

Original Research Paper

Pazifismus der Iraner in den politischen Beziehungen zum Westen; Eine Studie von 1906 bis 1951

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Zusammenfassung:

Im Laufe ihrer modernen Geschichte waren Iraner gezwungen, verschiedene politische Ansätze in ihren Interaktionen mit westlichen Regierungen zu verfolgen, bedingt durch die militärische Präsenz und den politischen Einfluss der Kolonialmächte. Einer dieser wesentlichen und vorherrschenden Ansätze war die Annahme einer freundschaftlichen Politik und friedlicher Beziehungen. Diese Studie untersucht die Rolle des Pazifismus und des friedlichen politischen Verhaltens der Iraner gegenüber den wichtigsten westlichen Mächten. Dabei wird thematisiert, warum die Iraner trotz gewaltsamer Auseinandersetzungen mit dem Westen weiterhin freundschaftliche und friedliche Beziehungen pflegten. Die Betonung auf die Etablierung freundschaftlicher Beziehungen und die Annahme eines pazifistischen Ansatzes wurde sowohl theoretisch von Intellektuellen als auch praktisch von Staatsmännern und Politikern verfolgt. Die Forschungsergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass die Iraner eine freundschaftliche Beziehung zum Westen anstrebten, um ihre territoriale Unabhängigkeit zu bewahren, politische Stabilität zu erreichen und zivile Fortschritte und Wohlstand zu fördern. Das Wissen und die Technologie des Westens wurden als unerlässlich für den industriellen und zivilen Fortschritt angesehen, und ein freundliches Verhalten des Westens war für die politische Stabilität innerhalb des Irans notwendig. Wirtschaftlich und militärisch war das Land nicht in der Lage, dem Westen entgegenzutreten, und jede Zwangsmaßnahme der iranischen Politiker führte zu einer noch aggressiveren Reaktion der westlichen Mächte.

Schlagwörter: Iran, Westen, politische Beziehungen, Pazifismus, friedliche Beziehungen, friedliche Gedanken

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صلح‌گرایی ایرانیان در روابط سیاسی با غرب؛ مطالعه سال‌های ۱۳۸۵ تا ۱۳۳۰ش

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چکیده:

ایرانیان در تاریخ معاصر خود به خاطر حضور نظامی و نفوذ سیاسی استعمارگران مجبور به اتخاذ رویکردهای مختلف سیاسی در تعامل با دولت‌های غربی بودند. یکی از این رویکردهای مهم و غالب، اتخاذ سیاست دوستانه و روابط مسالمت‌آمیز بود. پژوهش حاضر نقش صلح‌طلبی و رفتار سیاسی مسالمت‌آمیز ایرانیان را با دولت‌های بزرگ غربی واکاوی می‌کند و به این پرسش اصلی پاسخ می‌دهد که چرا ایرانیان با وجود برخوردهای قهری غرب با آن‌ها، همچنان به برخورد دوستانه و مسالمت‌آمیز با غرب ادامه می‌دادند. این مسئله یعنی تأکید بر برقراری روابط دوستانه و اتخاذ رویکرد صلح‌طلبی به صورت نظری توسط اندیشمندان و به صورت عملی توسط دولت‌مردان و سیاستمداران پی گرفته می‌شد. نتایج تحقیق نشان می‌دهد که ایرانیان به خاطر حفظ استقلال سرزمین خود، رسیدن به ثبات سیاسی، پیشرفت و رونق مدنی، خواهان رابطه دوستانه با غرب بودند. دانش و فناوری غرب برای پیشرفت صنعتی و مدنی، و رفتار دوستانه غرب برای ثبات سیاسی در داخل ایران ضروری می‌نمود. همچنین کشور از نظر اقتصادی و نظامی توان رویارویی با غربی‌ها را نداشت و با هر سیاست قهری دولت‌مردان ایرانی، غربی‌ها رفتارهای خشن‌تری را در پیش می‌گرفتند.

واژگان کلیدی: ایران، غرب، روابط سیاسی، صلح‌گرایی، رفتار مسالمت‌آمیز

Original Research Paper

Pacifism of Iranians in Political Relations with the West; A Study from 1906 to 1951

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Abstract

Iranians have had to adopt various political approaches in their interactions with Western governments in their modern history due to the colonial powers' military presence and political influence. One of these major and dominant approaches was adopting a friendly policy and peaceful relations. This study examines the role of pacifism and the peaceful political behavior of Iranians towards major Western powers, addressing why, despite violent encounters with the West, Iranians continued to engage in friendly and peaceful relations. This emphasis on establishing friendly relations and adopting a pacifist approach was pursued theoretically by intellectuals and practically by statesmen and politicians. The research findings indicate that Iranians sought a friendly relationship with the West to preserve their territorial independence, achieve political stability, and foster civil advancement and prosperity. The knowledge and technology of the West were deemed essential for industrial and civil progress, and friendly behavior from the West was necessary for political stability within Iran. Economically and militarily, the country could not confront the West, and any coercive policy from Iranian politicians led to an even more aggressive response from the Western powers.

Keywords: Iran, West political relations, pacifism, peaceful relationship, peaceful thoughts

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Introduction

One of the critical approaches of Iranians during the studied period (1906-1951) in political relations with the West was adopting a friendly political method. In this research, the West refers to major European powers of the time- Britain, France, Germany, and Russia- as well as the United States. Despite the antagonistic approaches of Western governments towards Iran, which included and were not limited to the acquisition of colonial economic concessions, exploitation of Iranians, repeated military occupations of the territory, and countless direct and indirect interventions in Iran's internal affairs, these governments were still viewed with respect by Iranian intellectuals and politicians, who desired to establish and maintaining friendly political relations. The present study explores the reasons and motivations behind Iranians' peaceful attitudes and behaviors towards Western governments. The central question of the research is why the Iranians maintained peace-seeking and amity in their political relations with the West from 1906 to 1951.

