Iran formed separate contingents in the cavalry. The cavalry was divided into five divisions, based in Tehran, Tabriz, Hamadan, Isfahan, and Mashhad. The five divisions were the Cossacks, the Gendarmaerie, the Provincial Troops, the Northern Brigade, and the Gendarmerie road security force. Further the ethnic diversity of Iranian population posed many threats to Qajar's rule. To keep the ethnic population integrated tribal and regional armies were used against one another by the Qajars. That was how they ruled Iran till the mid twentieth century. In the mid twentieth century, the Pehelvis succeeded the Qajars and the Iranian civilization entered into a new phase.

b) Growth of Shia and Sunni Islam and Iran:

"Iran the modern name of Persia acquired the new title because of its Aryanism as contrasted with Arabism out of which grew Islam. Islam endowed Arab Society with an indigenous universal church which became the chrysalis out of which emerged Arabic and Iranic (Persian) civilizations. Each of these assumed though imperfectly traditional forms one being overwhelmingly Sunni the other Shia. Arabic and Persian the two languages became the instruments of the two trends which draw out of the genius of the two currents issuing out of Islam".²

Both the Shia Islam and the Sunni Islam lay emphasis on two different religious beliefs.

i) **The Sunni Belief:**

The Sunnis believe in the Quran, the Prophet Mohammed and the Sunna tradition. The Sunna tradition, is a part of Mohammedan law based on tradition of Prophet Mohammed's actions and teaching, accepted by orthodox as equal in authority to the Quran and rejected by the Shiites.

ii) **The Shia belief:**

The Shiites believe in the family of the Prophet Mohammed. They reject the first three Caliphs and stress the role of Imam Ali, the Cousin and the Son-in-Law of the Prophet. The Shiites regard Ali as the lawful successor of the Prophet Mohammed. According to the Shiites Ali should have succeeded the Prophet Mohammed as the leader of the Muslim community and his chosen descendants known as Imams carry a special spiritual power and charisma.

c) **The Pehelvi Dynasty:**

In the twentieth century, the Pehelvi Dynasty succeeded the Qajar dynasty and remained in power till the year 1979. The Pehelvi dynasty brought about a marked change in the life style of the Iranians. In the reign of Pehelvi's Iranians enjoyed more freer life than any other period. They nationalized the Persian oil and created the Parliament - the Mejlis - which was financed by foreign money and agents. Iranians were overwhelmed, with the social and political advancement and with the novelties which ranged from Coca-Cola to night clubs, liquor shops and cinema halls. Thus Iran entered into a new

phase, called a short period of westernization, under the Pehelvi rule. The two Pehelvis - Reza Shah Pehelvi and his son Shah Mohammed Reza Pehelvi - were more liberal in their attitude towards foreign countries, especially America. They were anticlerical, pro-American and pragmatic in their attitude. They believed in modern, advanced life, and proceeded to achieve the same for the Iranians. In the earlier period of their life they were successful in achieving their objective. But in the later half of their rule they failed to maintain the same success. This was because, of their own faults, of the covert and orthodox nature of the Islamic community and the emergence of Ayattollah Khomeini - the Islamic Fundamentalist and the pivot of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

a) Reza Shah Pehelvi's Rule :

Reza Shah Pehelvi, the first monarch of Pehelvi dynasty played a significant role in Iran. When he succeeded the Qajars, the internal situation in Iran was not a welcome situation. The tribal and regional armies were constantly at loggerheads with each other. During this period the economic position of Iranians was also very bad. In fact there were no means to develop the economy. Further the ethnic diversity of Iranian Population created lot of social problems - like fighting between the two ethnic groups, fighting between tribal and regional armies etc. creating a strong and solid military was expensive and demanded both financial and political resources. But the Qajar, predecessors of the Pehelvi dynasty — had neither. Thus the internal situation in Iran was very bleak when Reza Shah came to Power.

As soon as he came to power he nationalized the Persian oil, created Mejlis - the representative assembly, secured financial assistance from the Americans and tried to develop the Iranian army. Thus, the Shah's father Reza Shah Pehelvi, was responsible for building Iran's first unified army, by uniting various tribal and regional units existing in Iran. The unified army fought tribal wars, protected the Pehelvi throne against a wide range of dissidents, tried Iranians convicted of treason, managed elections, and contributed to development projects. However, all this was possible because of the American aid. Hence it was with Reza Shah Pehelvi, the political social and economic advancement began in Iran. But as the Iranians were foreign to what the Reza Shah did, they viewed the entire advancement as the modest political advancement. But in the earlier period they did not protest.

b) Shah Mohammed Reza Pehelvi's Rule :

Shah Mohammed Reza Pehelvi came to power in 1953 with the fall of Dr. Mossadeq - the founder of the National Front Party and the first Iranian popular and charismatic leader. "The rise and fall of Dr. Mossadeq corresponds, on the one hand with the resurrection and retirement of the Mejlis and on the other with the fall and rise of the Padshahi (imperial rule of Mohammed Reza Khan). These mercurial variations reflect on the fickleness of the Iranian people as well as their representative assembly."³ Thus it would not be wrong to say that : "National heroes are as easily raised up as they are down-graded like Dr. Mossadeq."⁴ The same is true in case of Shah Mohammed Reza Pehelvi. Though, initially Iranians welcomed him, latter on they did not even hesitate to criticize him and

this is proved by their way of thinking "Most Iranians readily equated the regime which oppressed them with the United States, accused of having restored Mohammed Reza Shah to his throne in 1953 and keeping him there through the many forms of aid - political, economic, military and police - it supplied."⁵ The Mejlis or representative assembly of Iran is nothing less than people. It also behaves like chameleon. When the Mejlis realized the Shah's prowess, it assisted the United States in its conspiracy against Mossadeq. Similarly when they smelled declines in the prowess of the Shah, they began supporting the revolutionary movement engineered by the Islamic fundamentalist leader, Ayattollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

i) The Mejlis and the Civil Courts :

