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“Victory or not, we know this to be our duty:”
Pan-Islam in Early Revolutionary Iran

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Abstract: This paper places the first decade of the Islamic Republic of Iran's formation in the context of global Cold War politics to argue that scholarship on the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) has concentrated on the mobilization of Shi'i religious imagery to the exclusion of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's pan-Islamic vision. While this vision provoked international hostility and posed new forms of opposition to the Cold War international system, the reordering of diplomatic relations precipitated by the Iranian Revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the Iran-Iraq War provided the United States and Saudi Arabia the opportunities necessary to re-establish their supremacy in the Persian Gulf.

Timeline

- 1953** Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq is removed in a coup following his nationalization of Iranian oil reserves
- 1963** Mohammad Reza Shah's White Revolution begins
June 6: thousands take to the street to oppose Shah's arrest of Khomeini; Khomeini exiled
- 1964** The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is established
- 1967** Six Days War ends in Israel's capture of the Sinai Peninsula
Iraq and other Arab countries respond by severing diplomatic relations with the United States
- 1968** July 17: Iraqi Ba'ath Party takes power in a bloodless coup
- 1969** Cairo Agreement is signed, confining the PLO's activities to Lebanon
- 1970** Black September, PLO is ousted from Jordan
Khomeini publishes his famous treatise, *Hukumat-i Islami (Islamic Government)*, in Najaf
- 1971** Mohammad Reza Shah celebrates "2500 years of Persian monarchy"
- 1975** Outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War
- 1978** Camp David accords signed between Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin
March 14-21: Israel invades Lebanon, 250,000 civilians displaced and 2,000 killed
September 8: "Black Friday," 88 protesters killed in Iran after Shah declares martial law
- 1979** January 16: Mohammad Reza Shah and his family leave Iran for Egypt
February 1: Khomeini returns to Iran after fourteen years in exile
February 18: PLO delegation visits Tehran; Yasser Arafat is given keys to the Israeli embassy
November 1: Seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca coincides with Shi'i protests in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia
- 1980** Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
September 22: Iraqi offensive launches the Iran-Iraq War
- 1982** Israeli invasion of Lebanon, "Operation Galilee for Peace"
Iran sends 1,500 revolutionary guards to the Biqa Valley in Lebanon; Hezbollah formed
With Iraq on the defensive, Reagan administration removes it from State Sponsors of Terrorism list, making it eligible for the sale of U.S. military technology
- 1987** Clashes between Iranian pilgrims to Mecca and Saudi police result in 400 deaths, severing of Iranian-Saudi diplomatic relations, and Iran's boycott of the Hajj from 1988 to 1980
- 1988** August 20: Khomeini accepts United Nations Security Council Resolution 598, bringing the Iran-Iraq War to an end

“Iran - Obsessed With Martyrdom”^{*}

“A fountain of blood cascades crimson in the bright sunlight of the martyrs' cemetery.” So started John Kifner’s 1984 *New York Times* article “Iran - Obsessed with Martyrdom.” Iranians, Kifner described, tugged at his sleeve, eagerly asking as he wandered through the Behesht-e Zahra cemetery of Tehran, “Have you seen the fountain of blood?” In Khomeini’s Iran, intimated Kifner, mourners circumambulating freshly dug graves and flagpoles swaying to the rhythm of chest-beating flagellants marked a routine celebration of *jumu'ah*, “the Muslim Sabbath.”¹

Kifner referenced the “Karbala paradigm,” originated by anthropologist Michael M.J. Fischer, to convince his readers of the historicity of the national cult of death gripping Iran. “The Karbala paradigm,” Kifner wrote, “is the fascination with the death of [Imam Hussein] the son of the Imam Ali, who in turn was the prophet Mohammed's successor . . . The fact that Hussein's followers failed to come to his aid left the Shiites with a permanent guilt complex.”² In Fischer’s own words, the martyrdom of Imam Hussein operates in the Shi‘i tradition not just as a religious drama but as a totalizing model for living and a “mnemonic for thinking about how to live.”³ The immaculate heroism of Hussein, who went to Karbala knowing he would die, guides thought and action, provides contrast to Sunni Islam, and offers avenues of emotional release in the form of

^{*} I would like to thank Professor Thomas Laqueur, whose levity buoyed me in moments of frustration and reminded me of simple joy of reading and writing, and Dr. Aimee Genell, whose course on political Islam inspired unexpected interests and whose support made pursuing them possible. For endless cups of tea and hours spent wading through scans of *Ittila'at* with me, I have to thank my mom. My deepest gratitude goes to Andrew McLaren, the light at the end of each day’s tunnel. This paper is dedicated to him.

^{**}I have followed the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* transliteration system for Persian, with the exception of omitting diacritical marks from transliterated forms. Proper nouns, names, and foreign terms with an established English spelling appear in their anglicized form.

¹ John Kifner, “Iran - Obsessed with Martyrdom” *New York Times*, December 16, 1984, accessed March 1, 2016. <http://www.nytimes.com/1984/12/16/magazine/iran-obsessed-with-martyrdom.html?page-wanted=all>.

² Ibid.

³ Michael M.J. Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 21.

pilgrimages to the tombs of the imams and *ta'ziyeh* or passion plays.⁴ In terms less charged than Kifner's, Fischer affirms the primacy of martyrdom and the ethos of sacrifice to Shi'i psychology.

Though Iranian revolutionaries did rely on Shi'i imagery to drum up domestic support for the Revolution and the subsequent Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), religion did not act as an abstract force independent of broader cultural and political changes. Clerics and leftists alike deployed religious imagery strategically. In contrast to Kifner's view of religion as an internalized paradigm, social philosopher Karl Marx defined tradition as a device consciously returned to in moments of social-political breakdown: "Just as they [the living] seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves . . . they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored disguise and borrowed language."⁵ The events of 1979, however, did not witness the activation of a martyrdom drive or the appearance of apparitions, but the culmination of a political project in revolutionary pan-Islamism articulated and advanced years prior. Cold War systems of governance only slowly caught up to the "third way" presented by Iran.

Following the 1978 Camp David accords and the subsequent disintegration of Arab nationalism, the nascent Islamic Republic altered Cold War politics by bringing Third World anti-imperialism under the banner of Islam. Khomeini's pan-Islamic vision provoked international hostility, and Iran's war with Iraq provided his opponents a way to limit its unifying

⁴ Fischer, 27.

⁵ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), accessed April 7, 2017. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm>. Or as Karim Sanjabi, a leader of the National Front under Prime Minister Mossadegh, put it, "The young men [protesting in Iran] have twentieth-century ideas, but, as in a war or any difficult period, their sentiments turn to religion. The corner mosque is the only forum for discussion." For more see Joseph Kraft, "Letter From Iran," *The New Yorker*, December 18, 1978, accessed April 16, 2017. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1978/12/18/letter-from-iran>.

potential. The political marginalization of Iran has been repeated in scholarship, which has sidelined the country in discussions on pan-Islam and the main arenas of Islamist activity in the 1980s: the Afghan jihad following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and the ongoing Palestinian struggle for autonomy. Rather than address the efforts of Khomeini to universalize the Revolution, scholars have overstated the Shi'i elements of mobilization for the Iran-Iraq War to the point of stereotype.⁶ Consequently, the universalist, pan-Islamic vision of Khomeini has been ignored or misunderstood as a cover for Iranian expansionism. Far from a political ploy, Khomeinists saw the world in terms of international Islamic struggle and it was in those terms that they sought to address its ills. Pan-Islam, with its injunctions for unified political action, represented to them a 'third way' for the Third World.

The argument of this paper is twofold. I first place Iran's mobilization of religion in the context of global politics to argue that during the Iraq war the Islamic Republic was engaged in another war, one of persuasion, directed not only at Muslims at home but also abroad. This policy of Muslim outreach constituted a pan-Islamic vision that contradicts assertions of the sectarian nature of the Revolution. Secondly, I argue that the while Iranian pan-Islamism challenged the existing paradigms of Cold War politics, the breakdown in diplomatic relations precipitated by the Revolution and the Iraq war, along with new Islamist challenges to Soviet influence in the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan, coincided to provide the United States and Saudi Arabia the opportunity to build new alliances opposed to Khomeini's internationalism as well as to Soviet policy in the Middle East.

This paper begins with an overview of scholarship on the political theology and imagery of the Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War. I suggest that previous observers of the Revolution and

⁶ Gholam Khiabany, *Iranian Media: The Paradox of Modernity* (New York: Routledge Press, 2010), 3.

the Iran-Iraq War have reduced revolutionary Iranian politics to sectarianism, shunting Khomeini's pan-Islamic vision to the side. I then assess Quds (Jerusalem) Day, a day of pan-Islamic solidarity⁷ inaugurated by Khomeini in 1979, as a case study representative of the larger ideology of early revolutionary Iran before placing the Revolution in the context of the Cold War international system to measure its consequences. Finally, I move into Iran's rivalry with Saudi Arabia over leadership of the Muslim world, before examining the treatment of the Iran-Iraq War and other Muslim conflicts in Khomeini's speeches, the Iranian press, and the English-language state publication *Echo of Islam*.

Before beginning, an overview of the state of the Iranian press is necessary to establish the provenance of many of the sources used herein. In the first decade of the Islamic Republic's formation, the Iranian press shared in the broader dynamics of the political economy of the country, which was divided by the presence of large state-owned enterprises and petty producers.⁸ After the 1979 Revolution, the Islamic Republic assumed ownership and oversight of the three leading dailies, *Ittila'at (Information)*, *Kayhan*, and *Soroush*—*Ittila'at* being the newspaper chiefly cited here. *Echo of Islam*, an English-language monthly published by the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance, which replaced Mohammad Reza Shah's Ministry of Tourism and was affiliated with the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), is the other main Iranian source I use. While circulation numbers for *Echo of Islam* remain difficult to gauge, Gholam Khiabany argues by way of the rapidly growing readership of new IRNA publishing ventures, such as the English-language *Iran Daily*, that publications supported by government

⁷ I use “pan-Islamic solidarity” here to point to a universal political project broader than a phrase like “Muslim solidarity” might suggest. Khomeini believed the world was ensnared in a global struggle between *mustaza'fan* (oppressed) and *mustakbirin* (oppressor). This is not to say Islam was incidental to his worldview, but that he did not limit his call to action to Muslims, though they assumed a special place in it.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

organizations, with their massive resources and regular access to the state, greatly benefited from the semi-nationalized nature of the communications industry.⁹

It can be safely assumed, then, that *Ittila'at* and *Echo of Islam*, beyond identifying with the official views of the Islamic Republic, assumed a lion's share of the readership of Iranian publications through their receipt of state subsidies and the elimination of an alternative press following the 1986 Press Law.¹⁰ Contributors to *Ittila'at* and *Echo of Islam* wrote anonymously and with a polemical pen, yet I refrain from referring to their pieces as propaganda, since journalism is always in part didactic and dependent upon a shared understanding of political discourse. The ways in which present anxieties and assumptions inflect writing are present in the scholarship on the Revolution and the Iraq war is examined in the section below.