The research results demonstrate that domestic unrest and political instability were partly caused by the antagonistic behaviors of and direct incursions by Western powers. Iranians fathomed that one path to achieving political and social stability and progress was through friendly political engagement and a peaceful approach with the West. Given the status and political ethos of the time, Iran was then under the influence and interventions of Russia and Britain. On the other hand, Iran was seeking progress, which a stable political climate could facilitate, and such stability and security could be achieved through peaceful behavior and friendly relations with the West. The current research is divided into three sections: First, from the Constitutional Revolution to the fall of the Qajar dynasty; second, the Pahlavi I era; and third, the first decade of the Pahlavi II government, in which the research questions are particularly addressed.

Research Method

Historical research aims to understand past conditions and uncover the goals and motivations of actors in the subject and period under study. In historical methods, scientific rules and principles must be applied, and data, documents, and sources should be organized appropriately in line with the research objective before proceeding to the writing stage. Stephen Isaac and

William B. Michael define historical research as a systematic and objective reconstruction of the past achieved through the collection of information, evaluation, and determination of the accuracy of the information, and the synthesis of events, ultimately leading to the validation of occurrences and the attainment of a defensible conclusion (Isaac, 1995, p. 54). They outline five stages for the historical research method: 1. Selecting a title and research design, 2. Sampling according to the research topic, 3. Data collection, 4. Data analysis, 5. Conclusion (Ghasemi, 2021, p. 528). Other sources also mention similar stages for historical research methods. The method specifically employed in this research, aligning with historical methods, is a basic research method conducted in three stages, each with specific actions and rules that must be followed. The first stage involves research design based on certain principles and standards. The second stage encompasses the collection of information. In the third stage, the research follows specific scientific principles (Alikhani, 2022, pp. 29-30).

Pacifism in Political Relations with the West during the Qajar Era

1. Pacifism from the Perspective of Thinkers and Intellectuals

Talbof, a thinker of the Constitutional period, believed that Iran should maintain friendly relations with major Western powers and avoid hostility with them, which would be dangerous for the national interests and the continuation of the country's political independence. He viewed friendship with major Western governments as a means to civil flourishing, peace, and political stability in Iran, and he urged political leaders to have amicable political relations with major Western powers such as Britain, Russia, Germany, France, and the United States. In this case, the benefits of friendship could be utilized for economic and industrial prosperity. In his view, adopting a friendly approach towards these states would also attract investment from other countries, consequently boosting the economy and eventually leading to comprehensive national advancement (Talebof, 1978, pp. 116-117). From his perspective, antagonization was one of the grounds for disrupting peaceful relations with Western governments, inhibiting the country's path toward progress and stability (Talebof, 1978, pp. 116-117).

In his views, Hostility and avoidance of friendly relations with the West threatened the country's independence and resulted in lagging in modern civilization. At that time, Iran did not possess the knowledge and capacity

to utilize its financial resources to achieve civil and economic prosperity. The development of mines, the establishment of roads and railways, schools, and military instruction all required investment, knowledge, and technology from major Western countries, and there could be no talk of civil progress, political stability, or security unless some degree of peaceful relations with them were established (Talebof, 1978, pp, 116-118).

Talebof's aim for developing friendly relations with the West was economic prosperity and commercial success. He believed not all Western governments had a colonial mindset and that a country like France was keen to establish trade relations with Iran, from which the latter could benefit through cordial policies (Talebof, 1944, pp. 42-43). He contended that Britain desired Iran's advancement and urged political leaders to adopt an amicable approach towards Britain, as Britain sought peace and friendship with Iran for her own interests. Therefore, it was purely advantageous for Iran to utilize the benefits of this policy for civil progress and to establish political stability (Talebof, 1978, pp. 125-128). From his point of view, the West was seen to be the cradle of knowledge and modern civilization, and he wrote, "the sun of knowledge and industry has risen from the West"; thus, to achieve new civilizational advancements, one must seek friendship with them to remain safe from their superiority (Talebof, 194, pp. 91-94).

In international relations, he emphasized pacifism and advised leaders to adopt pacifist and cordial approaches in their political relations with other countries. He viewed this approach as the foundation for the progress and bliss of humanity, which would benefit all nations and states, advising Westerners to "base their relations with Asian and Muslim nations on genuine honesty, mutual satisfaction, and goodwill" (Talebof, 1978, p. 184). Most intellectuals and thinkers of the Constitution perceived the constitutional government as a compromise with Western states, thus advocating its establishment. They believed European governments would engage better with countries with the rule of law. Since their citizens and advisors involved in trade and economic affairs in other countries, lacking a legal government would risk their lives and property. Hence, political reform, such as establishing a constitutional order, could provide a friendly, redemptive solution for Iran against Western colonialism and lead the

country toward progress and stability (Zarghami-Nejad, 2008, pp. 496-500; Adamiyat, 1990, p. 246).

Some clerics of the Constitution also believed that the constitutional system could liberate Iran from the colonial approach of Western governments that treated nations lacking constitutional rule of law as uncivilized, and under this pacifism, progress and internal security might have been achieved (Zarghami-Nejad, 2008, p. 609). Dehkhoda also advocated distancing from tensions and engaging peacefully with the West. He posited that Iran could not confront the West, pursuing amity with the West to achieve political stability and civil advancements was better. Regarding Russia's military incursions, he believed Iran could not resist Russia and, therefore, had to fabricate a non-antagonizing strategy to address Russia's occupation. He asserted that Russia would not pursue a hostile policy against Iran without Britain's consent. Thus, he planned to sway British public opinion towards an amicable approach with Iran in response to Russia's offensive stance. Since their nation's public opinion influenced the British government, pressure from their people could change Russia's hostile approach (Dehkhoda, 1979, pp. 53-55). He argued that when other governments saw that Iran was secure, not in interstate conflict, and had friendly close relations with major countries, they would also be interested in engaging and establishing relations with Iran. From Dehkhoda's perspective, maintaining a friendly relationship with Britain was crucial for several significant reasons: First, it would reduce Britain's colonial avarice; second, it would accelerate the country's progress; and third, it would prevent territorial threats from Russia, as Britain had interests that needed to be protected on an ally's land. To him, Britain is a free society whose public opinion influences its policymakers' thoughts when dealing with other nations. He believed efforts should be made to garner British public opinion in Iran's favor, thus preventing Russia's hostile policies towards Iran. With the reduction of the colonial behaviors of Russia and Britain, freedom-seeking movements in Iran would flourish, political stability would be achieved, and the country would progress (Dehkhoda, 1979, pp. 53-55).