The Shah's personal rule lasted for nearly twenty - six years, that is, from 1953 to 1979, during which he obtained plenary powers from the Mejlis. The Mejlis enjoyed real powers till late 1960's but later on it became a device in the hands of the Shah. Apart from Mejlis there were other institutions that were functioning in Iran. He had established civil courts in order to ventilate the grievances of the people of Iran. Thus Judiciary was in existence in Iran under the reign of Shah. The Shah also formed ministries or provincial administration, from the point of view of maintaining administrative efficiency and administrative convenience.

ii) The 'SAVAK' :

The Shah also built or created an institution called 'SAVAK'. The 'SAVAK' meant a centralized security apparatus or formidable secret police of Iran. This 'SAVAK' was trained

with the United States and other techniques. The 'SAVAK' was expected to keep the Iranians within law and order; provide internal security and fighting alongside the army.

iii) The Shah's Social and Political Policies :

As far as political policy of the Shah was concerned, he controlled all institutions in Iran. In fact he was autocratic in his attitude towards political institutions and policies. He followed ruthless action against political enemies and turned a blind eye toward private behaviour. Initially, it created a better atmosphere in Iran.

The Shah followed liberal policy as far as his policies were concerned. He allowed freedom to the individuals of Iran. They were free to talk on the phone, congregate in the evenings; women took off their headscarves, Youth sold their musical cassette - recordings on the streets, people enjoyed cinema, night-clubs etc. - under the reign of the Shah. Thus the Shah followed & permitted large-scale liberalization. in the country - especially more in social matters than in political matters.

iv) The Shah's Economic Policy :

Iran remained & remains greatly dependent on oil earnings, that account for more than 80 percent of foreign exchange revenues. Naturally, the Shah's economic policy is based on aggressive marketing of oil and oil production. The Shah kept Iran's oil production at high levels, but only to make lavish purchases of armaments and luxury imports, for the few. The Shah supported an inefficient system with oil revenues and funnelled those same revenues in industrial development

which was based on western pattern, i.e., the technology was western.

In his economic policy, the Shah also had a package of reforms for the agriculturists; which instead of benefitting them, made them more worried. "The Shah's agrarian reform benefited only a minority of the peasants, who, in any case, were soon taken over by big companies, engaged in large - scale industrialized agriculture. The massive importing of agricultural goods, especially wheat from the United States - coupled with the absence of inadequacy of protective tariffs - contributed to the ruin of countless small farmers, aggravated rural unemployment and swelled the migration to the cities."⁶

As far as trade was concerned, the Shah followed the policy of "nationalization of trade". However he could not nationalize the entire trade. Because the Shah failed to extend the state involvement and control over the bazaar merchants and their bazaars - control of wholesale and retail trade. The bazaars were and are active centres of economic activity in Iran. But since ancient times they have managed to follow trade independent of state-power.

v) The Shah and his base of support :

"The Shah had attracted positive support from important elements of Iranian Society. Probably most significant of these elements was the officer corps of the military and internal security services."⁷ Further the sizeable class of neo-rich the class of wealthy, peasantry, the young men and women technocrats, Iran's industrial workers, the members of traditional elite, the lower middle class, the urban unskilled workers, the small, poor and landless farmers, tribesmen and lastly, there was a group called "accommodationist" also

supported the Shah.

Further the Shah was also supported by the Americans; especially financially and militarily.

vi) The Shah and the U.S.:

The Shah was and is often referred to as "Pro-American Mercenary", in Iran, by majority of Iranians. In fact, it is widely believed in Iran that the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) led coup of 1953 restored the Shah Mohammed Reza Pehelvi to power. "It was notorious that the CIA worked closely with SAVAK, and the Pentagon helped equip and train the imperial forces and advised them on a regular basis. American firms "pumped" the petrodollars out of Iran in exchange for needless armaments, industrial products and consumer goods. In the eyes of many Iranians, these "sales" were just another means of looting their country's resources."⁸

In order to strengthen the U.S.- Iranian relations and in order to gain military assistance the Shah concluded a bilateral Defence Pact with the United States. In his bid to strengthen and maintain his unquestioned and unlimited power, the Shah received the support of the United States; especially militarily. "Successive United States administration justified selling weapons to Iran on the basis of the Shah's ability to preserve United States interests in the Persian Gulf region. Iran is strategically positioned on the Gulf and the Indian ocean, with over 1,000 miles of shoreline. She has an equally long northern border with the Soviet Union. These geographic characteristics make Iran a particularly valuable adjunct of the United States strategic posture in the region - as part of

its communications network, for its naval base facilities, and supplementary air capabilities. Moreover, the Shah had been a cooperative ally : in United States support for Israel in limiting the expansion of Soviet influence around the Gulf, in fostering links with Indian leaders, and in bringing China into more active involvement with moderate regimes in that part of the world.

The Shah's own military policy, however, was designed to preserve his throne and only secondarily to promote a "Pax Americana" in the Gulf."⁹

Thus the relationship between the Shah and the U.S., though very close and intense, was one of dependence on each other. Both of them wanted to achieve their own selfish interests.

vii) Opposition to the Shah and His failure to
contain the same :

The first half of the Shah's rule was quiet and peaceful : he enjoyed plenary powers over the Mejlis and the people; his power during the period was unquestioned.

However, from 1961 onwards he began to meet opposition from the University students both within and without the country. The students opposed the Shah because they did not approve of his modernization programme. They believed in Imam Khomeini and his Islamic principles. Further, they did not like the American intervention in the internal affairs of Iran. They disapproved the pattern of universities and schools based on the U.S. pattern.

Almost at the same time the Muslim Clergy began to

raise their voice against the Shah. As far as Iranian people are concerned, their history and psychology is concerned, it appears that they are religious people. They believe that religion and politics cannot be separated. And this is precisely what the Shah ignored. He ignored the considerable role that clergy plays in Iranian Society. The Shah, with the help of the SAVAK controlled this class and thus made them suffer. This is the main reason why clergy rose against him. In the light of the above events, in the mid 1963, the Shah exiled their leader Ayatollah Khomeini.