A Shi'i Revolution?

Scholars have for the most part, directly or indirectly, isolated the 1979 revolution as a purely "Shi'i affair."¹¹ Jacob M. Landau traces the origins of pan-Islam as both a concept and a term to the late nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire before rejecting the pan-Islamism of the early Islamic Republic outright. Iranian officials, he insists, focused on "Islamic unity, rather than on a political Pan-Islamic union, striving to minimize the significance of Shiite-Sunni doctrinal differences."¹² What the difference between Islamic unity and political unity is to Landau remains unclear. Moreover, Landau overlooks the possibility that the minimization of

⁹ Ibid., 85.

¹⁰ Ibid., 80. The 1986 Press Law, amended in 2000 and again in 2008, prohibited the press from publishing articles "prejudicial to Islamic codes," propagating "obscene and religiously forbidden acts," disclosing classified documents and issues related to the Armed Forces, and insulting the Supreme Leader and other recognized religious authorities. For the full text of the Press Law see <http://www.iranhrdc.org/english/english/human-rights-documents/iranian-codes/3201-the-presslaw.html?p=1>.

¹¹ The phrase is used critically by Mahmood Mamdani to analyze the goals of the Reagan administration. For more see Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004), 119-77.

¹² Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 258-59.

doctrinal difference might have been a first step to political unity and a remedy to Saudi- and American-supported sectarianism. This strategy, as will be discussed later in the paper, in fact constituted one of the foremost devices in Iran's pan-Islamic campaign.

Other scholars have sidestepped Khomeini's calls for Muslim unity by placing Shi'i imagery at the symbolic heart of the Revolution and subsequent Iran-Iraq War. Peter Chelkowski and Hamid Dabashi argue that the Iranian Revolution "resuscitated the most radical and subversive features of that faith [Shi'i Islam] and put them to immediate political use."¹³ The Revolution, by framing Imam Hussein's self-sacrifice as a model for political action, "fulfilled, however symbolically, the Shi'i Iranians' ahistorical wish to fight (and die) for Imam Hussein: fighting for Khomeini in 1978-79 became tantamount to finally being able to fight for Imam Hussein in 680 CE."¹⁴ By explaining the Revolution in terms of the potency of martyrdom in "that faith," (a phrase that has the effect, however subtle or unintended, of setting Shi'ism apart from Islam), Chelkowski and Dabashi simplify the dynamics undergirding social protest in Iran to the "guilt complex" seen in Kifner's understanding of the war. Political scientist Pierre Razoux goes one step further, taking the intermittent inflammation of Sunni-Shi'a relations as natural and unchanging. The war, he suggests, can be understood as an expression of the personal obduracy of the two countries' leaders, Saddam Hussein and Khomeini, who, in line with Orientalist tropes of primordialism, tapped into "an ancestral rivalry" between Arabs and Persians or Sunnis and Shi'a to provide their subjects the energy needed to sustain eight years of

¹³ Peter Chelkowski and Hamid Dabashi, *Staging a Revolution: The Art of Persuasion in the Islamic Republic of Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 22.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 75. For more on the evolving narratives of Karbala see Ali Rahnema, *An Islamic Utopian: A Political Biography of Ali Shariati* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998); and Ali Shariati, *Red Shi'ism* (Houston: Free Islamic Literatures, 1980).

fighting.¹⁵ By writing within Iran's national and doctrinal borders, scholars have cut the geographic and political reach of the first decade of the Republic short.

Even Elisheva Machlis, who in contrast to nationally-minded scholars, insists that the 1979 Revolution should be placed in a transnational context, identifies Khomeini as eventually breaking with an international, decades-long project of Shi'i reform. Both early Shi'i reformists and later Islamic revolutionaries "were dealing with the similar topic of Islam and development;" they "were debating how to practice Shi'ism in the current era and how to define communal identity within a more globalised world."¹⁶ To account for these factors, the Islamic revolution in Iran should be assessed not in terms of national social and political trends alone but also in terms of changes in world politics prompted by the Cold War, the decline of pan-Arabism, and the dwindling likelihood of Palestinian independence. Existing scholarship has, as Machlis points out, concentrated instead on the internal dynamics of Iran and the influence of Western interference under Mohammad Reza Shah on social unrest. Khomeini, however, did not abandon "earlier universal Islamic notions" held by other Shi'i reformers to propagate "a more sectarian outlook," as Machlis suggests.¹⁷ Khomeini argued that anti-imperialism grounded in nationalism, socialism, or pan-Arabism ought to be abandoned in favor of a unified notion of Islam centered on shared experiences of subjugation and decolonial struggle.

The Universalism of vilayat-i faqih

Despite Khomeini's calls for Muslim unity, which his followers in Iraq,¹⁸ his home in exile from 1965 to 1978, recorded and distributed as cassette tapes, pan-Islam was in the 1960s

¹⁵ Pierre Razoux, *The Iran-Iraq War*, trans. Nicholas Elliott (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2015), 45.

¹⁶ Elisheva Machlis, *Shi'i Sectarianism in the Middle East: Modernisation and the Quest for Islamic Universalism* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 15. While Machlis defines Khomeini's outlook as sectarian, she updates definitions of political sectarianism to include the possibility of a progressive sectarianism inclusive of other "Islams."

¹⁸ For a description of the illegal distribution of religious sermons on cassettes and their place in *hayat* or neighborhood religious associations see Roy Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and*

and 1970s losing ground to leading ideologists of the time, particularly to the Arab nationalism of Egyptian president Gamel Abdel Nasser. At the same time, Saudi Arabia began investing significant financial resources to spreading its conservative reading of Islam (Wahhabism).¹⁹ Iranian clerics, preoccupied with internal challenges following the White Revolution,²⁰ focused on providing a political alternative to the Shah's nationalism and consequently directed their messages inward. While the end goal of revolutionary clerics remained the establishment of an Islamic state that would encompass the entire *umma* or Muslim community, the immediate aim of Iranian Islamists became overthrowing the Shah.²¹ It was only after the Revolution that Khomeini and his leadership were free to elaborate their pan-Islamic vision. The Iran-Iraq War, which quickly implicated Arab countries and forced them to pick sides, provided further reason for international outreach.

Still, Khomeini did indeed leverage the most potent symbols of the Shi'i tradition to "Islamicize" a revolution pregnant with alternative political possibility. His concept of *vilayat-i faqih* (the guardianship of the jurist) and his foundational treatise *Islamic Government* are best known for offering a radical rereading of the political theology of the early Shi'i community that broke with a centuries-old tradition of Shi'i quietism in arguing for the permissibility of forming an Islamic state in the absence of the Mahdi.²² Once integrated into the new Iranian constitution

Politics in Iran (London: Oneworld Publications, 2008), 347-51. After signing the Algiers accord in 1975, which settled a longstanding border dispute between Iran and Iraq over the Shatt al-Arab waterway, Mohammed Reza Shah urged Saddam Hussein to remove Khomeini from his home in exile in Najaf, Iraq.

¹⁹ Machlis, 132.

²⁰ The White Revolution was a top-down program of social-political reform introduced by Mohammad Reza Shah and ratified by the Majlis or National Assembly in 1963. Though the program promised to bring an end to feudal relations of land ownership, it had the effect of alienating "traditional" classes and enriching state functionaries at the expense of already immiserated agricultural workers. For more see Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

²¹ Machlis, 133.

²² The Mahdi is believed by Twelver Shi'a to be the final of the Twelve Imams. A messianic figure, he is thought to be living in occultation and will return at a time decided by God to restore humankind.

in December 1979,²³ Khomeini's ideas moved from the realm of the Shi'i particular to the pan-Islamic universal by challenging the religious and political legitimacy of all existing governments. Government based on the principle of *vilayat-i faqih*, Khomeini insisted, is necessary "if innovation and the approval of anti-Islamic laws by sham parliaments are to be prevented, if the influence of foreign powers in the Islamic lands is to be destroyed."²⁴

Khomeini drove home his argument for universal juridical rule by referencing a figure shared *among* Muslims—the Prophet Muhammad. Khomeini placed equal emphasis on the Prophet's roles as messenger and executor of the will of God: "In addition to conveying the revelation and expounding and interpreting the articles of faith and the ordinances and institutions of Islam, he [the Prophet] undertook the implementation of law and the establishment of the ordinances of Islam, thereby bringing into being the Islamic state."²⁵ Khomeini went on to define Islamic government as a government of God's law,²⁶ before concluding, "the true rulers are the fuqaha [jurists] themselves," since they are the most versed in law, "and rulership ought officially to be theirs."²⁷ Without proper legal knowledge, the power to govern is compromised, and if, on the other hand, the ruler is Muslim, he must necessarily submit to his superior in legal knowledge, the jurist. This logic left little room for rule by anyone but the jurist. Promoting Islamic government to Khomeini, then, did not mean being uncritical of other Muslim leaders. Instead, it meant holding Muslim politicians accountable to Islamic standards of governance as

²³ See Articles 5, 109, and 110 of the Iranian constitution. For full text of the Constitution see <http://www.iranonline.com/iran/iran-info/government/constitution.html>.

²⁴ Quoted in Najam Haider, "The Politicization of the Twelver Shī'a," in *Shī'ī Islam: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 211.

²⁵ Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, "Islamic Government" in *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden*, ed. Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 163.

²⁶ Khomeini defined Islamic law as all the ordinances contained in the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, or the recorded traditions of the Prophet and the twelve divinely guided imams. For more see Khomeini, "Islamic Government," 165.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

he understood them.²⁸ Indeed, the choice of the term *faqih* (as opposed to honorifics reserved for Shi‘i clerics) evokes a decided appeal to Arabic-as-Islamic *lingua franca*.²⁹

Theological Unity or a Liberation Theology?

Before delving into Khomeini's 1979 announcement of Quds Day and the challenges the Islamic Republic posed to the international system of Cold War diplomacy, I want to pursue briefly a thread of examination started above, namely the theological component of Iranian pan-Islamism. That is, was there a theological component to Iranian pan-Islamism at all? Having demonstrated the universalizing claims embedded in Khomeini's concept of *vilayat-i faqih*, the section below evaluates an official argument for Sunni-Shi‘a cooperation then assesses its content as either theological or political.