Dr. Mahmoud Afshar also advised the West and Iranians to adopt a non-antagonizing approach in their political relations, as it would be bilaterally advantageous. For Iran, it would provide civil advancement and political stability, while for the West -mainly Britain-it would allow for hassle-free

benefit acquisition. He considered the 1919 agreement a grave error in British-Iranian political relations, stating that it created a negative mindset among Iranians towards Britain, which would hinder their ability to acquire benefits easily. He told the British that Iran's growth and progress were in their interest and that they should not pursue oppressive and colonial policies in Iran, as these actions upset the Iranian people. Therefore, a dissatisfied Iran could be no assistance in ensuring security in India. Moreover, when Britain and Iran enjoyed friendly and peaceful relations, they would support each other, serving as a deterrent for Iran against Russian aggression, which was critical for the overarching plan of Iran's progress and political stability (Afshar, 1979, pp. 203-206). He emphasized the vital role of Iranian oil in political relations with the West, indicating that Iranian politicians should use it as a means for peace in international relations and maintain political stability and economic advancement through proper management; otherwise, it would become a contentious issue in their political relations (pp. 262-269).

Adopting friendly political behaviors toward Western governments was not only the desire of intellectuals and thinkers but also a widely held belief that establishing friendly political relationships with the West was the only way to achieve stability, independence, and progress.

2. Pacifism in the Behavior of Iranian Statesmen

Other political methods had to be adopted to achieve sustainable peace with the West. One of these measures was incorporating a powerful third state into the equations of foreign relations to garner support for Iran against the colonial ambitions of Russia and Britain. This third power would create a balance between the two Western powers for its interests and prevent them from encroaching on Iran. Thus, the Iranian inclination towards a foreign third power during this period can be interpreted as part of the Iranians' peaceful endeavors to avoid the warmongering of Western powers. Consequently, the Iranian government's tendency to establish relations with Germany and America was in line with achieving peaceful political relations with the West (Pira, 2000, pp. 258-259; Ettehadih, 1981, pp. 315-316). One of the goals of the Constitutional Revolution was freedom from colonial powers and establishing political relationships with non-belligerent Western states. Accordingly, as Iranian nationalists regarded

America as a humanitarian and liberating nation, they sought to establish friendly political relations with it to benefit from its assistance against the oppressive actions of Russia and Britain (Yaslean, 1989, pp. 182-183).

Even under the most challenging Western colonial pressures, the Iranians preferred peaceful methods to violent confrontations. When, in the second parliament, the Iranian government faced the colonial pressures of Russia to expel financial advisors, there were representatives who, not swayed by the emotional atmosphere, advocated for a peaceful stance and solution as, in their view, violent reactions to Russia's demands could provoke a severe political backlash. Matin-ol-Saltaneh, a parliament member advocating for amity with the West, argued that rejecting Russia's request aggressively could be extremely dangerous and lead to territorial occupation. He stated that by accepting some aspects that did not infringe on independence, one could escape violent confrontations and would negotiate to reduce the intrusive factors. This approach was friendly and logical and could resolve the emerging crisis (Azari, 1969, pp. 32-34).

The pacifist viewpoints of politicians believed that better outcomes could yet be derived from political relations with Western governments. One such opportunity was the 1919 Agreement. Almost all Iranians, except for the signatories of the agreement and Seyyed Zia al-Din Tabatabai, deemed this agreement colonial and enslaving (Tolouei, 2001, p. 100). However, some researchers, applying a hindsight approach to interpret the provisions, hold a different opinion. Mehdi Mojtahedi, in his book "Iran and Britain," written in 1947, sees the 1919 Agreement as beneficial to Iran, given the political conditions of that day. Mojtahedi describes the agreement's terms individually, positing them to preserve Iran's independence, achieve political stability, and alleviate unrest by establishing a strong modern army. Additionally, a strong and progressive Iran would resist the colonial ambitions of states like Russia. Britain, too, could secure the unruly political situation in Iran by ensuring peace and establishing a strong army and finance to easily protect its interests in India from the potential overreach of major European powers through an attenuated Iran. Some scholars and individuals at that time viewed this agreement as a peace treaty between Iran and the West, which would end disputes with Western powers. The envisioned calm and strong Iran aimed by this agreement was seen as a friendly political solution with the West (Tolouei, 2001, pp. 100-103).

Nationalists at the end of the Qajar period were very cautious over any disruption to the friendly and pacifist relations between Iran and Western governments. Consequently, they condemned the 1919 agreement, which had disrupted Iran's friendly policy with Western states, as it effectively placed the country under British control. They thus sought to build friendly relations with emerging powers like America to continue Iran's political relationship with great powers (Maki, 1980, pp: 90-95). The Iranian policy of leaning towards America, aimed at establishing peaceful political relations with the West, proved effective during this period, as America emerged as the main reason for the peaceful termination of the 1919 agreement with Britain (Tolouei, 2005, pp. 135-138; Zoughi, 1989, pp. 336-350). Qavam sought to create a third line in Iran's foreign policy against Russia and Britain. From his perspective, America could retract the interventionist hand of Britain and Russia from Iran's political landscape; thus, he inclined towards establishing political relations with America (Behnoud, 1998, p. 33). The primary goal of Qavam and other nationalist figures in their rapprochement with major Western powers was to achieve peace with the West and to curb their colonial ambitions. A superior third power could counterbalance Russia and Britain, and its interests in Iran could serve as a stabilizing force, reducing their hostile engagements (Behnoud, 1998, pp. 45-46). Qavam pursued a policy of friendly relations with the West and aimed to prevent the predatory and destabilizing ambitions of Russia and Britain through the concession of northern oil to America. His goal in leaning towards a third power was establishing a balance between Russia and Britain over their interests in Iran, thereby mitigating their colonial rivalries. By implementing this approach, the political turmoil in Iran stemming from the colonial rivalries of Britain and Russia would be alleviated, leading to economic improvements for the country (Kianfar, 1949, pp. 100-111).