The Shah expelled Ayatollah Khomeini because "he had become famous by publicly condemning both the Shah's violations of the constitution and the granting of extra-territoriality to American military advisers and their dependents."¹⁰ He attributed the religious fanaticism of the Iranian People and their opposition of his policies to Imam Khomeini - who took refuge in the holy city of Najaf in Iraq. However, Imam Khomeini did not stop public condemnation of the Shah through clandestine means. From 1961 to 1963, the Shah's regime went through a very critical phase. The regime faced with many crucial problems. The economic situation was grim : agriculture the major industry stagnated. Due to this 35% of the food was imported. Moreover, the Shah's mentor the United States failed to grasp the situation. The United States timely help would have acted as a great moral support to Iran, but this did not happen. The main reason for such a grim economic situation was the enormous and unnecessary wastage of available capital on massive arms purchase and luxury imports.

However, the situation began improving at the fag end of the year 1963. This relieved the Shah to a great extent, atleast temporarily. The situation remained stable till 1973. From 1963 to 1973, there was rapid economic growth with inflation much below expected level. The real or actual income of virtually every Iranian improved and there was little unemployment. Once again, after 1973, the situation began deteriorating and this time for the worst. The income gap in Iran was rapidly widening. The rich, especially the neo-rich were growing richer day by day and the poor were growing poorer day by day. Westernization, corruption and terrorism became rampant in Iran. In fact it flourished in the country.

The opposition to the Shah was highly diverse but at the same time it was intense as well. The core opposition to the Shah came from the individuals who commanded respect in the society and who were politically attentive elite. Few of this core group opposed the westernization process through which the Shah was squandering Iran's oil income. The secular intelligentsia - a sizeable class of people in Iran also opposed the Shah. The religious and Islamic fundamentalist groups. The poor Iranians and the Iranians with the fixed income also opposed the Shah's rule.

Further, the party (the Shah belonged to Rastakhiz party) structure that he estalished caused him lot of problems. It was largely manned by the technocrats and careerists who were indifferent to the people. The Shah also failed to institutionalise the natural base of support that he gained from the entrepreneurial class and the neo-rich class. As the crisis developed in Iran, this class left Iran, taking their

fortunes with them. Similarly, in his final days, support from other elements also evaporated. Even the United States abandoned him at the time when he needed it the most.

The major reason for the failure of the Shah was his security apparatus. The security apparatus failed to control the opposition in Iran, they lost their efficiency and organization. Thus the failure of the security apparatus led to the failure of the Shah to contain the opposition.

The moment, the Shah lost his control over Iran all his supporters left him. They not only left him but rose against him. Such a type of sudden and massive rising against him once again proved the chameleon attitude and nature of the Iranian people and their support.

viii) Beginning of Revolution :

By 1979, the situation in Iran became very critical. In fact it became revolutionary. The revolution in Iran did not break out spontaneously. Already the seeds of the revolution were sowed in 1961 but the Shah was able to contain the same and attract support to his policies. This continued till 1977. In this venture he was supported by entire Iranian citizenry. However the situation did not remain the same in the year 1977. From the beginning of 1977 the indications of inevitable revolution were seen. In fact the year 1977 marked the gradual beginning of Iranian revolution. In the meantime the Shah expeditiously tried to pacify the whole situation but without any results. As strikes, demonstrations and violence erupted in many cities, the first political effort that Shah made was, he removed the Prime-Minister Amir Abbas Hoveid. The Prime Minister Hoveid, who held this post for most of the period of absolute government, that is, from 1965 to 1977, was

subsequently held responsible for the misdemeanours, morass and violence in the country. The Prime-Minister Hoveid was replaced by the Prime Minister Hoveid was replaced by the Prime Minister Jaffar Sherrif Imami and relaxed the coercive control of this country. But Prime-Minister Sherrif remained in power only for a short span. He was again replaced by Shahpur Bakhtiar in the middle of the year 1978. Further some more minor reforms like dismissal of 'SAVAK' officers, banning of various political parties etc. were made by the Shah to control the situation. However the reforms came very late, that is, after the situation was out of hands. People wanted radical changes in the pattern of governance, but this did not happen. People were fed up of the Shah's government.

Around mid 1978, the situation became so violent that the hooligans set fire to cinemas, scores of restaurants and night clubs. In retaliation the Iranian government agents and spies set fire to the Rex Cinema in Abadan killing hundreds of people in the incident. The situation worsened to a great extent. Moreover : "The Shah's security officials had great difficulty dealing with expressions of opposition from the mosques. Arresting preachers only exacerbated public anger. Furthermore, because a preacher could give his anti regime message in the form of allegories, it was difficult to charge sedition."¹¹

When the Shah realized that all the doors, of controlling the opposition and of resolving the conflicts and problems in the country were closed, he declared martial law in the country. He declared "martial law" or what Iranian called 'Black Friday' on 8th of September 1978. Black Friday seemed to mark a return to brutal suppression. The Shah's announcement of 'martial law' proved that "the Shah had lost

his ability to deal decisively with a regime crisis, the officer corps failed to take the kind of action that might have saved the regime.

Their passivity was in large part a consequence of two policies. First, the Shah fully understood that his rule rested on the ability of his security forces to exercise coercive control. Yet his very need to rely on such a force made him vulnerable to the possibility of a coup from that quarter. Hence, like many absolute dictators, the Shah split the security forces into a number of competing sections each with direct access to his majesty. The policy worked too well. So divided were the security force leaders that they had difficulty acting cooperatively even to save the regime. Second, with his military as with his bureaucracy, the Shah was careful not to — permit outstanding and independent officers to achieve high rank. Thus, in the moment of terrible crisis, the kind of mediocrity in leadership he had fomented was ineffective."¹² The mediocracy in leadership was proved when the security officials failed to put down the huge demonstration of December 10, 1978. In this incident millions of Iranians marched against the Shah's government. The banners that they carried clearly reflected the religiopolitical essence of the revolutionary movement.

"Iranian Revolution is a complex in which the people, their Parliament, the army, the mullahs, the Shah and his foreign, oil consuming supporters in the west especially the United States were all intertwined in an inextricable manner with the Soviet Union keeping a wary eye on the upshot of a social and political convulsion. Not much is known about its ideology; it is more of the nature of a counter Revolution, a reaction against what critics called white Revolution of which

the hero was the Shah. Westernization was the target of the mullahs, the object of the Shah's anti clericalism."¹³

Thus the Iranian revolution was the product of a diverse forces integrated only to overthrow the hated regime of the Shah.