A 1987 edition of *Echo of Islam* profiled two Sunni Egyptian reformers, Shaykh Mahmud Shaltut—a student of the forebears of political Islam, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida—and Sayyid Qutb, a luminary among theorists of Islamic revivalism and a leading member of the Muslim Brotherhood before his execution in 1966, to establish a chain of revivalism commanded, in their view, by Iran (see Figure 1). A shared commitment to Muslim unity, more than any other characteristic, insisted one *Echo of Islam* writer, connected Shaltut and Qutb, “two strivers in the way of Allah:”

In the long history of the struggles of Muslim people against the tyranny of the oppressive forces we often come across the names of remarkable individuals who had been the prime catalyst behind the successful culmination and crystallization of such movements. While of different nationalities and belonging to different eras, these Brothers and Sisters share the same characteristics, their utmost love and dedication for the unity of the Muslim nations and ummah.³⁰

²⁸ A well-known example of Khomeini’s criticism of Muslim politicians, even those whose causes he was sympathetic to, is his vocal disapproval of the Palestinian Liberation Organization’s embrace of Arab nationalism. He expressed his concerns to Yasser Arafat during their two-hour meeting Tehran in 1979. For more see <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/2010/10/iran-primer-iran-and-the-palestinians.html#ixzz4eMwKCgoW>.

²⁹ I have Andrew McLaren to thank for this term.

³⁰ “Shaikh Shaltoot’s Fatwa Explained,” *Echo of Islam* 7:1 (1987), 10.

The sweeping declarations of this introduction belie its primary function, prescribing a reading of Shaltut and Qutb according to Iran's terms. To understand, it may help to reference Montaigne's remark on referencing others: "I do not speak the minds of others except to speak my own mind better."³¹ Here, we might say *to speak of others is to speak of how one thinks*. The author's recognition of contributions made by "different nationalities" to the history of Islamic resistance may be understood as a call for Muslim unity made by a group, in this case Shi'i Iranians, conscious of its own minority status. The Islamic Republic, however, held onto its power to mark others as different, even if this marking was not athwart its embrace of doctrinal difference under the umbrella of Iranian leadership.

Having established a desideratum of unity—"love and dedication for the unity of the Muslim nations and ummah"—the author cited Shaltut's famous 1958 *fatwa* as proof of the possibility of pan-Islamic cooperation. Shaltut, who Nasser appointed Grand Imam of al-Azhar, the oldest site of classical Sunni learning, in 1958, declared Shi'i schools of thought as valid as any other. So long as the *sunnah*, or traditions of the the Prophet and his companions, are derived from authentic sources, Shaltut argued, "every Muslim has a right to follow any of the various schools of Islamic law."³² Following the qualification to unity described above, the writer ended his article by affirming the importance, even impulse, of keeping sects separate: "[I]t is common knowledge that in the propagation of their creed, adherents of one creed freely criticise those of the other. One has only to make reference to the international Muslim magazines and books to get a good idea of the fact that the Qadianis, the Wahabis and the Sunnis freely criticise each

³¹ Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 109.

³² "Shaikh Shaltoot's Fatwa Explained," 11.

other.”³³ Theological unity, it seems, mattered to the Islamic Republic only so much as religious divisions impeded their primary goal of unity of political action.

Challenges to the International System of the Cold War

Prior to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the United States appointed Mohammad Reza Shah its regional police dog. While Israel hemmed in the radicalism of its Arab neighbors in the west, Iran, in coordination with Saudi Arabia, stymied Soviet-allied Iraq’s bid for regional dominance in the east (see Figure 2). Saudi-Iranian equilibrium thus regulated geopolitics and official interaction in the Persian Gulf until 1979.³⁴ The *modus vivendi* established between Saudi Arabia and Iran was made possible by American mediation and the Shah’s disinterest in claiming any authority over Muslims abroad. The secular nature of Pahlavi rule, which promoted the memory of “2500 years” of continuous Iranian kingship to the exclusion of Islamic civilization, secularized the education system and judiciary, and suppressed Shi‘i religious practices, contrasted neatly but not antagonistically with the religious values of the Saud dynasty.³⁵ The events of 1979 disrupted this equilibrium and signaled a radical shift in Third World opposition to Western domination.³⁶ The United States had understood communism as the main threat to its interests since World War II and was confounded by the Islamic Republic formed upon Khomeini’s return to Iran. Claiming to take directive from the word of God,

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, *The International Politics of the Persian Gulf: A Cultural Genealogy*. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 21.

³⁵ Raihan Ismail, *Saudi Clerics and Shi‘a Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 136-38.

³⁶ Or as S. Sayyid, puts it, the 1979 Revolution did more than bring about the fall of the Peacock Throne; it destabilized the assumption that the West was the bedrock of progress and democracy. S. Sayyid, “Khomeini and the Decolonization of the Political,” in *A Critical Introduction to Khomeini*, ed. Arshin Adib Moghaddam (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 288.

Khomeini and his leadership refused to abide by either Eastern (Soviet) or Western (American) interests.³⁷

Realization of this sea change was slow in coming for the United States and the Soviet Union. Immediately following the Revolution, the Carter administration, despite the unwavering anti-Americanism of Khomeini and his followers, attempted to set up channels of communication with the new republic. It was only once Khomeini came out in support of holding American diplomats at the US embassy in Tehran hostage³⁸ that Washington realized the Iranian Islamists were more implacable opponents than the Tudeh (Iranian Communist) Party. Carter's failed rescue mission in April 1980 only confirmed to Khomeini and his supporters the impotence of the United States in the face of a united Islamic front.³⁹ The Soviet Union, on the other hand, cautiously but optimistically opted for a gradualist reading of Iran's anti-imperialist denunciations of the United States. It aimed to facilitate the Tudeh's rise to power from within but was soon faced with a dilemma of its own. Its failure to prevent its ally Saddam Hussein from attacking Iran in 1980, along with the setbacks of its military campaign in Afghanistan, ensured that a regional pro-Soviet, anti-imperialist front including Iran went unfulfilled.⁴⁰

That both the United States and the Soviet Union saw what they wanted to see in the emergent Islamic Republic—an interim government to be plied and absorbed into their geopolitical orbit—evidences Matthew Connelly's claim that the Cold War in its later decades operated as an international system, replete with Gordon Craig and Alexander George's stipulations of congruous aims and objectives, a structure apposite the power of participating

³⁷ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Intervention and the Making of Our Times*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 296.

³⁸ Khomeini seized the opportunity to publicize his pan-Islamic politics and demanded the release of the forty-eight women and black Marine guards stationed there before agreeing to keep the remaining fifty-two American diplomats hostage.

³⁹ Westad, 296.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

states, and agreed upon norms, institutions, and practices used to achieve those aims.⁴¹ While at the onset of the Cold War, American and Soviet leaders seemed willing to engage in nuclear war if necessary to contain the other's reach, they eventually determined to avoid clashes and even to respect spheres of influence, an agreement Connelly argues the superpowers implicitly formalized after the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) and the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1963).⁴² Contrary to our post-ideological present, Western governments actively advertised capitalism to decolonizing countries as an alternative better suited to meet the new international norms of human rights and economic development than communism.⁴³

The very ascension of these new norms, however, created a dynamic that facilitated the fall of the Cold War system of realpolitik. Internationalized norms, as Connelly shows with the case of the Algerian War, now trumped national sovereignty, and differences in Cold War alliances and strategies could be exploited by state and nonstate actors alike in pursuit of their own motives. By the 1950s “any movement that called itself anticolonial could expect a sympathetic reception at the United Nations.”⁴⁴

Where did the Islamic Republic, which called for “the complete elimination of imperialism,” fit into this international system?⁴⁵ At first sight, nowhere. Its universal vision of pan-Islam broke with the superpowers' objectives of balancing influence and with the values of avowedly secular rule, as well as with the practices and institutions used to achieve it. “Not Eastern, not Western, Islamic Republican,”⁴⁶ Iran's promise to eliminate all foreign interference

⁴¹ Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 276.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 278.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 279.

⁴⁵ Article 3, Section 5, The Iranian Constitution, accessed April 22, 2016, <http://www.iranonline.com/iran/iran-info/government/constitution-1.html>.

⁴⁶ To Adib-Moghaddam, the slogan *na sharqi, na gharbi, jumhuri-yi Islami* captures par excellence the rejectionist spirit of the early Republic. For more see Adib-Moghaddam, *International Politics*, 21.

and to frame “the foreign policy of the country on the basis of Islamic criteria, fraternal commitment to all Muslims, and unsparing support to the mustad'afin [oppressed] of the world” as it forged a third way for the Third World made it an enemy to both sides of the Cold War divide.⁴⁷

“Quds Day, A New Start in the World of Islam”⁴⁸

Before Reagan and his Gulf allies teamed up to silence Iran’s calls for Muslim unity, Khomeini publicly declared his internationalist intentions in his August 1979 announcement of a new holiday: *ruz-i jahani-yi Quds* or International Quds (Jerusalem) Day. Ebrahim Yazdi, the interim minister of foreign affairs and a Muslim revivalist who placed unity of political action before doctrinal agreement, first suggested a day of international solidarity with Palestinians to Khomeini in 1979.⁴⁹ The last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan was to be consecrated an international day of pan-Islamic solidarity in support of the rights of the people of Palestine and in opposition to Zionism. Coverage of the first Quds Day marches of August 16, 1979 dominated the Iranian press. A digest of local reports published in *Ittila‘at* placed the size of marches nationwide at three and a half million. Of these millions, “More than one million and two hundred thousand people from Isfahan and its surrounding parts and villages participated in the Quds Day march.” So great was the turn out in the city of Isfahan that, “Because the gathering exceeded the space’s capacity, approximately half a million marchers were unable to join in

⁴⁷ See Article 3, Section 16.

⁴⁸ This section heading is taken from the title of an *Ittila‘at* pictorial spread: “*Ruz-i Quds, aghaz-i digar dar jahan-i Islam*,” August 18, 1979.

⁴⁹ Wilfried Buchta, “The Failed Pan-Islamic Program of the Islamic Republic: Views of the Liberal Reformers of the Religious ‘Semi-Opposition,’” in *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics*, ed. Nikkie R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 288-89.

Friday prayers.”⁵⁰ Protesters held pictures of Khomeini and Ayatollah Shariatmadari, a high-ranking cleric who later broke ties with Khomeini for his endorsement of the embassy takeover, in their hands as they chanted, “Islam is victorious, Israel and America are defeated.”⁵¹ The very image of the Republic’s leaders evidenced the crowd’s claims of victory and placed them at the head of the international movement for Palestinian rights and Muslim autonomy (see Figure 3).