Among the people and nationalists, one major reason for the opposition to the 1919 Agreement was the fear that Iran's friendly relationship with other Western countries would be compromised. This was also the reason for the opposition from Russia, America, and France. Thus, the positive relations worked to promote the cancellation of this agreement, ensuring that Iran's policy of peace and friendship with the West remained intact (Emanat, 2021, p. 438). The official declaration of neutrality during World War I indicated

the weak position of Iran and yet exemplified the pacifist attitude of Iranians who did not wish to get involved in international conflicts. With this policy, Iran was able to pursue its legitimate demands in international forums and garner global public opinion support along with the backing of the American government (Zoughi, 1989, pp. 221-225). The monarch, Ahmad Shah, also exercised a peaceful political approach towards Western governments. He was unwilling to submit to the excessive demands of Russia and Britain, believing that leaning towards one side would compromise the friendly and balanced political relationship Iran maintained with others. Ahmad Shah's approach stemmed from the policy of preserving friendship and balance between Western nations. He understood Iran's acute political situation and geographic position between two colonial powers, recognizing that leaning towards one side would generate hostility from the other, jeopardizing Iran's political stability and independence and thus involving the country in the fierce rivalry between the two colonial powers. Therefore, he refrained from endorsing any document that would disrupt Iran's non-antagonizing and balanced relationships with Western parties (Maki, 1982, Vol. 1, pp. 135-136). Ahmad Shah believed that as long as Iran was situated between Russia and Britain, "the Shah of Iran must be a very meticulous and wise guardian of the balance, vigilantly guarding the balance so that its weight should never lean slightly towards either side." Whenever the Shah of Iran performed this role well, he rendered the greatest service to his nation (Safavi, 1983, pp. 121-122).

The aim was to establish a peaceful relationship with all Western powers. Modarres also admonished the government regarding the 1919 Agreement, emphasizing that our policy in political relations with the West must be based on peace, friendship, and neutrality to preserve balance and equilibrium in Iran and to prevent harm from the country. He considered the 1919 Agreement detrimental to national interests due to its unilateral tendency to favor Britain, arguing that

"[T]he ominous contract was a harmful policy that was not just destructive of Islamic principles but detrimental to our neutrality policy. We are neutral; our policy should not reflect a tilt. That has been the case since His Majesty (Ahmad Shah) and the national assembly's declaration; Vothuq ol-Dowleh wished to shape Iran for the British government, yet the Iranian

nation revolted against it. This sentiment prevails even now, as any degree of inclination towards any policy will not find agreement with us as the Iranian nation, regardless of the side, be it East, West, North, or South." (Modarres, 1979, p. 79)

Mossadegh also believed in the need for a friendly political approach with the West. He argued that when Iran faced colonial and coercive pressures from the West, it was necessary to act peacefully to resolve issues. He asserted that Iran's political relations with the West should be conducted under the supervision of the parliamentary institution to prevent the establishment of colonial political relations and the development of resentment towards the West. Since they respected parliamentary institutions, differences would be resolved peacefully if this entity governed our political ties. "We are a nation equipped with a parliament, and the West cannot openly impose its demands upon us. Thus, the parliament can shape friendly political relationships free from Western powers' hegemonic aspirations." (Kianfar, 1949, pp. 86-90).

Pacifism in Political Relations with the West during the First Pahlavi Era

1. Pacifism from the Perspective of Intellectuals and Statesmen

During Reza Shah's reign, due to the extralegal powers of the monarch, intellectuals and politicians dared not express independent opinions regarding the type and method of establishing political relations. The king made all the decisions; his word was law. Consequently, ministers, representatives, and other prominent figures did not participate in political decision-making but merely executed the king's decisions (Maki, 1982, Vol. 7, pp. 355-358). Writers for the magazine *Kaaveh*, supportive of the modernization initiatives of Reza Shah's period and desiring for the country to quickly attain political stability and civil progress, believed that achieving these goals depended solely on establishing friendly and peaceful relations with major Western powers, as security and advancement for Iran were only possible in the absence of threats and animosities from them. However, various factors and internal issues threatened the achievement of these goals. One of them was certain negative moral attributes of Iranians, notably superiority complexes. This attitude negatively impacted peaceful and pacifist thoughts that hindered the path of political stability and growth in Iran. Such ethics blocked the entry of knowledge and new ideas and

exacerbated internal and external conflicts in Iran. Kaaveh identified the drawbacks of this mentality as an obstacle to establishing friendly political relations. The magazine critiqued these detrimental ethics, promoting a spirit of peace and peaceful behaviors, compelling Iranians to learn the principles of modern civilization (Malai Tavani, 2000, pp. 80-84).

The writers of Kaaveh warned Iranians during this period against cultivating enemies and fearing Westerners. They believed that anti-Western sentiment would lead to political instability and internal unrest, obstructing the path to peace and stability. Their primary solution for achieving stability and tranquility in Iran and fostering friendly relations with the West was solving internal conflicts by overcoming despotism that would bring order and drive political behavior toward peacemaking with the West (Malai Tavani, 2000, pp. 92-97).

Teymourtash, the powerful court minister of Reza Shah during the early years of his rule, was concerned about the monopoly of the British oil company as it kept Iran tethered to Britain and could jeopardize Iran's friendly relationships with other nations while entrenching the economy and trade in British hands. This situation undermined Iran's political ties with other states. Teymourtash desired to create a competitor for the UK to curb its recklessness. Therefore, he traveled to Europe and negotiated this subject, seeking to find other Western competitors in Iran's oil sector to foster competition and thereby open up Iran's constricted political space (Aqeli, 1993, 258-265, 392).