As Iran neared the eighties the pent up discontent slowly came to the surface at first in trickles and then in a torrent.

However, one thing was very clear in the Iranian revolution : Islam played a major role in it and the Islamic fundamentalist leader Imam Khomeini controlled the revolution. In fact he was the key-figure, the pivot of the Revolution.

Thus 'shiiism' dominated the Revolution in Iran.

ix) Shah's Exit and Return of Imam Khomeini:

In the middle of January 1979 the Shah left Iran and fled to Morocco. By the end of January 1979 Imam Khomeini landed in Iran. This shows that Khomeini was waiting in the wing to fill the shoe of Shah and Shah's exit left a political vacuum for which there was no successor. People welcomed him with great enthusiasm. However, the Shah himself, was responsible for his own fall. "Historically, the Shah's problems have stemmed from separatist movements and armed tribal rebellions, from questions of loyalty inside the military, and from an inability to control Iranian territory in terms of communications and transport."¹⁴

1. Imam Khomeini's Policies:

As soon as Imam Khomeini's return to Iran the revolution flared up. He declared the Shah's Government as illegal : set up tribunals and started executions on a large scale. "Fighting flared up between the two sections in the army,

one stood for the Shah, the other for the people. Ultimately the royalists collapsed and a very large number of high-ranking officers became the victims of tribunals set up for their trial. Ayatullah Khomeini's threat of unleashing a 'holy war' against the pro-Shah regiments completed their ruin."¹⁵

On February 5, 1979, Imam Khomeini appointed Mehdi Bazargan as head of the provisional government. However, Mehdi Bazargan a pious and practicing Muslim never shared Imam Khomeini's view that "Islam should take precedence over Iran". Then why Imam Khomeini chose a person who was opposed to his view of Islam? The answer was very clear "the choice of Mr. Bazargan as Prime Minister was dictated by tactical considerations at a time when the Imam, recently returned, to Iran, feared that the situation could slip from his control."¹⁶

"In appointing him Prime Minister, Imam Khomeini thus hoped to buy time, the time needed to establish a "true revolutionary government". But this did not mean he gave him any real power. Mr. Bazargan was permitted to make endless declarations and protests over radio and television, but the essential decisions came from the clergy - dominated council of the Revolution. It was Mr. Bazargan himself who, in the interview with Oriana Fallaci, best described his situation : 'They've put a knife in my hand, but it's a knife with only a handle : others are holding the blade.'¹⁷

In the meantime, that is, on April 1, 1979 the Islamic Republic was proclaimed. It was immediately recognized by the Soviet - Union and Egypt. On April 3, 1979 voting for the constituent Council of Experts of 73 members was conducted. In this voting the religious (fundamentalists) party captured

sixty seats and was declared winner. The constitution drafted by the Experts was published in June. However the new arrangement was opposed by certain elements, especially political parties in Iran-the Mujahidin Khalq, the National Democratic Front and the Tudeh.

Some novel features of the draft constitution were : Right of voting granted to women; women were eligible for all posts, state controlled industries and family cooperatives for agriculture were fully recognized; 'Shia' form of religion was declared as the state religion; the Wali Faqih - a saint, a guardian, a director - was to elaborate the 'supreme law of the land' and Council of Guardians were to act like the politbureau of the Soviet Union.

However, Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan was not happy with the interference of theologians in the political affairs of the country. He was opposed to the inclusion of clergy in the key government structures. For the same reason Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan was forced to resign.

Prime Minister Bazargan resigned in November 1979. He was succeeded by President Bani Sadr on 25th January 1980. He too could not remain in power for a long time. He hardly remained the President for 18 months. Meanwhile after the resignation of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, the situation in Iran deteriorated to a great extent. The counter - revolutionaries took charge of the entire revolution. At around the same time, that is, on November 4, 1979 a band of students activists seized the American Embassy and the Americans were taken as hostages by the Iranian students (fundamentalists — following Imam line). On the one hand the hostage crisis

continued and on the other hand the counter-revolutionaries were busy with their own insurgency activities. Soon after the dismissal of President Bani Sadr, the Islamic Party head-quarter was bomb blasted by the counter-revolutionaries.

Few weeks after President Bani Sadr's dismissal Mohammed Ali Rajai succeeded him as the President. He too was assassinated along with the Prime Minister Hojatoleslam Javed Banohar, in a powerful bomb explosion in the office of the Prime Minister. Then the Mejlis elected Ayatullah Mohammed Reza Mahadavi Mani as the new Prime Minister of Iran. When he took over the charge Iran was facing internal tension, terrorism, and economic situation in the country was also not too good. In short, Iran was at the verge of collapse but somehow it escaped that ordeal.

x) Shah's illness And Hostage Issue:

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Shah left Iran and fled to Morocco in the middle of January : more precisely on January 16, 1979. In October he landed in the United States where his money lay in the banks. He always considered the United States to be his ultimate destination - which in reality was not the one. It was the Shah's over confidence and absessed faith in the United States that ultimately landed him in great trouble.