Instructions for support for Palestine came in another article, “Quds, the land of blood and hope!” The reporter connected the struggle in Palestine to the Islamic Revolution thusly:

Palestine, the land of revelation and messengers, the first *qiblah* of Muslims, the third Noble Sanctuary has for many years been held captive in the jungle of global Zionism and by the allies of colonialism. Quds has become occupied by Zionism and Judaism. The staggering tragedy of Palestine is a tragedy suffered by all Islamic nations and by all the oppressed nations of the world. Sustaining the life and pride of the beholden nation of Islam requires giving ourselves to resistance and opposition to this serious danger and to the roots of colonialism and exploitation in this land of prophets.⁵²

By describing Quds as a “land of revelation” and invoking its memory as the first *qiblah*, or direction of prayer for all Muslims, the reporter appealed to a broader Muslim identity not bound to Shi‘i tradition or history. Moreover, the parallel images of “all Islamic nations” and “all the oppressed nations of the world” brings us to a point made earlier: that Khomeini, in his calls for pan-Islamic resistance to the superpowers, attempted to speak for the entirety of the Third World. The expropriation of Palestinian land by Israel in collusion with Western forces, he argued, signified a quintessentially colonialist venture and, as such, merited response from the international community of the oppressed. He proclaimed the transnational relevance of Quds

⁵⁰ *Ittila'at*, “Milyunha-yi shahristani dar rahpaymani-yi ruz-i Quds shirkat kardand,” August 16/18?, 1979. *Bi-'illat-i tarakum-i bish az hadd-i jami'at va mahdudiyat-i ja, hudud-i nim milyun nafar az anan muvaffaq bih barguzar-i namaz-i jum'ah nashudand.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ittila'at*, “Quds, sarzamin-i khun va ommid!” August 16, 1979. *Filistin sarzamin vahi va payambran, nukhustin qiblahgah-i Musalmanan, sivumin haram-i sharif (masjid al-haram Makkah - masjid-i nabavvi Madinah) sal-ha ast kih dar jangal-i sihyunism bayn ul-milali va muttahidan-i isti'margarish asir va giriftar amadimu Bayt al-muqaddas an dar ashghal sihyunism va bihubud dar amadih ast. Faji'ih-yi Filistin, faji'ih-yi buzurg-i tamam-i milal-i Islami va 'umum-i milal-i mustaz'af-i jahan ast. Kih khud ra barayi muqablihi va mubarizih ba in khatar-i jiddi amadih namayad va rishih-ha-yi isti'mar va istithmar ra dar sarzamin-i anbiya' mahv va nanud kunad.*

Day outright in another public address: “Quds day is not only a day for Palestine. It is a day of Islam; it is a day of Islamic government. It is a day in which the flag of the Islamic Republic must be raised in all countries. It is a day of letting the world powers know that they can no longer advance in Muslim countries.”⁵³ In his classic binary of *mustaz‘afan* (oppressed) versus *mustakbirin* (oppressor), Khomeini extended his invitation to resistance to non-Muslims as well, though in a distinctly Islamic vernacular: “Quds day is global (*jahani*), and it is not a day that has only been dedicated to Quds. It is a day of confrontation between the *mustaz‘afan* and the *mustakbirin*, a day of confrontation between nations that were under the pressure both of America and non-American countries. . . . On Quds Day the fate of the *mustaz‘af* must be realized.”⁵⁴ Indeed, Khomeini viewed Zionism as an evil equal, if not greater, than dissipated and hypocritical versions of Islam touted by Arab and Muslim leaders, not because Israel was Jewish, but because it was the stalking horse of a renewed imperialist enterprise. With his 1979 announcement, Khomeini did not intend to bring attention to a regional struggle between Muslims and Zionists, which by 1979 had been sufficiently internationalized. Rather, Khomeini sought to place the fight for Palestinian rights in the context of an international struggle against oppression and to make public Iran’s break with Israel.

The malleability of Quds Day, in what its creators claimed it combated and who they called upon to participate, has, in part, to do with the geographically fragmented nature of the

⁵³ Khomeini, “*Sukhanrani dar jam‘-i mardum (vizhagi-ha-yi ruz-i Quds-i jahani)*,” August 16, 1979, accessed March 13, 2016, <http://emam.com/posts/view/1856/>. *Ruz-i Quds faqat ruz-i Filistin nist, ruz-i Islam ast; ruz-i hukumat-i Islami ast. Ruzi ast kih bayad jumhuri-yi Islami dar sarasar kishvar-ha bayraq-i an barafrihtih shavad. Ruzi ast kih bayad bih abarqudrat-ha fahmanad kih digar anha nimi tavanand dar mamalik-i Islami pishravi kunand.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* *Ruz-i Quds, jahani ast, va ruzi nist kih faqat ikhtisas bih Quds dashtih bashad. Ruz-i muqablihi-yi mustaz‘afin ba mustakbarin ast, ruz-i muqablihi-yi millat-ha ast kih dar zir-i fishar-i zulm-i Amrika va ghayr-i Amrika budand, ruzi ast kih bayad sar-nivisht-i millat-ha-yi mustaz‘af ma‘lum shavad. bayad millat-ha-yi mustaz‘af dar muqabil-i mustakbarin i‘lan vujud bikunand, bayad haman tor kih Iran qiyam kard va damagh-i mustakbarin ra bih khak malid, va khahad malid, taman millat-ha qiyam kunand, va in jursumih-ha-yi fasad ra bih zupal-i dan-ha birizand.*

Palestinian struggle. By 1979, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians had been displaced into nearby countries like Lebanon and Jordan. Another *Ittila'at* reporter noted this, writing that protesters joined together on Quds Day not only to express support for the Muslims and *mustaz'afan* of Jerusalem but those of southern Lebanon as well: "Millions of Iranians, in Tehran and smaller cities, in an impressive and unified movement, answered the justice-seeking invitation of Imam Khomeini, the leader of the holy revolution of Iran. They turned out to the streets in a promise to be friends and allies to the *mustaz'afan* of the world and to the downtrodden Muslims of Palestine and southern Lebanon."⁵⁵ Khomeini, who understood that the fight against Israel had spilled over into surrounding Muslim countries, declared Quds Day and, tacitly, the Islamic Republic "a new start for Islam."⁵⁶ This invented tradition became the arena upon which Khomeini enacted his internationalist politics, reaching out to communities in Palestine, Lebanon, and the colonized world.

Leading the Muslim World

The prominence of Quds and Palestine more broadly in Khomeini's vision of pan-Islam is camouflaged by Iran's connections to political factions removed from Palestine and by its rivalry with Saudi Arabia. In the same vein of thought as Connelly, Arshin Adib-Moghaddam holds that the transnational dynamic of Iranian pan-Islamism clashed with the statist norms of the "international Westphalian system."⁵⁷ Diplomacy before, and after, the 1979 Revolution was

⁵⁵ *Ittila'at*, "میلیون تهرانی در مراسم روزی قدس شرکت کردند," August 18, 1980. "Milyunha-yi irani, dar Tihran va sharistan-ha, ba harakat-i yikparchigi va shukumand bih da'vat-i haqq talbanih-yi Imam Khumayni, rahbar-i inqilab-i muqaddas-i Iran pasukh guftand, bih khiyabanan amadand va mithaq bastand kih yar o yavar-i mustaz'afan-i jahan, va buzhiz Musalmanan-i lubnan bashand." Emphasis mine. Cathartic participation in Quds Day continues to this today, with an obvious example being the Green Movement marches of 2007. Protesters took to the streets, in nominal celebration of Quds Day, and instead shouted slogans against Ahmadinejad and for reformist candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* "Aghaz-i digar barayi Islam."

⁵⁷ Adib-Moghaddam defines the "international Westphalian system" as a system of international relations in which sovereign nation-states remain the central protagonists. According to this concept of diplomacy, non-state actors are illegitimate. The name refers to the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which brought the

modeled on the premise of nation-state sovereignty, leaving little tolerance for Iran's internationalism and its flagrant violation of the norms of international conduct, the most famous examples of which remain the head of state's support for taking of American hostages and his *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie.⁵⁸ In the following section, I focus on the formation of Hezbollah as an example of Khomeini's pan-Islamic challenges to the Westphalian system of international conduct. I continue, however, to point to growing Saudi and American support for the Afghan jihad as evidence of the malleability of the international system which Adib-Moghaddam and Connelly refer to. It was this malleability, I contend, that circumscribed Iran's revolutionary potential.

Beyond challenging Saudi supremacy through speech, Iran propagated pan-Islam by providing material assistance to Hezbollah. This support began in 1982, the same year that the United States and its Gulf allies began jointly funding the Afghan mujahidin. Today, Western media portrays Hezbollah as a puppet of Iran, the only successful example of its attempt to "export" Islamic revolution.⁵⁹ In reality, over the last twenty-five years, Hezbollah has evolved from what R. Augustus Norton calls an "Iranian influenced conspiratorial terrorist group" to a political party complete with direct access to the Lebanese state.⁶⁰ Hezbollah's formation and subsequent influence in Lebanese politics should be broadly understood as a response to an increasingly lukewarm reception of Palestinian refugees and guerrilla fighters on the part of Amal (*Afwaj al-muqawama al-lubnaniya*, the battalions of Lebanese resistance), another Lebanese Shi'i political party.

European wars of religion to an end and ushered in a new political order based upon the rights of co-existing sovereign states. Moghaddam, *International Politics*, 22-29.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵⁹ The language of "exportation" is how Iran's policy on revolution or Islamism is most commonly talked about. For more on this choice of word see Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, trans. Anthony F. Roberts (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁶⁰ R. Augustus Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 5-7.

Amal's constituency, primarily Shi'i Muslims living in southern Lebanon, turned against Palestinians in the 1970s and the 1980s, creating a vacuum of support for Palestinians that Hezbollah, with backing from Iran, dutifully filled. Following the Nakba (1948-49); the Six Days War (1967); and *aylul al-aswad* (Black September), the 1970 conflict fought between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Jordanian Armed Forces, Palestinians fled to Lebanon in successive waves, each numbering in the thousands. Some arrived as refugees and others as armed guerilla fighters. Either way, the Shi'a of southern Lebanon came to see Palestinians as an unwelcome strain on limited resources and job opportunities, adding new and unwanted tension to existing Muslim-Maronite relations.⁶¹ Enmity between Lebanese Shi'a and Palestinians reached a boiling point during the Lebanese Civil War of 1975, wherein the Shi'a became reduced to "cannon fodder" for the PLO's ranks, bloated by poor Lebanese who fought for compensation.⁶² In turn, Amal, came to tacitly welcome Israel's offensive, "Operation Peace for Galilee" (1982), as a solution to an overgrown and increasingly high-handed Palestinian presence.