Teymourtash opposed Iran's isolation, believing no country could continue to thrive without friendly political relations with major powers in the age of machinery. However, he also acknowledged the natural political principle that, in establishing political relations, all governments, especially major powers, seek to expand their influence and dominance over others, particularly if that country is weak and has crucial resources, such as oil, deemed vital for modern industry. Thus, equity among nations and respect for their rights was fantastic; the jungle law prevailed, and the weak remained prey to the strong. Based on this premise, he sought to establish friendly political relations with European governments, aiming for Iran's advancement while escaping the colonial shadows of the lawless period. His formula for strengthening Iran was through establishing friendly and

peaceful political relations with European powers (Khajeh Noori, 1978, pp. 36-38).

While serving as a court minister, Teymourtash endeavored to forge close, friendly political ties with European states (Khajeh Noori, 1978, p. 43). His main goal in establishing these friendly political channels with Western political leaders—which the king interpreted as independence-driven—was to promote Iran (Khajeh Noori, 1978, pp. 48-47).

Some Iranian dignitaries regarded Teymourtash as a pro-Russian figure because he had spent considerable time and youth in Russia, especially since he did not favor collaboration with Britain. Because Teymourtash heavily influenced the first decade of Reza Shah's reign, this perception bolstered the belief that his inclination was towards Russia. However, Western political figures believed his political stances were dictated by necessity. The British ambassador stated that Timurtash had no belief in Bolshevik dogmas; he was neither pro-Russian nor pro-British but aimed to seize any opportunity beneficial to his nation. He was a patriotic nationalist who happened to be incompatible with the colonial policies of the West and desired to establish friendly political relations with the West to develop Iran politically and civically (Zarghozari, 1993, pp. 138-139).

Despite the emotionally charged atmosphere favoring decisive actions against colonizers—which stemmed from the increasing nationalism of the era—there were still individuals who recognized the severe consequences of trying to confront the West with harsh political actions, given the nation's circumstances. They sought to reclaim Iran's rights through logical arguments recognized by international bodies so as not to entangle the country in acute disputes with superpowers. For instance, Ali Akbar Davar, involved in the oil dispute with Britain, sought to implement logical and friendly policies, undeterred by the emotionally charged sentiments of the time favoring hostility toward British interests. He endeavored to deploy legal arguments to influence public opinion worldwide and persuade international organizations to de-escalate tensions. The importance of this issue became evident when Britain resorted to threats and violence during the annulment of the oil contract, resorting to military threats, legal threats, and complaints to the League of Nations. Davar, the envoy of Iran defending the nation's rights, presented a reasonable argument, declaring

that the oil dispute between Iran and the oil company was an internal matter, meaning international courts had no jurisdiction over it and that the British government did not have the right to interfere in Iran's domestic affairs. If the company had grievances, it should address them in Iranian courts. The adoption of such approaches saved Iran from political turmoil with the West (Aqeli, 1990, pp. 207-208). From the perspective of the circle of intellectuals during the First Pahlavi period, incorporating knowledge and new Western ideas into Iran would enhance friendly political relationships with the West. In fact, once Iran adopted the manifestations of Western civilization, Western countries would establish suitable and peaceful relations with Iran. Otherwise, a traditional Iran in the international arena was considered a deficiency, leading Western powers to refrain from acting in a pacifist manner, motivating Iran to embrace modernity; without modernity, peaceful political relations would not form, and Iran would fall into the misfortunes of war and chaos (Abadian, 2004, pp. 32-24).

2. Reza Shah's Pacifist Approach in Relations with the West

During his reign, Reza Shah sought to achieve friendly political relations with Western governments through plans and programs intended to mitigate their colonial demands. He aimed to build a friendly relationship with them to free Iran from hostile interventions. Creating national unity, establishing security, and modernization in the Western style were among the groundwork programs for Iran's national and international peace with the West. These modernization programs were grand and ambitious undertakings that required both internal and external political stability and friendship with powerful northern and southern neighbors. In his political dealings with those two powers, he aimed to strike a balance between their ambitions, enabling Iran to achieve civilizational progress and political stability. He subsequently viewed the recourse to a third power as a suitable instrument for reaching equilibrium in dealings with Western nations (Zarghani, 1993, pp. 139-141).

Reza Shah sought to demonstrate to those powers that he could skillfully manage the capabilities of a strong leader to maintain peace and create equilibrium between Western powers, ensuring their interests were safeguarded and that preferred relations were neither excessively tilted

towards one party nor the other. He also aimed to adopt the political tradition of the constitutionalists, namely establishing cordial relations with both colonialist powers of the Soviet Union and Britain while maintaining neutrality in global politics. In some cases, he even attempted to mitigate potential overreach from those two states by drawing closer to Germany, thereby maintaining the balance (Zarghani, 1993, pp. 139-141).

One of Reza Shah's efforts involved creating close political relations with Western governments, specifically with Britain and neighboring Russia, to secure their interests in Iran and uphold the established balance (Maki, 1982, Vol 6, pp. 46-47). He sought to reassure them of his friendly policy towards both sides and that he would maintain the stability of Iran while respecting both rivals' interests, preserving his neutrality between these forces. Like the nationalist politicians of the constitutional era, his foreign policy was built on three principles: 1. Friendship with Russia and Britain, 2. Neutrality in global politics, 3. Approaching a third power to establish a balance between Russia and Britain. His primary objective was to reduce dependency on foreigners and minimize their interference in Iran by establishing friendly and balanced political relations (Avayi, 2005, pp. 120-121).

Reza Shah's serious intention for Iran's neutrality in international conflicts was to avoid entrapment in the dangerous and violent games of Europeans. He intended to maintain friendships with all Western nations while capitalizing on their assistance and goodwill to foster peace and progress for Iran. Observing the situation in Europe during the years leading up to the war, he reckoned that Iran's involvement in these conflicts would be detrimental as it compromised his twenty years of peaceful and friendly relations with the Western powers, which had seen his country develop to an extent. Thus, preserving neutrality implied maintaining friendship and ongoing peace between him and the West (Stewart, 1991, pp. 17-20). Therefore, the fundamental principles of the Shah's foreign policy revolved around promoting neutrality and friendship with neighbors while respecting mutually beneficial relationships. He suppressed any activities that might disrupt this balance, making it clear to Britain and Russia that Iran's policy was transparent and followed through legal channels like the Foreign Ministry and its diplomatic apparatus, negating concerns from both

states regarding unauthorized negotiations by individuals that might undermine national security (Mokhtari, 1947, pp. 466-468).