On October 22, 1979, the Shah fled from Morocco to the United States only to get admitted in the hospital. He was suffering from cancer for which he was permitted treatment at the Cornell Medical Centre into the New York hospital. This action of the United States angered the masses in Iran. Feeling of hostility flared up among them. They demanded the return of

— the Shah to Iran to face a trial. However, the United States neglected the public feeling in Iran. "The press and the congress of the United States went out of their way to support him but when the time came to act, they failed; the Shah became an unwelcome guest."¹⁸ The Americans asked the Shah to leave the country instead of returning him to Iran. This caused more tension between the two countries. Because Iranians considered the Shah a guarantee for their assets (Iranian oil money which lay locked in the United States). Iranian students were hunting for alternate guarantee from the U.S. but with no results. Ultimately on November 4, 1979 a band of Iranian student activists Seized the American Embassy and the Americans were held hostages. Iran held the hostages as security against the Iranian assets it held in the United States.

a) The U.S. efforts to release the hostages :

The United States, at one time, thought of using force against Iranians to release the hostages. But the United Nations Secretary General prevented the United States from taking any such action. Because that might have resulted in serious military encounter. On January 13, 1980, the United States introduced a resolution in the security council demanding the imposition of economic sanctions against Iran; another means to release the hostages. However, this time, the Soviet Union vetoed the resolution. Early in 1980, Secretary General Kurt Waldheim visited Iran to assess the whole situation there. But the U.N. Secretary General's mission failed. Then in March 1980 a U.N. Commission was formed to undertake a fact-finding mission. The commission also failed in releasing the hostages. In the meantime, that is, on July 27,

1980, the Shah expired. With his death, the Iranian Government took charge of the hostages. It demanded unfreezing of Iranian assets in the United States, the only alternative to release the hostages. Ultimately, the United States had to give up their struggle for releasing the hostages.

The hostage crisis finally ended on January 21, 1981 through the Algerian mediation. An accord was reached on the issue on the basis of which the hostages were released on the one hand and unfreezing of Iranian assets on the other.

b) The Shah's Death :

After lot of protest against the Shah's stay in the United States by the Iranians; the Shah fled to Panama. Here also he was received grudgingly. After a short stay in Panama, the Shah left for Mexico where he was received but not with enthusiasm. Ultimately, in his last days, he was fortunate enough because President Sadat of Egypt extended him a warm welcome. He took the responsibility of the Shah and admitted him into an Egyptian military hospital near Cairo where he breathed his last breath.

"The Shah died on 27th of July 1980. He was given a state funeral. A cortege bore the Shah's coffin to the Al Rifai Mosque where the Shah's father was buried temporarily. The funeral procession was led by President Sadat; ex-President Nixon; and the former King Constantine of Greece joined it. The United States, West Germany, France, Australia, and Israel were represented by their ambassadors. The only Muslim country to attend was Morocco. All other countries stayed away."¹⁹

xi) Survival of Khomeini's Regime :

The Khomeini's regime somehow or the other resisted all the crisis that it faced. "The regime survives because it is

constructing a powerful State organization based on the Shah's institutions as well as on parallel revolutionary creations. It can even be argued that the Iranian state is the revolution's most stabilizing factor, with the mullahs in second place. On the most basic level, life is as it was before. Many of the services provided under the Shah continue : garbage gets picked up; traffic ticket gets written; telephone bills get paid; mail gets delivered; taxes get collected. As for structures which have survived, the most important are a single party system, the Majlis, the mosques and the ministries."²⁰

The Single Party System : the Shah's Rastakhiz Party was replaced by Islamic Republican Party. As far as the Mejlis was concerned; under the Shah's period, it enjoyed the real power till 1960 but later on it was fully controlled by the Shah himself. Similarly, under the Khomeini's period it was controlled by the clergy. Under the Shah's reign there were civil courts and independent supreme court however, the same were controlled by the radical clergymen under Khomeini's reign. The 'SAVAK' was replaced by Islamic Revolutionary Guards. The Mosques had the status of religious institutions under the Shah's rule; they were transformed into political organs in the Islamic Republic of Khomeini. The Shah's ministries or provincial administration were not dismantled by Khomeini but they were continued : only the management was changed, the men were changed.

However, the confusion in Iran did not end with the Shah's death or with the solution of the hostage crisis with the United States. Internal commotion in Iran continued.

Thus the history of contemporary Iran is not the simple story of the transition of that country from autocracy to

Islamic Republic but it is full of incalculable and innumerable happenings in that country and outside of it.

Iraq :

a) Discovery of contemporary Iraq :

" At the tip of the Gulf, variously called Persian or Arabian, that a British expeditionary force first landed in 1914 to drive the Turks from Mesopotamia, and to establish ultimately the independent state of Iraq as it is known today."²¹

Modern Iraq was thus discovered by a British expeditionary force led by Sir Arnold Wilson and Gertrude Bell, in 1916. They proceeded with the dauntless self confidence possessed by the British overseas in that era. Their aim was to create a contemporary Iraq out of some remnants of the Ottoman Empire, after Turkey had disintegrated. British secured " from the League of Nations mandate over the Ottoman territories of Palestine, Trans-Jordan and the Ottoman provinces of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra. These three became modern Iraq."²² This helped the Britishers to control almost all the territory between Egypt and India, except for Persia. The expedition's political adviser was Sir Percy Cox, who later on played a very important role in the independence of Iraq.

b) Ascendancy of Hashemite Dynasty:

Though the British expedition force discovered Iraq in 1916, the government was set up only on June 20, 1920.

On July 11, 1921, King Faisal I a member of the noble Hashemite family from the Hejaz was declared the King of Iraq. The help of the British empire and a well managed referendum subsequently confirmed his place on the throne. A treaty was drawn up in 1922 between Britain and new Iraq which defined

their relationships. As per this treaty Iraq was to be Semi-autonomous, with the British exercising a large measure of control through advisory rights in military and matters including foreign relations.

Initially even the boundaries of Iraq were not defined. The Arab riverine and delta lands comprising the vilayets of Basra and Baghdad did not face any problem regarding the boundary. But Kemal Ataturks Turkey claimed the Vilayet of Mosul. According to Turks Mosul belonged to them; it was their integral part. However, in 1926, the treaty of Ankara assigned the vilayet of Mosul to Iraq. The name of the new state was 'Al-Iraq'. It reflected the dominance of the Arab element. The Arab geographical term 'Al-Iraq' means the "cliff" or "shore" — and refers to delta lands.

Another treaty was concluded between Britain and Iraq in 1930. This treaty paved the way to Iraq's imminent independence but gave Britain inter alia the right to maintain air bases in Iraq. However, in 1932, the mandate was terminated. Iraq became independent. It was admitted to the League of Nations under British sponsorship. Though Iraq became independent, British and Western influence remained strong throughout the world war II and afterward, until the revolution of 1958.