Khomeini was unwilling to renege on his support for Palestinian resistance but hoped, at the same time, to prevent Islamic opposition to Israel in Lebanon from splintering. He hoped to reform the platform of Amal from within, pushing it in a less nationalist and more pan-Islamic direction. In the wake of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, he, although engaged in his own war with Iraq, dispatched fifteen hundred *pasdaran* (Revolutionary Guards) to the Biqa Valley of Lebanon. The guards worked to insinuate themselves into existing Shi'i militia such as Amal; only when that did not come to fruition did they decide to organize existing resistance groups

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid, 15.

into a single organizational framework—Hezbollah.⁶³ From 1985 to 1988, Amal, on the other hand, began its “war of the camps” against Palestinians. At a time of seemingly total betrayal, Hezbollah positioned itself as the vanguard to Palestinian resistance.⁶⁴ Yet well after the formation of Hezbollah, Iran, through its English-language publication *Echo of Islam*, celebrated “the tiny, ill-equipped and poorly supported Joint Forces of the PLO and the freedom fighters of Lebanon, such as AMAL” for combatting Israel, “the most vicious and one of the most powerful war machines ever to have existed.” “[H]ow bravely and how firmly,” the writer celebrated, “they stood up in defense of their lives, their rights and their homes!”⁶⁵ In the face of a rift between Lebanese Muslim political factions, Khomeini and his leadership focused their efforts on defining Israel as a common enemy of oppressed Muslims.

Disparities in the military capabilities of Iran and Iraq and Lebanon/Palestine and Israel represented a point of contention and a source of pride for Iranian officials. Iran took the refusal of the same Muslim leaders offering arms and support to Iraq to lend financial assistance to their coreligionists in Lebanon and Palestine as proof of their practice of *Islam-i Amrika’i*, (“American Islam”). The Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance, writing to Muslims worldwide, insisted that Saudi Arabia’s silence on Palestine belied its claim to leadership over the Muslim world, “[C]ertain ‘defenders of the holy citadels’ left this problem [the siege on Palestinians] to America to solve—a problem that the American government itself, in private if not in public announcements, had actively endorsed.” The writer then turned his attention to Egypt before unleashing a general attack on Muslim rulers allied with the West: “Disgust [should be felt by Muslims] at the way a ‘life-long’ President cracks down on pro-Palestinian demonstrations one day and offers the PLO a safe ‘home’—in already over-crowded, starving and ‘neutralized’

⁶³ Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu’llah: Politics and Religion* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 14.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁵ “Editorial,” *Echo of Islam* 2:4 (1982), 4.

Egypt—another day. Disgust that these kings, presidents and ‘defenders of citadels’ are actually the people who are ruling over the heads of the Muslims and deciding Muslim affairs, and actually claim to be ‘Muslims’ themselves.”⁶⁶

Following the vertical principles of governance enshrined in *vilayat-i faqih*, Khomeini placed blame for the disunity he believed to be plaguing Muslims with “life-long” heads of state. Roger Owen explains the rise of what he calls Arab presidents for life as a product largely of postcolonial experiences of military defeat, most notably at the hands of Israel in 1967, and fears of reoccupation, as the British and French attempted to do in Egypt in 1956. These experiences left Arab countries with a complex of “inadequate stateness” that produced in their leaders a determination to secure sovereignty and maintain military strength, no matter the cost.⁶⁷ Owen describes state-centralization and personification of power by authoritarian presidents as the main tools used in their efforts to distance new regimes from their colonial pasts. Over time, however, their excessive usage had the effect of producing free license to manipulate the notion of sovereignty to legitimize their own rule.⁶⁸

Beyond polemicizing against Arab or Muslim leaders in particular, the Islamic Republic devoted attention in *Echo of Islam* to exposing ethnic nationalism as ideologically bankrupt and human rights as a cover for Cold War realpolitik. Starting with Israel, one *Echo* writer argued, “The time is past for Muslims in Palestine or Lebanon to rely on “the ‘humanitarianism’ of the West or ‘concern for justice’ of the East, since [Menachim] Begin himself has said that ‘no one is going to preach to us humanitarianism,’” and then suggested, “The time is even past for our brothers and sisters to have hope in ‘Arab nationalism’ and ‘Arab solidarity.’ What they should

⁶⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁷ Roger Owen, *The Rise and Fall of Arab Presidents for Life* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press: 2012), 15.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 23.

never lose hope in, however, is the Islamic brotherhood and the Islamic commitment to defend the oppressed.”⁶⁹ The call to abandon any hope in Arab nationalism in the face of manifest ideological and geopolitical divisions was repeated in another English-language Ministry of Islamic Guidance and Culture publication, *The Imam versus Zionism*. The publication charted the consistency of Khomeini’s anti-Zionist position by selecting for translation into English and publication a passage from his public addresses spanning the years 1970 to 1982. “Arab countries,” it prefaced, “have tried every single nationalistic way in attempts to annihilate Israel, but they have never succeeded. Now the time has come to try Islam as an alternative and follow the Islamic Republic of Iran.”⁷⁰ The Ministry, which published the book three years after the start of the Iran-Iraq War, took its unexpected continuation as proof of their God-sent mission: “[Y]ears have passed since the inception of the Iran-Iraq War, and even though the aggressor Iraq is equipped with the most advanced American, Russian and French weapons, it has nevertheless ended up in an economic deadlock and is searching frantically for a way out.”⁷¹

The writer linked geographically distant instances of violence against Muslims to assemble an image of global Islamic struggle ignored by incumbent powers. “These so-called ‘Muslim statesmen’ prefer to turn their attention against the Islamic Republic of Iran. For example,” the writer continued, seamlessly connecting the willingness of Arab states to fund Iraq to their silence on Palestine, “although totally ignoring the needs of the Palestinians and Lebanese and actually calling for them to lay down their arms, and while killing and wounding their supporters in Egypt, the tyrant Husni Mubarak has deemed it fitting to send a total of \$500 million worth of weaponry to support the brutal regime of Iraq.” Kuwait, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, for aiding Saddam while “the Muslims of West Beirut went without food and water,”

⁶⁹ “Editorial,” *Echo of Islam*, 4.

⁷⁰ *The Imam versus Zionism* (Tehran: Ministry of Islamic Guidance, 1983), 11.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

also received special reproof. The betrayal of Arab states, who would rather fund Soviet-backed Ba‘athists than the Palestinian resistance, represented to Iran the disunity plaguing “the Muslim world today. Overlooking similar conditions in other parts of the Muslim world like Afghanistan, Eritrea, the Philippines, Somalia (it seems that all the wars of the world are fought against Muslims), this tragedy alone is enough to make a real Muslim die of shame.”⁷²

Ayatollah Montazeri, in another edition of *Echo of Islam*, asked, “Why do Muslim nations not find inspiration from the living example of the brave, Islamic nation of Iran. The Islamic revolution of Iran should be the best model for freedom movements the world over.”⁷³ The war in his and others’ view functioned to weaken the newly established Islamic Republic. Iraq perceived “Khomeini’s legions were working to spread the revolution across the Islamic world.”⁷⁴ *Echo of Islam* called the war a “multi-dimensional blessing” as it clarified the true character of rulers and kings, “especially of the Middle East,” causing consternation there. “The main objective in imposing the war on Iran was to divert the attention of the Islamic Revolution and the officials of the Islamic Republic towards war so that they would be diverted from their activities in the field of propagation and development of Islamic ideology.” “[T]he war itself, contrary to the will of Islam’s antagonists, became an important factor in the vast expansion of revolutionary waves and Islamic ideas.”

Almost a year into the Iran-Iraq War, Khomeini, rather than emphasize national self-interest, maintained support for Palestine as the best test of a country’s Islamic credentials. In an address published on July 27, 1981, he accused Saddam and other Arab leaders of collaborating with Zionist collaborators for their dubious alliances:

⁷² “Editorial,” *Echo of Islam*, 4.

⁷³ “Message of Ayatollah Montazeri,” *Echo of Islam* 2:4 (1982), 6.

⁷⁴ L.A. Reda, “*Khatt-e Imam: The Follower’s of Khomeini’s Line*,” in *A Critical Introduction to Khomeini*, 131.

We ask statesmen whether they really believe that Iraq is ready to fight beside Palestine for the freedom of Quds. Is this Saddam not the very same Saddam whose agents hunted and assassinated leaders of the PLO from all corners of the world? Is the Iraqi regime not the same regime that right now by bombing the Persian Gulf and Kuwait attempts to make allies out of them? Honestly, are these statesmen so optimistic that they imagine a day wherein the tanks and jets of Iraq are put to use against Israel? Do these statesmen not see the unity between the evil and reactionary regimes of Jordan, Egypt, Morocco and Saddam and not know from which countries Iraq's war provisions come from and by which routes they arrived at Iraq?⁷⁵

He singled Jordan, Egypt, Morocco out for their participation in an Arab League conference held the previous year. The three countries moved not only toward recognizing Israel as a state but negotiating with it.

Saddam's attempts to position himself at the helm of the pan-Arab cause and his characterization of Iranians as alternately Persian or Zoroastrian stoked Khomeini's need to reach out to Arab countries and reaffirm the Revolution's pan-Islamism. He called into question Saddam's fidelity to Islam by reminding readers of the assassination of Ayatollah Sadr and by making explicit reference to the regime's racism: "These leaders faithful to Islam that chiefly are from Arab countries until now have not noticed that, in contradiction to Islamic principles, the regime of Saddam places difference between Arab Muslims and non-Arab Muslims." The effects of Saddam's racist policies, Khomeini warned, "can produce discord between 100 million Arabs and 900 million non-Arab Muslims."⁷⁶

In a 1981 speech, Khomeini explained again the ways in which race had been manipulated to prevent pan-Islamic union: "The Muslims' problems (sic) is their governments....It is the governments which, as the result of their relations with the Superpowers and their servitude to powers of the Left and Right, have created problems for us and for the

⁷⁵ *Ittila'at*, "Barayi ma da'vat bih atash-bas dar halikih tajavuz-gar dar khak mast da'vati barayi khuruj az Islam ast," July 27, 1981. *Ma az in dowlat-madaran su'al mikunim kih aya vaqi'an bih masilih kih 'iraq hazir ast dar kinar-i millat-i Filistin barayi azadi-yi Quds bijangad i'tiqad darand? Magar in Saddam hamam Saddami nist kih ma'murinash (mashlul) sayd va tirur rahbaran-i sazman-i azadibaskhsh-i Filistin dar sarasar-i jahan budand?*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* "ba'ith-i nifaq bayn-i 100 milyun Musliman 'Arab ba 900 milyun Musliman-i ghayr-i 'Arab khud mukhalif.