During World War II, Iran officially declared a policy of neutrality, reflecting the pacifist spirit of Iranians and their reluctance to engage in international conflicts (Stewart, 1991, pp. 17-20). Iranian statesmen endeavored to demonstrate Iran's goodwill through neutrality and refrain from violent political actions, which somewhat helped to mitigate Allied anger over these matters (Khajeh Noori, ۱۹۷۹, Vol. 3, pp. 84-85). In the second decade of Reza Shah's rule, the policy of maintaining balance and neutrality with a tendency towards Germany in the early stages of World War II was compromised (Avayi, 2005, pp. 121-120). Although Iran's official policy was based on neutrality, this leaning tended towards Germany, which provided a pretext for the occupation of Iranian soil (Maki, 1985, Vol. 7, pp. 133-137).

The proponents among the Pahlavi supporters sought to absolve the royal family of culpability in disrupting the longstanding tradition of Iran's foreign policy – maintaining balance in political relations with the West – by attributing blame to Military Ministers and high-ranking army officers, thereby exonerating Reza Shah. Their perspective was that the military should have warned the regime against the dangers of leaning towards Germany, which could violate the principle of Iran's neutrality and embroil the country in war (Mokhtari, 1946, pp. 643-642). This notion posits that maintaining neutrality was the Shah's main desire, which he endeavored to uphold; the presence of military experts served as a nominal excuse, whereby they aimed for assistance to the Soviet Union through Iran, prompting its occupation (Mirza Saleh, 1993, p. 404).

Overall, Reza Shah's policy during his two decades of rule emphasized conflict resolution. From the outset, he recognized that most disputes with neighboring states involved border limits, surmising that progress and the survival of interests hinged on fostering good relations and balance among neighbors. Thus, efforts were made to militarily resolve these border disputes diplomatically so that no conflicts remained. Why did military commanders not realize that the government's policy did not favor hostility and that no official declarations had been made in this regard? How did they overlook the fact that the Shah had declared neutrality in parliament

and had issued no orders for intervention? Why, then, did sporadic resistances arise? By studying the structure of the Pahlavi army, it was evident that the Iranian military was neither trained nor equipped for conflict with its neighbors (Mokhtari, 1946, pp. 652-644). The realization of this perspective suggests errors made by military commanders and the country's diplomatic apparatus, which provoked neighbors into attack and dissolved Iran's friendly relations.

Pacifism in Political Relations with the West during the Second Pahlavi Era

1. Kasravi and Pacifism in Political Relations with the West

Ahmad Kasravi (1890-1946) was one of the most significant writers and influential politicians of the Pahlavi era. How should the West be treated? Which ideology and doctrine should we follow? These were the recurrent questions that Kasravi aimed to address with his scholarly mind during such sensitive times, as the country was under occupation by Russia, England, and America, with liberal and communist ideologies battling within society. Regarding how our political relationships with the West should proceed, he believed that at this juncture, the world order was largely under the control of three great powers—Russia, England, and America—each maintaining military presence and political influence in our country. Each Western power adheres to specific ideologies and worldviews that we must be cautious of when approaching them politically. He regards these matters as fundamental issues that had not yet received a suitable response, plunging the society into confusion. The cause of societal confusion stemmed from questions over which ideologies and governments to align with for maximum benefit, ensuring that the independence of Iran remains intact. Is maintaining Iran's independence achievable under these circumstances? These questions preoccupied the minds of Iranians during the early 40s. Kasravi's response emphasized maintaining a rational and friendly stance both from the government and the public. With this principle, he asserted that not only would Iran's independence be secured, but it would also contribute to the political elevation and advancement of society—a goal requiring the purging of society (both ordinary citizens and elites) of ignorance and division and promoting rational behaviors toward neighboring states to avoid

provoking them and instead compel adherence to a clear and transparent governmental policy (Kasravi, 1945, pp. 44-43).

Kasravi recommended establishing political relations with Western governments, particularly the two neighboring states, based on friendly political behavior. He argued that due to Iran's weak position, wisdom dictated that Iran should not engage in hostile political actions toward Russia and England (Kasravi, 1945, p. 6). Remembering the experiences from the Constitution along with its political crises with Western states, he continued the political agendas of conservative figures of that period while resting on the theme of maintaining balance, friendship, and amiable relations with those nations. Establishing friendly relations thus became the axis of Kasravi's thoughts on logical engagement with the West. By adopting this friendly approach, Iran's independence would be preserved, and political calm and stability would be fostered, guiding the nation toward prosperity. He believed the key to the country's development and prosperity lay in friendship with major powers (Kasravi, 1945, p. 9-6). Steering clear of hostile political behaviors and adopting a transparent, friendly policy with neighbors represented Kasravi's solution to lead Iran out of political tensions with them, resulting in political stability and development (Kasravi, 1945, pp. 9-6).

Of course, establishing amicable political relations with Western governments required tools, which Kasravi believed mainly lay in "purifying society" from its myriad contaminations, promoting goodwill among Iranian statesmen. He views politics essentially as a peaceful way of coexistence with neighbors. This peaceful living must be devoid of insults and antagonism towards other nations. He alluded to the existence of various political parties and their policies, which involved derogatory comments about the Russian and British governments and fueled tensions and hostilities that could provoke them. Kasravi regarded the backwardness and political underdevelopment of the masses and political parties as evidence of societal contamination, representing the overarching lack of progress that allowed Western governments to dominate Iran. Therefore, to cleanse this contamination meant advancing Iran through friendly policies and a sound absorption of Western civilizational experiences (Kasravi, 1945, pp. 16-15).