Iraq was run by the veteran pro-British Premier Nuri Pasha-al-Said till 1958 revolution, that is, during the entire monarchical period. Under his rule he embarked on an extensive programme of building roads, hospitals, schools etc. He also encouraged economic development based on oil revenues.

In the late 1920's oil began to flow from Kirkuk oilfield which made social and economic development possible.

Additional discoveries were made later at Mosul field and at Rumalia field, near Basra. But the Kirkuk field remains the chief source of Iraqi crude and naturally its source of revenue.

c) National Policies of Hashemite Dynasty :

The national policies pursued by Iraqi government under Hashemite dynasty were similar to the policies being pursued in neighbouring Iran by the Pehelvi dynasty. The events in Iraq in 1958 and the events in Iran in 1978-79 strongly resembled each other. In each country, a dynasty perished, i.e., in Iraq the Hasemite dynasty was overthrown in a coup in 1958; similarly in Iran the Pehelvi dynasty was overthrown by the Islamic fundamentalist led by Khomeini. In each country, an openly pro-western regime and military ally gave way to a revolutionary government hostile to the west and rabidly nationalist. In Iraq, the regime of Nuri Pasha-al-Said and his military ally, Britain gave way to a revolutionary government of Abdul Karem Kassem. It was opposed to the western powers and influence and it was a regime formed of nationalist forces. Similarly in Iran, the regime of Shah Mohammed Reza Pehelvi and his military ally America gave way to a revolutionary government of Imam Khomeini. It was also opposed to the west. It was also a regime formed of nationalist and fundamentalist forces.

d) The 1958 Revolution :

By 1955, Iraq Seemed Solidly established in the western camp. In 1955, it became the only Arab State to Sign the Baghdad Pact. The other states did not signed the Pact because it was more a pro-western Pact.

" The growing pre-occupation of the Arab League with Israel and anti-colonialism and its manifest unwillingness to fulfil the objectives originally sought by the British, that is, to strengthen the League as a bulwark against communism, led to the suspicion and hostility of the Arab States. The United States then tried to encourage the Arab States to take the initiative to organise the area in the Middle East defence system. This finally bore fruit in 1955 as the Baghdad Pact."²³

Thus the Baghdad Pact, now known as Central treaty organization, being a mutual defence system backed by the U.S., was vehemently criticized and hated by other Arab States. They feared that it was an attempt by the United States to form its own defence system in the area. In short, basically it was hatred toward the U.S. and feeling of insecurity and suspicion that kept other Arab States away from the pact. Moreover this — Pact was opposed to communists, the force that was growing in strength especially in the cities in the Arab States.

Three years, after, the signing of the 'Baghdad Pact', that is, in 1958 the situation in Iraq had grown suspicious. The nationalist socialists and the communists were growing in strength, day by day. The whole thing resulted in the coup of July 14, 1958. In this coup, Nuri and his royal family were brutally assassinated. The Republican regime of nationalist forces took over the charge of the government. The regime was led by Abdul Karem Kassem. His regime remained in power for ten years, that is, till 1968 and he remained in Power till 1963.

As soon as Kassem came to Power he took the absolute charge of the government. The constitutional government established by Nuri Said was replaced by the revolutionary council. Brigadier Kassem further established personal rule over Iraq. His regime heavily leaned toward the Soviet Union. Because it saw a friend in Soviet Union that could have helped them in any exigency, especially an exigency from the U.S. Moreover, the regime was supported by communists, who were opposed by the U.S. This was one of the reasons why most of the Arab States did not sign the Baghdad Pact. Thus, the regimes hatred toward the United States made them lean toward the Soviet Union.

In 1963, Abdul Karem Kassem was succeeded by the two Areef brothers who ruled the country for five years, that is, till 1968. However, these two brothers were incapable, inefficient and unschooled in the matters of politics and administration in the country. Hence they made a mess of the country : they created a morass in the country. This morass led to the revolutionary situation in the country.

Thus the revolutionary regime of Brigadier Kassem inaugurated a period of violent upheaval in the country. In fact it would be no exaggeration, if we say that the regime inaugurated the era of Coup's.

E) The 1968 Revolution :

The failure of Areef brothers to rule the country efficiently resulted in another momentous Coup on July 17, 1968. This time members of the Ba'ath Party led by General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr is generally regarded as the father of the Revolution in Iraq which after years of coups has brought stability to the country, and Saddam Hussein was the sparkplug of the Baath Party.

i) Origin of Ba'ath :

" The Baath revolution emerged from the thinking of a handful of intellectuals in Damascus and Beirut who in the late 1940's and early 1950's transmitted their doctrine to cells of activists around the Arab World."²⁴ However Ba'ath as a party was born in 1947 in Syria. It evolved with the stormy politics of Syria and Iraq and also made inroads in other Arab States. This party, however, operated in Iraq and Syria almost at the same time.

ii) Doctrine of Baathism :

Michael Aflaq is the chief ideologue of the doctrine of Baathism. He was not a Muslim at all but a Christian Arab, raised in Syria and educated in Paris on Pan-Arab doctrines. A venerated figure, he currently lives in Baghdad and serves, at least honorifically, as Secretary General of the Baath Party. Aflaq's formula for dealing with the Arab World's debilitating divisions was to create a powerful nationalism, built not upon religious conformity but on a genuine tolerance of cultural diversity."²⁵

As far as Iraq is concerned, Baathism as a doctrine was made to order for heterogeneous Iraq - where Arabs, Kurds and other ethnic minorities reside. Baathism departs from Orthodox Islam. It separates the state from religion. It does not grant a special role to Islamic clergy or to the Islamic law-the Sharia. However, it does not put any restriction in the way of worship. Baathism advocates creation of a "new" society unfettered of the shackles of an oppressive past. It believes in

education and technology, emancipation of women, economic development and material prosperity. It also believes in the development of the entire society. Thus Baathism was and is a search for political forms,, economic and social reforms and intellectual direction that are responsive to the modern world without affecting the religious and cultural fabric of the country.

iii) Policies of the Ba'ath Party :

The Policies of Ba'ath party led by Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr and his associate Saddam Hussein were motivated by Pan-Arabism. The party came to power with a definitive Pan-Arab programme. It laid emphasis on individualism and played a very important role in the stability of the country.