Muslims.”⁷⁷ Both the United States and Soviet Union “ played the Arabs against the non-Arabs or the Arabs against the Turks and the Turks against other; every race against each other . . . I repeatedly state that nationalism is the root of the Muslims’ misfortune it is because it sets the nation of Iran up against the other Muslim nations.”⁷⁸ “We should follow Islamic teachings and the order of Islam saying that all pious men, everywhere, are brothers and the order to ‘hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together,’ and the order not to disperse or fight amongst each other.”⁷⁹

The International System Restored

The international system of the Cold War proved to be less static than its initial inability to accommodate Iranian pan-Islamism might suggest. The United States and Saudi Arabia exploited the diplomatic fissures caused by the events of 1979 to localize the Revolution to Iran and accelerate the decline of Soviet influence in the Middle East. The Iran-Iraq War brought the United States and Saudi Arabia together in strategic support of Iraq, a Soviet ally that had severed relations with the US after Six Days War and been on the US Department of State’s State Sponsor of Terrorism list since 1978. Before 1979, Saudi Arabia and Iran policed the Gulf with the objective of containing Soviet dominions; after 1979, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, in an orientation opposite the one assumed just years prior, partnered to advance America’s interest in seeing an Iranian defeat. To limit the reach of Khomeini’s message, the United States and Saudi Arabia moved to discredit and even disallow discussion of Iran’s pan-Islamic project at home. Bernard Gwertzman, a *New York Times* reporter, explained, “Insisting that Washington has no

⁷⁷ *The Imam versus Zionism*, 44.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 49. It may be worth noting that this is a reference to Qur’anic verse 3:103: “And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be guided.”

quarrel or conflict with Islam, one senior [American] official, implored reporters to refrain from using the phrase ‘the Moslem world’ because, he argued, this suggested a united anti-American force.”⁸⁰ At the head of this Islamic anti-American movement was “Ayatollah Khomeini [who] has tried to work up pan-Moslem sentiment against the United States.”⁸¹

Gwertzman, like most of the U.S. press, deflated anxieties caused by the spectre of Islamic opposition by declaring that Khomeini, like the Egyptian president Abdel Nasser, had managed to attract support from “radical” Muslims “not entirely because he is a man of Islam, but also because he has dared to take on the giant United States.” Iranian pan-Islamism, then, could be discussed but only in the negative, an idea to be only invoked to be dismissed. Yet this is not to say a gag rule was in effect on discussions of Iran. Indeed, the American press quickly picked up and circulated Egyptian President Anwar Sadat’s denunciations of Khomeini as un-Islamic. Appearing on Egyptian television in 1980, Sadat made his own appeal to the Muslim world, “I’m sad for the Islamic nation, because Khomeini’s fever is beginning to catch onto some Moslem leaders. But I will not hesitate to fight this disease if it tries to creep into some souls here.”⁸²

A US Department of State communique sent only sixteen days after Sadat’s television appearance suggests that the American press did more than “pick-up” Sadat’s statement for circulation; they consciously coordinated anti-Iranian messages. An American official asked John West, US ambassador to Saudi Arabia from 1977 to 1981, to approach the Saudis about the “possible leasing of Saudi facilities for broadcasts to Soviet Muslims” in the face of “strong and urgent high level interest;” Egyptian facilities, the official admitted, remained an option, but

⁸⁰ Bernard Gwertzman, “Passions and Perils: An Anxious Washington Studies the Fever in Islam,” *New York Times*, December 9, 1979, accessed April 16, 1979. <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/12/09/archives/passions-perils-an-anxious-washington-studies-the-fever-in-islam.html>.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² “Sadat: Khomeini distorting Islam,” *The San Bernardino County Sun*, December 26, 1979, accessed April 16, 2017. <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/62725148/>.

because they had already been tapped “for broadcasting relating to Iran,” Egypt remained a second option as its press might be overloaded “if we make [a] parallel request for Radio Liberty leasing.”⁸³

The Revolution, as Sadat’s statement reveals, extended the reordering of Iran’s relations to its neighbors. By manipulating Cold War divisions and supplying Saddam with weapons and operational support to exacerbate the economic strain placed on Iran, opponents to Khomeini minimized the resources available for spreading his pan-Islamic vision. Mahmood Mamdani reveals that Reagan, who succeeded Carter, had resolved to expand the “pro-U.S. Islamic lobby” to isolate Iran.⁸⁴ The strategy of the United States under Reagan unfolded along two lines. It hoped first to unite Muslims worldwide in a crusade, Mamdani’s preferred term, against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan; a secondary objective was to turn a doctrinal difference between Muslims—the minority Shi‘a and the majority Sunni—into a political divide and thereby to redefine the Iranian Revolution as an exclusively Shi‘i affair.⁸⁵ The interests of the US and Saudi Arabia, “a paragon of Islamic piety” and, more importantly, “a wellspring for America’s oil lifeline,” converged, and a joint mission to roll back communism in Afghanistan and undermine pan-Islam in Iran was born.⁸⁶

The Saudi Rivalry

Before the Islamic Revolution, Saudi Arabia stood at the helm of the Muslim world as custodian of the two Holy Sanctuaries, Mecca and Medina, and as host for the hajj. The country had also spearheaded a series of humanitarian efforts directed at alleviating the worst consequences of the Six Days War of 1967, which Israel, less than two decades old at the time,

⁸³ “Facilities for Broadcasts to Soviet Muslims,” United States Department of State, Secret Cable, January 11, 1980, accessed April 22, 2017. Digital National Security Archive. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1679094435?accountid=14496>.

⁸⁴ Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004), 128.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Gwertzman, “Passions and Perils.”

brought to a quick end by capturing the Sinai Peninsula. Immediately after the war's end, King Faisal established the "Popular Committee for Aiding Martyrs' Families, Prisoners and Mujahidin of Palestine," an organization which still exists to this day. The following year the Popular Committee launched its 'Riyal of Palestine' project under the colorful slogan 'Pay a Riyal, Save an Arab.' Later that same year, Palestinians living in Saudi Arabia pledged to give five percent of their salaries to the Popular Committee, inspiring Saudis to donate one percent of their income in 1969 under the campaign "The One Percent Project."⁸⁷

While these Saudi projects reveal early articulations of Muslim solidarity, they limited their solicitation to Saudi residents and their assistance to Palestinians. Moreover, they were very much in the vein of supporting other Arab nations, sometimes glosses in Islamic terms and at others in those of Arab nationalism. Indeed, Saudi Arabia did not assume a more active, as opposed to purely financial, role in political struggles involving Muslims until the 1970s and 1980s.⁸⁸ Two factors influenced a more active pan-Islamist policy on the part of the Saudi state: the rise of revolutionary Iran, "which challenged Saudi Arabia for the leadership of the Muslim world and adopted a populist discourse deeply hostile to the United States, a key Saudi ally," and a decline in oil prices in the mid-1980s which triggered a crisis over the ability of the Saud dynasty to provide economic welfare, such as a guarantee of employment after graduation, to its citizens.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Thomas Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism since 1979* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 20. It is worth noting that in a 1966 speech, Ayatollah Morteza Mutahhari, Chairman of the Council of Islamic Revolution at the time of his assassination by an anti-clerical Iranian group in 1979, recommended a project along these exact lines. He speculated, "If the 700 million . . . Muslim population of the world [would] donate one Iranian rial every day to the Palestinians, it would total to 3 billion dollars a year;" later he added that Iranians should dedicate a "portion of their income" to aiding Palestinians. For more see "Shaheed Muttahari's View on Zionism," *Echo of Islam* 7:1 (1987), 20-21.

⁸⁸ Hegghammer, 20.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

To divert attention from economic recession, Saudi Arabia doubled down on its claims to religious integrity by expanding its efforts to assist Muslims abroad. The extent of Saudi support for the Afghan jihad, the religious dimensions of which led to international Islamist calls for action against Soviet occupation, was entirely unprecedented, and far exceed assistance for Palestinians. Saudi support for the Afghan mujahideen between 1984 and 1989 was greater than any five-year period of the Palestinian conflict had seen since the 1970s; while the PLO received a total of \$992 million in the fourteen years spanning 1978 to 1991, the Afghan saw almost twice that, \$1.8 billion, in the three years from 1987 to 1989.⁹⁰ CitiCorp and Chase Bank provided the country, a key ally of the United States and a large importer of American goods, private loans upward of a billion dollars at a time of waning oil prices.⁹¹

Saudi Arabia recognized that Iran, as heir to an Islamic revolution and creator of an Islamic republic, claimed a unique position in the Muslim world as a vanguard, model, and leader.⁹² Furthermore, as Thomas Hegghammer, Sharam Chubin, and Charles Tripp note, the need to broaden Saudi Arabia's network of Muslim patronage was acutely felt following the 1980s, as major Muslim conflicts then did not involve Arabs. Islamic movements in non-Arab Afghanistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina forced both Saudi Arabia and Iran to recalibrate their policies toward Muslims. The need to escape Iran's "Shi'i ghetto," the phrase used by Chubin and Tripp to describe the religious and political isolation suffered by Iran at the hand of its rivals, and to prove the universality of its message became an essential element of the Islamic Republic's interaction with Muslims abroad as well.⁹³ Khomeini, in contrast to what Mahmood Mamdani calls the "right-wing Islamism" of Saudi Arabia, combined Third World anti-

⁹⁰ Ibid., 25.

⁹¹ Kenneth N. Gilpin, "Saudi Economy Is Ailing: Three Years Of Recession," *New York Times*, February 18, 1985, accessed March 18, 2016. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/111132361?accountid=14496>.

⁹² Shahrām Chubin and Charles Tripp, *Iran and Iraq at War* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 158.

⁹³ Ibid.

colonialism with Islamism to offer an interpretation of pan-Islam less concerned with religious reform than with immediate political action against the two “Great Satans,” the United States and the Soviet Union.⁹⁴

John West, the US ambassador to Saudi Arabia, noted the consternation the Islamic Revolution caused the House of Saud in a confidential cable dated to September 20, 1979. West reported that Saudi officials had issued warnings to Egypt, after Anwar Sadat publicly made comments interpreted as positive on the Iranian Revolution. The warnings stressed with more than a hint of indignation that “no state has done better than Saudi Arabia in preserving its religious integrity or in propagating Islam.” Egyptian rulers, Saudi officials reminded, do not “observe [the] strict rules of Islam, and even Iran is not 100 percent Islamic, like Saudia Arabia.” The US ambassador confirmed the depth of Saudi anxiety over developments in Iran, privately commenting that the “religious issue is very sensitive for Saudis, especially following events in Iran. Reaction here to Egyptian gibes on religious issue is stronger and [bigger?] than to Sadat or Cairo press statements about Saudi political perfidy or even corruption.” The Iraqi attack on Iran, which occurred exactly a year after the cable’s transmission, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that same year provided Saudi Arabia the opportunity it needed to fence in Khomeini’s pan-Islamic movement.⁹⁵

Pilgrimage as Protest: Internal Consequences of the 1979 Revolution on Saudi Arabia

While the Islamic Revolution of 1979 threatened the significance of the contributions of the House of Saud to global Islam, it did more than tarnish its image—it destabilized the internal order of the Kingdom. In November 1979, Khomeini’s condemnation of Muslim rulers who

⁹⁴ Mamdani, 130.