Kasravi addressed a misconception among Iranians who believed Western governments had imperialistic designs toward Iran, whereas he argued otherwise; their interests in Iran could only be secured through an independent Iran. An independent Iran would preclude violent political confrontations between neighbors. A stable Iran would result in a deeper retention and securing of their interests within the country. According to him, it was crucial to exploit this situation for the nation's advancement. He emphasized that negative emotional reactions would not only provoke local animosities but would also lead to Iran's backwardness. Kasravi attributed the hesitation of neighboring nations in establishing friendly relations with Iran to the presence of extremist parties and politicians, unable to cultivate a balanced policy between the interests of neighboring states. Their piecemeal and unplanned policies produced risk for the interests of both British and Soviet states. He acknowledged that a positive sentiment among Iranians towards establishing rational and friendly political relations with neighboring states was forming, albeit requiring mutual cooperation. Neighboring governments must also establish friendly relations with Iran. His advice emphasized an intelligent and friendly political relationship with both sides so this collaboration could foster Iran's flourishing and political stability 9-20).

Kasravi criticized the advocates of irrational policies leaning towards unilateralism as unfit for Iran's circumstances, potentially leading to Iran's subjugation to a single power, thus representing the main source of Iran's misfortunes – embracing the oppressiveness a single power brings. With such approaches, independent sovereignty could not be achieved; we must first liberate ourselves to serve as agents of recovery, as a stance favoring one would only further confine our freedom. By that time, large states had established friendly alliances; for them, securing relationships among those powers was seen as more beneficial than entangling themselves with Iran. Through a single-sided policy, Iran becomes a mere pawn for one power which would act in its own interests whenever the political tides dictated, and this scenario would jeopardize Iran's status as a crossroads of interests, inciting fury from others against whom it could not withstand (Kasravi, 1945, pp. 47-46).

However, this misunderstanding treats the notion that major Western powers want to eliminate Iran's independence as a fallacy. A strong Iran

would benefit all nations, helping maintain the balance of power while ensuring security over their interests. Why then do they interfere in our affairs, and what remedies can be sought? According to Kasravi, Western interference in Iranian domestic affairs is due to the internal discord plaguing Iran. Their actions stem from lacking a capable and suitable government that could manage affairs, enforce a clear and stable policy, and reassert the nation's balance. This perception characterizes Iran as a contested ground for the intersecting interests of these two states, as they act preemptively to prevent rivals from consolidating more influence at the expense of their gains. If a competent and principled government were to gain power, maintain equilibrium between the two states, sidestep allegiances, and regard both interests with respect, the likelihood of contentious interactions and entanglements in Iranian domestic matters would diminish, as their interests would not be jeopardized. This kind of government would catalyze Iran's advancement and contribute to maintaining global peace (Kasravi, 1945, pp. 49-47).

Kasravi was among the nationalists who deemed the acceptance of positive aspects of Western civilization, such as knowledge and expertise, imperative for Iran's advancement. He believed that the positive aspects of Western civilization, such as knowledge and expertise, would lead to political calm, stability, and progress in Iran, while the indiscriminate acceptance of all Western influences without internalizing them into Iranian culture could lead to a loss of peace, stability, and turmoil in the country. Perhaps it is for this reason that he did not consider the divisionary philosophical and moral schools of the West, such as a leaning towards communism, among the essential ailments of Iranian society and saw their appeal as a move away from peace that could provoke extremism in international relations, potentially disrupting the delicate equilibrium of Iran and obstructing the peaceful endeavors of the Iranian people (Hassanzadeh, 2000, pp. 134-133). Recognizing the tumultuous global state between the two wars and during the Second World War, he advocated for global peace so humanity could navigate the dangers of Western civilization (Hassanzadeh, 2000, pp. 137). He criticized the tendency to attribute blame to Britain in the contemporary events within Iran, which exacerbated anti-Western sentiment, positing that such provocative acts would counter the peaceful disposition prevalent

among Iranians while being detrimental to the preservation of Iran's independence amid powerful Western states (Hassan-zadeh, 2000, pp. 145-143).

2. Iranian Statesmen and Pacifism in Political Engagement with the West between 1941-1951

The political figures of this period were largely the old politicians from the Constitution, adopting the same time-tested approach amidst political crises, which emphasized establishing friendly ties and maintaining balance with both the northern and southern neighbors. From the perspective of these leaders, who typically hailed from influential and aristocratic classes, the optimal solution for establishing proper and peaceful political relations with the West was to be conciliatory towards the Soviets while fostering friendship with Britain. They believed that friendship with Britain was essential for Iran's political stability, asserting that as long as Britain remained a close friend of Iran, the latter's political stability would be assured, as the primary concern for these aristocracy and seasoned politicians was political stability that would not compromise their interests (Avayi, 1984, Vol.2, pp. 368-366). Therefore, they attempted to seek logical resolutions for establishing friendly political relations with the West through alignment with Western governments to create pathways for political stability that would safeguard independence and ensure Iran's advancement. Qavam exemplified this approach with a conciliatory political disposition towards all great powers; he aimed to lay the groundwork for political stability to catalyze reform and progress in Iran. The fundamental principle in these political leaders' minds, along with their political apparatus, was the pursuit of a de-escalation strategy in political relations with the three great powers to ease tensions while garnering their friendship, ultimately guiding the nation toward peace, stability, and development (Pirdigar et al., 1999, p. 132).

The means to establish friendly relations with the West and ensure internal political stability required compromises with great powers. Perhaps it could be termed positive balancing. Ahmad Qavam perceived the discourse of his foreign policy as determined by the advice of his allies in accommodating the three Western powers, essentially soliciting cooperation from these powers to prevent political unrest and achieve stability (Eskandari, 1993, p.

216). The policy of accommodating Western governments executed by Qavam proved quite sagacious, as evidenced in the resolution of the oil crisis with the Soviets and the peaceful resolution with Stalin regarding Azerbaijan. Despite being pro-Western, he adopted a friendly and conciliatory policy towards the Soviets to alleviate pressure and threats, resulting in the withdrawal of Soviet support for the Democratic faction in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. Clearly, this outcome was unattainable without policies emphasizing conciliation, thus establishing a strategy to ensure stability for Iran (Mahdavi, 2006, pp. 431-430).