From 1968 till to this date Iraq's foreign and domestic policies emerged directly from the Pan-Arab Socialist ideology of the Baath. The central objectives of which were Arab Unity, freedom and socialism. It pursued to move in the same directin. "Its Pan-Arabism was based on the assumption that some day Israel would be eliminated : Iraqs main aim was to control the persian Gulf which according to its Pan-Arabism was an Arabian Lake rather than a persian Gulf. Iraqs Pan-Arabism believed in powerful nationalism and non-cooperation and disagreement with other Arab and non-Arab States and non participation in international affairs.

As far as domestic policies (Pan-Arab) of Iraq were concerned, they attempted to built an independent economy based on a strong socialist infra-structure. Their economic policies were based on three major dimensions, one the establishment of

sovereignty over oil resources and production. Accordingly it nationalized the oil industry in 1972 and realized the first dimension. By doing this it wanted to control the planning, production and marketing of the oil wealth and at the same time freeing it from the domination of the imperialist monopolies.

Second, economic self-reliance in the internal market. To achieve economic self-reliance, the first thing that Iraqi government did was, it replaced foreign goods by the goods made in Iraq. It also created industries dependent on locally produced raw materials and lessened the industries dependent on imported raw material and services. Further : " The Baath government attempted to transform industrial development from industries dependent on external suppliers and the vicissitudes of the international market to industries vertically and horizontally integrated ;in an economically self-reliant framework."²⁶

Third, economic diversification in the world economy. In this direction the Baath government undertook several large-scale development projects like the creation of a sulphur extraction and refining industry, the creation of a petrochemical industry etc.

The first phase of the sulphur industry was completed in 1971 and by 1980 the annual productive capacity of the sulphur industry was about one million tons. The Baath government also tried to develop the industry of natural gas amonia.

Thus the above policies of the Baath government show that Iraq was intentionally moving away from its role as an exporter of a raw material and resources in the international market and international economy and was moving toward fully integrated diversified industrial base.

Baath socialism did not prohibit or restrict the private sector; altogether. In fact, it used the private sector money to finance the public sector in order to develop that sector. Thus, financed by the wealth produced by the private sector, the socialization of Industry in Iraq progressed rapidly under the Baath. The Public Sector was missing before the Baath came to power.

Agricultural sector was another area on which the Baath government took lot of efforts to achieve growth, especially economic growth from agricultural produce." Agrarian Reform Law 117, issued in 1970 introduced the principle of ownership ceilings based on land fertility, irrigation, and type of produce in an effort to break up large landholdings and weaken the ability of landlords to impede redistribution."²⁷ " While allowing private ownership of small and mediumsize farms, the Baath government tried to socialize agriculture and pool the technical and material resources of the farming communities. The number of collective farms increased from 6 with a total of 100 members in 1972 to 79 with a total of 8,540 members by 1977."²⁹

Even in the agricultural sector the Baath Government brought about drastic changes in order to build an independent socialist economy with a self-sustaining rate of growth and thus aimed at achieving the socialistic objectives of Baath. The same was true about other areas like education health family, — etc.

Thus, from 1968 to 1980, Iraq achieved large scale capital surplus by pursuing socialist development. It did not

face any problem of capital scarcity in securing its development strategies. Thus socialist economy under the entire Baath regime was a great success.

As far as Iraq's foreign policy was concerned, it was in accordance with the principles of Baathism. And Baathism laid great emphasis on powerful nationalism. Basically, the Iraqi foreign policy was opposed to imperialist countries. It believed in keeping away from both Arab and non-Arab States. Though the Baathist are rigid in their attitude. However, when it comes to actual functioning they grow very flexible. This is evident from the given statement; " Our opposition to the imperialists countries does not prevent us from dealing with them in matters which are in our national interests."²⁹ It means that if any country was interested in developing relations with Iraq on Iraqi terms and if they fulfill the conditions laid down by the Iraqi government, and if it was in its interest Iraq would look forward to developing relations with that country.

Thus Iraq, under Baath leadership inaugurated a new foreign policy but within certain limits. "Since 1968, Iraq has followed a delicate middle path in its relations with the Soviet Union and the U.S.A."³⁰ "It gave recognition to the German Democratic Republic, laid the foundation of cooperation with the Soviet Union and the Non-Alignent movement, and initiated a new form of relationship with Turkey. With France Iraq's Friendship ripened and in economic, technical and cultural fields the two countries forged ties. Saddam Hussein the second pillar of the Ba'aath party visited France in 1972.

With African and Latin American countries diplomatic relations were improved."³¹ However, its relations with Syria continued to remain hostile. Further any event or incident in the Persian Gulf changes the relations between all the Arab Country. The same happened, when the camp David Accords were sponsored by the United States. These accords gave a new turn to the politics of Arab countries. All the Arab countries were bifurcated into three divisions with regard to the Camp David Accords - Egypt on one side, Saudi Arabia constituted the Second group, the group of moderates and in the third group the hardliners Syria, Libya and Iraq constituted themselves.

So, the relations in the Middle East constantly pass through upheavals; where a singular event can lead to a drastic change.

iv) Baath Rule Under President Ahmed Haussan alBark :

President Bakr Seized the power in Iraq on 17 July, 1968. As soon as he captured the power, he formed a "Revolutionary council of 22 members. Ba'ath, in Iraq, rules over 15 provinces and 3 autonomous regions of which Kurds are the inhabitants.

President Bakr and his Revolutionary Council of 22 members promised to give a parliamentary form of government to the people. However, features of Parliamentary government were absent and it was also clear that al-Bakr was not interested in the existence and emergence of other political parties : which form the Soul of the Parliamentary form of government. However, due to the governments dependence on the Soviet Union for arms and amunition, the communist party was recognized in

1973. In 1972 Iraq concluded an aid pact with the U.S.S.R.; which obliged Iraq to recognise the Iraqi communist party as mentioned above.