⁹⁵ “Saudi Arabia Defends its Islamic Purity,” Confidential cable, United States Embassy, Saudi Arabia, September 20, 1979, accessed March 18, 2016, Digital National Security Archives. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1679080488?accountid=14496>. It is worth pointing out that this cable predates Anwar Sadat’s comments concerning “Khomeini’s fever” by only four months. The warning received from Saudi Arabia, then, may explain his sudden shift in attitude.

luxuriated in oil money while their populations suffered in poverty reverberated in Shi'i protests across Saudi Arabia.⁹⁶ The seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, the holiest site of Islam, by Juhayman al-'Utaybi and his army of Mahdists overlapped temporally with Shi'i protests and riots in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. Toby Jones points out that the political repression of the House of Saud, which excluded the country's Shi'a from sharing in wealth and welfare services, shaped the demands and grievances of protesters more deeply than any connection with Khomeini did. In other words, the 1979 Revolution helped coax Shi'i dissidents onto the streets, but it cannot account for the roots of Shi'a discontent in Saudi Arabia.⁹⁷ Although Khomeini's call for international political action was perhaps not the only factor, Shi'i unrest cannot be seen as entirely separate from the Islamic Revolution, especially its politics are understood as actively pan-Islamic.

Furthermore, although the pamphlets circulated by Saudi protesters and political groups did not contain a coherent political message, least of all a unified platform of "political Shi'ism," Khomeini's 1971 address delivered from Najaf in protest of Mohammad Reza Shah's opulent celebration of "2500 years of monarchy" advanced critiques similar to those raised in the Eastern Province over the misuse of oil revenues by the state at a time of chronic immiseration. Just as the Shi'a of Saudi Arabia pointed to the simultaneous growth of oil wealth and shanty towns as proof of government neglect, Khomeini opined, "While the majority of the nation of Iran lives in poverty and deprivation, and at a time when any justice-seeking sound is strangled in its throat and the prisons and jails of Iran are filled with God-seeking clerics and others struggling in the path of justice and truth, the Shah and his agents were busy preparing the most tremendous and

⁹⁶ Toby Jones, "Rebellion on the Saudi Periphery: Modernity, Marginalization and the Shia Uprising of 1979," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38 (2006), 224.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 217.

expensive ceremony, ‘The Celebration of 2500 years of Monarchy.’”⁹⁸ Shi‘i protesters in Saudi Arabia repeated variations of these same critiques eight years later, condemning the House of Saud for building fences to keep their poverty out of view when the Queen of England visited the Kingdom.⁹⁹

The extent of Khomeini’s influence on protesters in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia remains difficult to establish. The politicization of Iranian pilgrims traveling to Mecca and the anxiety they caused the House of Saud, however, can be more easily traced. In his 1982 address for Eid-i Qurban, the annual commemoration of Abraham’s sacrifice, Khomeini decried denunciations made against Iranian pilgrims for mixing politics with religion. “These pilgrims [who answered the call to a political pilgrimage],” he proclaimed, “are in the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, notwithstanding some incredibly witless and snakish clerics who at this same time started writing and propagating letters on Shi‘ism, the Shi‘i Imams, and the way of the Shi‘a, which they have violated;” these anti-Shi‘i clerics, he continued, “want to think for the affairs of Islam and have published letters as if they saw a danger for America and, alas, they raised it. The stupid cleric who at this juncture in time violates the sanctities of Shi‘ism is seeking opposition, someone who will also say something that will sow division between Muslims at a time when unity is being formed.”¹⁰⁰ Saddam intervened on behalf of Saudi Arabia, arguing that, “They [Iranians] have interpreted the flexibility and courtesy on the part of the Saudis as a sign of

⁹⁸ Khomeini, “*Tahrim jashn-ha-yi 2500 sal-yi ba sukhanrani-yi muhim-i imam Khumayni*,” October 12, 1971, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://www.imam-khomeini.ir/fa>. *Dar hali kih akthariyat millat-i Iran dar faqr va mahrumiyat bih sar mi bardand, va dar zamani kih har sida-yi haqq talabi dar galu khafih mi shavad va zindan-ha va siahchal-ha-yi Iran, ambashtih az ruhaniyun kuhaju va digar mubarizan-i rah-i haqq va haqiqat bud, shah va dastgash dar tadaruk-i ‘azimtarin va pur kharjtarin marasim, ya ‘ni “jashn-ha-yi duhizar va pansad sal-ha-yi shahanshahi” budand.*

⁹⁹ Jones, 217.

¹⁰⁰ Khomeini, *Kangurih-yi ‘abadi-yi siyasi-i hajj - majmu‘ih-yi sukhanan va payam-ha-yi imam Khumayni*. “*Payam-i Khumayni dar didar ba mas’ulin-i kishvar bih munasibat ‘id-i qurban* (Tehran: Markaz-i Tahqiqat va Intisharat-i Hajj, 1984/85), 205-06. *In hujjaji kih dar bayt Allah al-haram hastand garchih ma‘a al-asif bazi az akhund-ha-yi bisyar nafahm va bisyar mozi.*

weakness,” through their protests they seek to “introduce novel rituals which are totally different from those initiated by the Prophet,” all toward the goal of introducing a new Khomeinist religion deviant from Islam.¹⁰¹ Moreover, Saddam compared Khomeini’s attempts to “internationalize Mecca” to Israel’s occupation of Jerusalem.¹⁰²

Diplomatically isolated and under an arms embargo, Khomeini refused to back away from his view of the Hajj as a forum of protest. Hojatoleslam Mohammad Khatami, Minister of Islamic Guidance and future president, seconded Khomeini’s view in a letter to countries “involved in Hajj affairs” and added that the recent move to limit the number of Iranian pilgrims allowed into Saudi Arabia by 100,000 represented a continuation on the part of the House of Saud of “hostility and enmity [that] had previously been shown against the Muslim nation and government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the forms of colossal financial, military and propaganda aids to the regime of Saddam.”¹⁰³ Saudi Arabia, however, remained undeterred in its determination to minimize the chances of a repeat of the 1979 domestic protests and placed increasing restrictions on the number of Iranian pilgrims allowed into Mecca until 1987, when protests in Mecca ended in the death of 402 pilgrims, over 250 of them Iranian, and the two countries completely severed diplomatic relations.

At the same time that Khatami and Khomeini released their hajj statements, the United States began to move away from neutrality on the Iraq war. In 1982, Reagan covertly removed Iraq from the States Supporting Terrorism list to make it eligible for arms sales. A year later, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld met with Saddam Hussein, triggering a wave of meetings and communiqués occurring at least once a week over the liberalization of Iraqi oil exports and transferring arms to Iraq (see Table 2). Secretary of State George Shultz, however, warned Iraq

¹⁰¹ Saddam Hussein, *The Khomeini Religion*, 39.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁰³ Mohammad Khatami, “Mecca and Medina, Open to All,” *Echo of Islam* 3:2 (1983), 40.

that it would be necessary for it to dissociate itself from “international terrorism” if it were to continue receiving support; to do so he painted pro-Palestinian Shi‘i militias in Lebanon as opposed to both the US and to Iraq’s secular government: “inspiration for certain terrorist acts against Iraq and against the U.S. emanates at times from the same sources. By working together to combat terrorism, our efforts should be more effective.”¹⁰⁴

Saudi Arabia was receptive to the American-Iraqi rapprochement, commenting to an American official that it was a “‘very good’ development from a Saudi perspective.”¹⁰⁵ Saudi Arabia took the side of Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War. In an interview published in 1988 under the title “The Khomeini religion,” Saddam and his Saudi interlocutor discussed the need for Arab unity against “Persian expansionism.”¹⁰⁶ Saddam emphasized the natural fraternity and like-mindedness of Arabs: “As Arabs we sit together and talk about everything; analyze all the phenomena which concern us and draw lessons which are useful for us in the way you deem necessary,”¹⁰⁷ while maintaining that, “Muslims should rely on the views of the Arabs who are well-informed in religious matters. Because no matter how proficient a Persian can be in the Arabic language, he cannot understand Islam, since language is not merely a means of communication, but rather a means of thinking.”¹⁰⁸ To this the reporter answered, “Undoubtedly, it is our duty to urge the Arab people everywhere . . . to be with the people of Iraq and with the Iraqi soldiers in one trench.” Saddam and the interviewer repeatedly stressed the non-Arab and un-Islamic character of the Republic.

¹⁰⁴ “Message from the Secretary for FON MIN Tariq Aziz: Iraqi Support for Terrorism,” Department of State Cable from George P. Shultz to the United States Interests Section in Iraq, May 23, 1983, accessed April 24, 2017. <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB82/iraq18.pdf>.

¹⁰⁵ “Saudi Official Commends U.S./Iraqi Contacts, Confidential Cable, United States Embassy, Saudi Arabia, December 27, 1983, accessed April 22, 2017. Digital National Security Archives. <http://search.proquest.com/dnsa/docview/1679046762/2CBA9ED46FCC4681PQ/5?accountid=14496>.

¹⁰⁶ Saddam Hussein, *The Khomeini Religion*, (Baghdad: Dar al-Ma’mun for Translation and Publishing, 1988), 42.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

Khomeini's Pan-Islamic Vision Undone

Denounced by its opponents as un-Islamic and by witnesses to the eight years of violence that defined the Iran-Iraq War as stubbornly sectarian, the universalist pan-Islamic vision that regulated interaction between the Islamic Republic and Muslims abroad has been lost in the conflagration that coincided with the upheaval of 1979. “Neither Eastern, nor Western,” but pan-Islamic, Khomeini’s calls for unified Islamic political action against the two “superpowers” signaled a shift in Third World opposition to Cold War politics. Sidestepping doctrinal agreement in favor of political action and enjoining Muslims worldwide to enjoin in their struggle against the hypocritical and dissipated governments plaguing Muslims, the Islamic Republic upset established principles of national sovereignty and enshrining Islam, which alleged secularists had relegated to the realm of the private, as the guiding principle of political action.

Yet the Islamic Republic could not escape Cold War politics so easily. Khomeini’s endorsement of the takeover of the American embassy in November 1979 was immediately followed by the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan in on behalf of the communist government there. The United States and Saudi Arabia, both extremely sensitive to the militant Islamism of the Islamic Republic, began warming up to Iraq at the same time that Saddam’s relations with the Soviet Union began to disintegrate.¹⁰⁹ While the Carter administration and the Soviet Union approached the revolutionary Islamism of Iran cautiously, assuming that it represented an unstable interim government to replaced one suited to their interests, by September 1980, with Iran under attack from Iraq, the Soviet Union involved in Afghanistan,

¹⁰⁹ For more see Francis Fukuyama, “The Soviet Threat to the Persian Gulf,” Rand Corporation, March 1981.

and Americans interned in Iran, the Islamist question became part and parcel of Cold War international system.