Mohammad Reza Shah also embraced a policy of conciliation with Western governments, which he pursued by establishing positive political ties with all major powers. Unlike Mossadegh, who resorted to a negative balance approach, he called for a positive balancing policy with all parties. Mohammad Reza Shah believed positive balancing would facilitate rapid advancements in Iran and its political stability. He detested the obstinacies of the National Front that led to societal polarization, hindering Iran's stability and progression relying on major powers, thus advocating for a form of positive balance that benefited Iran and necessitated complying with all countries, especially Western powers (Pahlavi, 1976, pp. 146-139).

From the very start of his rule, Mohammad Reza Shah recognized that establishing political stability in Iran and securing his monarchy were contingent on friendship and collaboration with Western countries like Britain, Russia, and America. Friendly relations and pacifist behaviors toward these nations were essential for achieving a political stability under the king's leadership and monarchy itself. Thus, without collaboration with Western allies, peace and stability would not be achieved in this tumultuous decade for Iran (Abrahamian, 1998, pp. 217-216).

Believing in the need for a balance and friendly approach towards Western nations was a prevailing sentiment among nationalist figures. After Reza Shah's downfall, they opposed the government's policy advocating for unity with the Allies against Germany, reasoning that it was premature, as the outcome of the war was yet uncertain; if Germany were victorious, it would pose a threat to Iran's existence (Mahdavi, 2006, pp. 412-410). Even as Iranians sought to cooperate with the Allies under pressure, they limited this collaboration to assisting within the borders, refusing any support

outside Iranian territories for their allied friends (Naghizadeh, 2004, pp. 156). This tendency can be viewed as an ideological inclination toward the traditional policy of Iranian nationalists regarding neutrality and friendship with major powers. The policy of neutrality and friendship with all nations, particularly major Western nations, which included Germany, represented a strong sentiment among nationalist figures during the early years of the Pahlavi II period. They deemed this path essential for Iran's independence and political stability (Mahdavi, 2006, 92-93).

In this decade, oil emerged as a critical issue in political relations between Iran and Western governments. Under these circumstances, Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh, a prominent and seasoned nationalist politician, initiated a creative advocacy that preserved Iran's peaceful policy while assuring its independence. His perspective was that Iran required a balance favoring itself rather than the West; thus, this balance could be negative. In other words, unlike positive balancing, which grants concessions to both sides, a negative balance implies granting no concessions to either party. Through this policy, which epitomizes the optimal approach for maintaining neutrality and peaceful strategies, both powers -Russia and Britain- would withdraw from colonial competition over concessions disrupting the political stability in Iran. This approach, centered on oil, fostered friendship and perpetuated Iran's peaceful policies towards the West, as granting concessions to one party undermined the ethos of friendship and maintaining balance in political relations with Western powers (Mahdavi, 1989, pp. 57-54; Kistavan, 1977, pp. 193-194).

Mossadegh's method of engaging politically with Western powers was characterized by a systematic interaction that arose from years of colonial pressure. By rejecting the demands of colonial powers, he contested unilateralism and positively balanced policies, which he regarded as divisive and counter to the discourse of peace-seeking espoused by Iranians since the Constitutional Movement. This approach became known as negative balance (Sami'i, 2019, pp. 473-472). In light of this policy, representatives in the fifteenth parliament rejected the oil agreement proposed by Qavam and Sadchikov, which entangled Iran in a perilous unilateral policy that would provoke American and British ire (Mahdavi, 1968, pp. 56-55). Furthermore, Mossadegh resisted accepting a mutual military pact with the United States—one that would bind Iran to the

West—arguing that such an agreement would compel Iran to defend Western interests and perceiving it as an infringement upon Iran's peaceful and friendly relationships with all Western powers, including the Soviets, leading it towards unilateralism and confrontation with the Eastern Bloc. Opposition to this military pact did not signify a drift into the Eastern Bloc. Still, it was rather an application of a fundamental principle in Iran's foreign policy, which had served as a crucial tool for the Iranian nationalists in navigating political crises with the West since the Constitutional Revolution (Zabih, 1991, pp. 133-135). Mossadegh argued that leaning towards a specific state was detrimental to national interests and contrasted with the peaceful approach that characterized Iranian nationalists, potentially exacerbating hostilities between Western powers and Iran; thus the best policy involved adhering to neutrality and sustaining friendly relationships that resonated with nationalist sentiments while fostering amicable relations across all governments (Mossadegh, 1986, p. 344).

Conclusion

In the contemporary political history of Iran, diverse approaches have been employed in political encounters with Western colonizers. One such approach included establishing friendly and peaceful relations aimed at avoiding coercive policies from Western governments. Due to its geographical position, Iran was subject to the ambitions and interventions of colonizers, yet it decidedly rejected military and violent confrontations, consistently opting for friendly and peaceful strategies despite the adversarial methods employed by the colonizers. Iran pursued independence and progress, perceiving solutions not in conflict and hostility but in peace and coexistence. The most significant strategy adopted and adhered to by Iranians during this period was the establishment of friendly and peaceful relations with the West. Within the context of these relations, Iranians aspired to political stability and civil advancement, which was fundamentally pursued theoretically and practically by nationalists, intellectuals, and statesmen. Distancing from tension and achieving political stability and civil progress necessitated the establishment of friendly political relationships with colonial powers that exercised military presence and political influence in Iran. Therefore, peaceful political relations with interfering powers emerged as one of the foremost pathways for establishing tranquility and political stability along

with advancement, perceived amongst intellectuals and statesmen. The key strategy of Iranian thinkers and politicians during this studied period was through goodwill in political relations with the West and promoting peace-centered ideas, steering the country towards tranquility, political stability, and progress, as national advancement was a pivotal tool in ensuring peace with meddlesome Western governments that treated weaker states contemptuously. This period witnessed theoretical and practical efforts by Iranians to establish friendly and peaceful relations with Western entities.

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