When President al Bakr took over the power Iraq was passing through the problems like instability, insecurity, constant upheavals in the country and outside the country and at times it became vulnerable to inside and outside dangers as well. "Within Iraq, the party (Baath) has borrowed from the communists the idea of organizing into cells all over the country; and informing on any symptoms of disloyalty is encouraged under the watchful eyes of vigilant and ruthless security police."³² This arrangement was made in order to put down any act of Violence and conspiracy against the ruling Ba'ath government. However, even after maintaining such a vigilant and strong security, the regime faced attempted coups against its authority in 1970 and 1973. But, it should be noted that the government was successful in putting down the coups only because it had already realized such a kind of attempts and arranged and prepared for the same. Thus, by mid 1970's the regime was successful, in resisting the Coups and establishing stability and also achieving general support from the masses.

President Ahmed Hassan al Bakr, successfully ruled the country till 1979. He was responsible for creating and establishing, alongwith his associate Saddam Hussein, a powerful and strong foundation for Baath Party in Iraq.

v) Rise of Saddam Hussein :

When President Ahmed Hassan al Bakr captured power in 1968; Saddam Hussein was one of his prominent associates. He

— was very close and loyal associate of the President al Bakr and the Ba'ath Socialist Party. When the government of President al-Bakr was formed Saddam Hussein was given the position of the Vice-President of the country.

In July 1979, President al-Bakr resigned due to ill-health. And he peacefully handed over the power to his friend and supporter Saddam Hussein Takriti who is also known as the "Strong man" in Iraq. One notable feature of the tightly knit core of Power-holders in Iraq is that both the Presidents, al-Bakr and Saddam Hussein come from the same town called Takrit. In fact, most of the members of the Revolutionary command council came from Hussein's native place.

The circumstances in Iraq were not so good when President Saddam Hussein came to Power. He succeeded President al Bakr at a time when the Iraqi-Soviet relations cooled down: for which the communist party of Iraq was partly responsible: because it could not come to terms with the Ba'ath Party; the economic situation though promising would not remain, So if not paid proper attention to; he also faced potential opposition from the Kurds in the north and the Shia's in the Sunni's. However, the Governors did not seemed to be biased towards either the Shias or the Sunnis. In short, the situation was such that it demanded much of the president Hussein's constructive abilities.

President Hussein, however, handled the situation shrewdly and efficiently. This is evident from the fact that he is still in power and his regime is accepted by majority of the Iraqis. He is a very popular figure in Iraq. Even to this date

he is as a "hero" in Iraq: "the likeness of Saddam Hussein, bemedaled in uniform or embracing his children, in bedouin headdress or in elegantly tailored Italian Suits, a top a Stallion or, least convincingly, on his knees in Prayer,"³³ displayed everywhere in Iraq shows the "hero" image of President Saddam Hussein.

vi) Policies of Ba'ath Socialist Party Under the
Presidentship of Saddam Hussein :

Iraq, under President Saddam Hussein's leadership brought about a drastic change in the domestic policies. For the first time since the fall of monarchy elections for a national parliament was held on July 20, 1980. Six million Iraqis exercised their adult franchise. Women voted for the first time. This was an impressive and well managed demonstration, especially on the part of President Hussein.

Though the regime was committed to an extreme Baathist ideology; its economic and social policies appeared to be more flexible and expedient in nature. Its social, economic and educational policies were enlightened. In the educational sphere an excellent system of free education had been introduced. In the social sphere, comprehensive social welfare programmes are established. In the economic sphere, central economic planning had been introduced, women enjoy full economic rights. It assigned high priority to the agricultural sector. The large landholdings of the largest landowners had been broken up, and the land had been redistributed to the peasants. The industrial policies of the previous government were continued and are continued by the new government of

President Hussein. However, many new industries were also established in order to achieve higher economic rate of growth. The percentage of success in government ventures or public sector had been quite high. There was a rise in the standard of living of the masses.

Politically, he faced the ethnic problem, especially from the Kurdish minority. Since 1958 every government in Iraq have faced the Kurdish problem. Successive Iraqi governments had always been reluctant to grant the autonomy - which was and is their genuine demand. In fact it is their right. In 1970, an autonomous Kurdish region was promised to them. But it was implemented only in the year 1974 in a half-hearted manner which led to fierce rebellion in the Iraqi Kurdistan. It continued till 1975. In 1975, Iran withdrew its supports from the Kurds in Iraq in exchange for Iraqi concessions in regard to the shat1-al-Arab waterway.

The Kurdish resistance, however, continued till 1979. Though on a lesser scale they kept on fighting for their demand. Ultimately in March 1979, the Kurdish resistance collapsed with the death of their veteran national leader Mustafa Barzani in Washington, D.C.

After the death of Barzani the Kurdish leader, the Kurds were forcibly made to stay in the south of Iraq far from their native place. However, in September 1980, President Hussein's government, for the first time conducted elections for the regional legislative assembly in Kurdistan. At the same time, the Kurds were granted language and cultural rights and also a measure of autonomy.

Thus by 1980 President Hussein was successful in solving the Kurdish problem.

As far as Iraq's relations with other countries, under President Hussein, were concerned they were not so good. Its hostility towards Syria, Egypt and Iran continues. It considers Kuwait, as its own integral part, i.e., it did not believe in the independence of Kuwait. Its relations with Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Jordan were stable. As far as its relation with Soviet Union were concerned, by 1972 they were cooled down. At the same time its relations with the United States and France improved to a great extent. France provided atomic reactors to Iraq. American economic activity in Iraq was largely growing. America assisted Iraq in the hunt for oil in the western part of Baghdad. In fact America, literally provided assistance to Iraq in almost all its ventures. By the middle of the year 1980 the military of Iraq had improved to a great extent. It was equipped with sophisticated western technology.

However, the Baath government, under the leadership of President Saddam Hussein continues to follow its policy of expansionism.

Thus the history of contemporary Iraq; especially stable Iraq is the contribution of Baath Party and its doctrine of Ba'athism. Moreover, the role of President Saddam Hussein in contemporary Iraq is going to leave its impact on the masses and the country. Because, of 17 years of his rule he has been able to keep Iraq intact; against all odds and in all circumstances.

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