Together, Saudi Arabia and the United States made the Afghan jihad the central militant cause of the 1980s. They also accelerated the decline of Soviet influence in the Persian Gulf by supplying its fairweather ally Saddam with the covert technology and financial assistance to prolong his war with Iran and thereby wear down its ability to propagate pan-Islamic movement. The Soviet Union, in the process, became the principal target of Islamist fervor, as opposed to the United States. Spending twice as much in four years on financial support for Afghan mujahidin as it had in fifteen years of the Palestinian resistance, Saudi Arabia held onto to its mantle of leadership over the Muslim world as it abetted the continuation of a war of attrition between Ba'athist Iraq and its rival Iran.



Figure 1: Commemorating “strivers in the way of Allah.” Top: A 1984 stamp commemorates the execution of Sayyid Qutb. Bottom: A 1984 stamp advertises the inaugural celebration of *Ruz-i jahani-yi mubarizi ba tab‘iz-i nizhadi* (Universal Day of Struggle Against Race Discrimination). Source: “*Tambr-ha-yi sal-i 1363*,” *Tambrestan*, accessed April 27, 2017. http://tambrestan.com/index.php?id_category=119&controller=category.

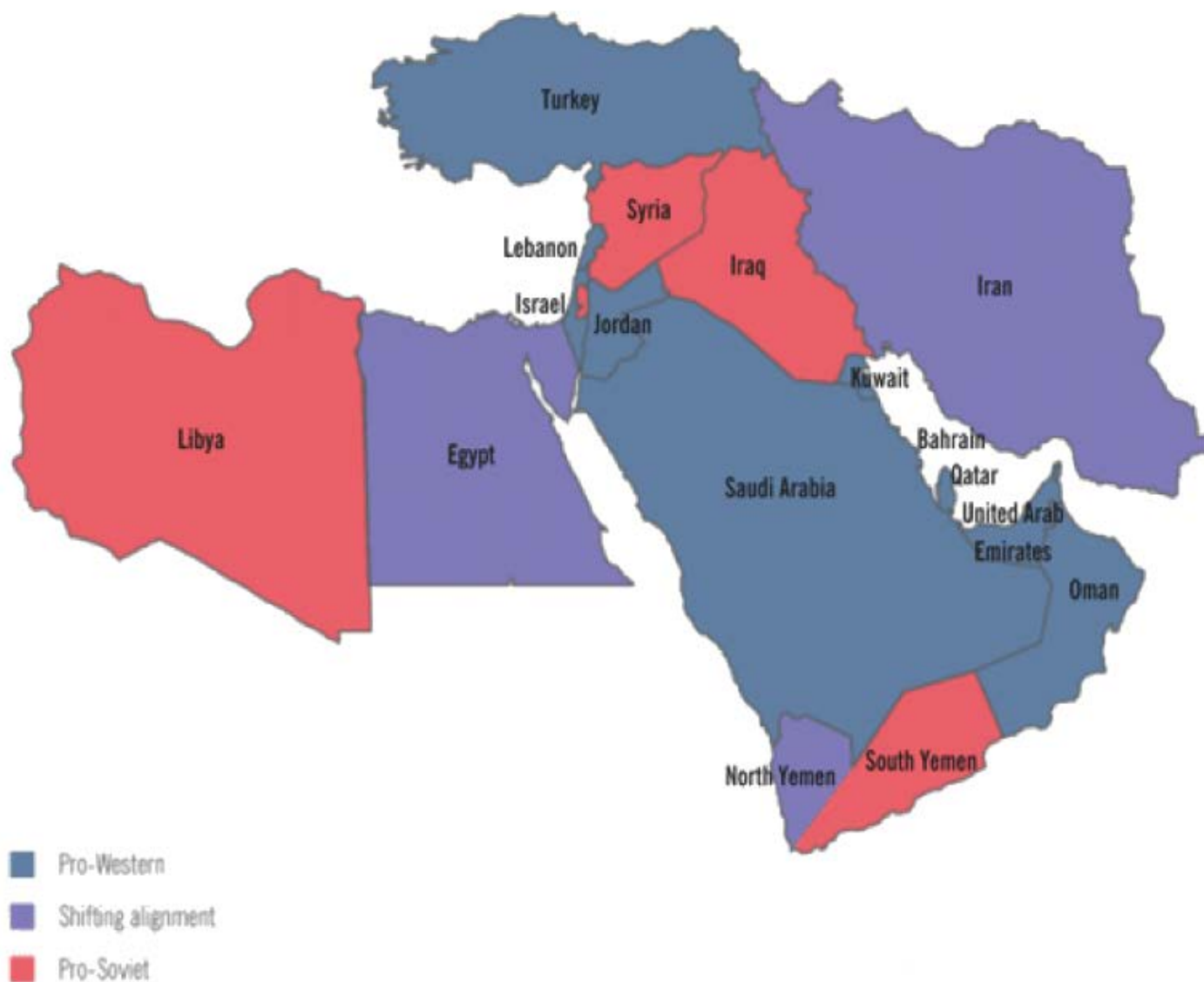


Figure 2: Cold War alliances, pre-1979. Prior to Iran’s diplomatic break with the United States, Mohammad Reza Shah and Saudi officials checked the regional power of their Soviet-allied neighbor Iraq. Source: “Four maps that explain the chaos of the Middle East,” *The Washington Post*, October 17, 2016, accessed April 25, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/10/17/4-maps-that-explain-the-chaos-of-the-middle-east/?utm_term=.7926e8a6f6ad. With modifications.



فلسطین پیروز است
 درمان جلوه‌های گوناگون راهپیمایی دیروز، تصویر بزرگ اسرائیل در دست یک جوان رزمده، مردم را به هجان آورده بود. بر این تصویر نوشته بودند: فلسطین پیروز است، اسرائیل نابود است؛ شعار واحدی که بیش از سوهیصد میلیون تهرانی و میلیونها ایرانی دیگر را در مراسم روز فتن، در کنار هم جمع کرده بود.



زن بیدار انقلابی
 شرکت فعال زنان انقلابی ایران، در مراسم روز فتن، یادآور شرکت فعال آنان، در روزهای اول از پیروزی انقلاب بود. زنی کسه دیروز، در کنار جوانان رزمده کنگرگیل مونوفت به دست می‌گرفتند و درکوچه پس‌کوچه‌های شهر، غلته اسباده و مزخیمان به‌تری می‌چنگیدند. دیروز بار دیگر با اجتماع یکپارچه خودپر مراسم روز فتن، نشان دادند که همچنان هشیار و بیدار، در حریف دستاوردهای انقلاب ایران، بابرجا هستند عکس آئینه زنان را درصحنه‌نامه‌شان می‌دهد.

Figure 3: The first Quds Day marches. Top: *Filistin piruz ast* (Palestine is victorious) Bottom: *Zan-i bidar-i inqilabi* (Awoken revolutionary women) Source: *Ittila'at*, August 18, 1979.

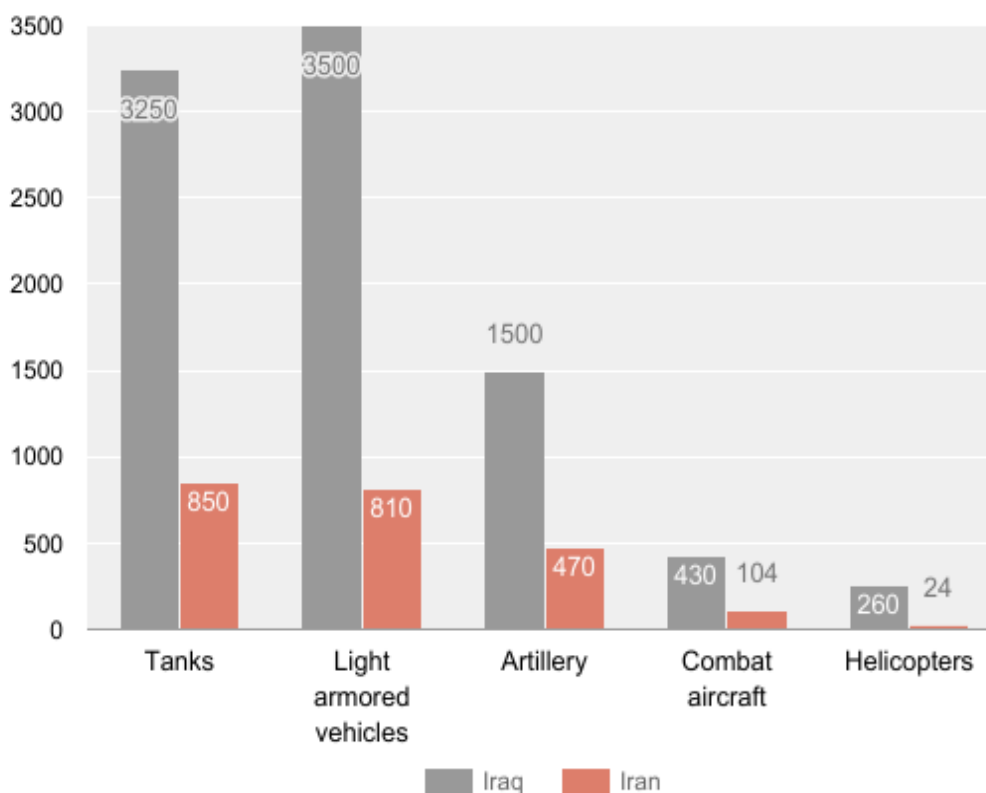
Appendix A: Financing the Iraqi War effort

Loans granted by the Gulf oil monarchies*	80 billion dollars
Iraqi oil revenue	38 billion dollars
Loan deferments granted by various Western countries	20 billion dollars
Credit granted by various communist states	9 billion dollars
Treasury bonds issued by the Iraqi central bank	3 billion dollars
Total	150 billion dollars

*Saudi Arabia: \$60 billion; Kuwait: \$15 billion; UAE and Qatar: \$5 billion. Loans from the Gulf oil monarchies totaled 54% of all Iraqi war finances. Loan deferments from the United States and its Western allies added up to another 13%.

Source: Pierre Razoux, *The Iran-Iraq War*, trans. Nicholas Elliot (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2015), 561-62.

Appendix B: War equipment deliveries in Iraq's favor, 1980-1988



Source: Pierre Razoux, *The Iran-Iraq War*, trans. Nicholas Elliott (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2015), 538.

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