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NUMBER ELEVEN

IRAN:
SOVIET INTERESTS,
US CONCERNS

By RALPH A. COSSA



THE INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL STRATEGIC STUDIES

A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy, or, perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; And a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives [James Madison to W.T. Barry August 4, 1822].

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PROLOGUE



he invasion began early one August morning. Invoking Article Six of the 1921 Treaty of Friendship, which states, "The Soviet Government shall have the right to send its army into Persia in order to take the necessary military steps in its own defense," the Soviets sent their forces marching toward Tehran. Although tensions in the region had been mounting steadily and strong Soviet diplomatic protests had reached Tehran earlier in the month, the Iranians were surprised by the attack.

The invasion carefully followed the plan laid out several months earlier by the Soviet General Staff. A two-pronged attack into the northwestern Azerbaijan Province quickly enveloped Tabriz, Iran's second-largest city, before progressing onward toward Zanjan, Qazvin, and ultimately to the western approaches to Tehran.

Another two-pronged attack was launched simultaneously against Khorasan Province in the northeast. Iran's third-largest city, Mashhad, quickly fell to the Soviets. A third Soviet force, along the eastern Caspian Sea coast, complemented this effort against Mashhad and helped cut off Tehran from the east. All told, 40,000 Soviet troops participated in the initial attack, with the occupation force quickly swelling to nearly 100,000 combat troops.

Soviet air forces supported the advancing ground armies and also conducted a highly effective, largely unchallenged air campaign of terror against virtually all major northern Iranian towns and cities, including Tehran itself. These indiscriminate air attacks added to the atmosphere of panic and intimidation. In the face of this swift and powerful ground and air onslaught, Iranian resistance caved in.

Within a week, the major northern cities were under Soviet control. Within two weeks, Tehran was effectively cut off from both east and west and the Iranian Majlis (Parliament) was urging the central government to accept Soviet terms. Within three weeks, as Soviet troops reached the outskirts of Tehran, Iran's senior leadership prepared to flee the country and leave behind a new regime—one willing to accept Soviet domination over northern Iran.

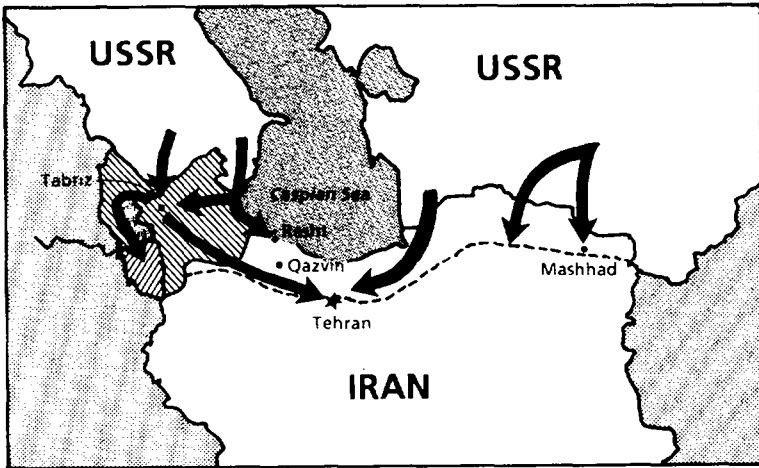
Fiction? Prediction? No—history. The year was 1941. In August, the British and the Soviets—concerned over the Shah’s pro-Nazi leanings and in need of a secure supply corridor to assist the Soviet war effort against Germany—had given Iran’s monarch, Reza Shah Pahlavi, an ultimatum to evict all German nationals from Iran. The Shah, convinced that the British would never invade and that the Soviets were too preoccupied resisting German advances to open another front, refused.¹





The rest is history. (See the map on p. 7.) On 25 August, Soviet forces attacked from the north while British forces invaded from the south. By 30 August, both were sufficiently entrenched to begin delivering new ultimatums to Tehran. By 9 September, the Majlis was willing to accept Moscow’s and London’s terms, even though Reza Shah remained defiant. On 15 September, Soviet forces advanced on Tehran from the east and west while British troops moved up from the south. The next day, Reza Shah abdicated in favor of his son Mohammed Reza Pahlavi (who remained on the Peacock Throne for the next 38 years).

In announcing his country’s invasion to the Iranian Prime Minister on 25 August 1941, the Soviet Ambassador to Iran assured the Iranians in writing that the USSR respected Iran’s sovereignty:

The military measures now undertaken by the Soviet government are directed exclusively against the danger produced by alien activity in Iran. As soon as the dangers threatening the interests of Iran and the U.S.S.R. have been averted, the Soviet government will, in accordance with the undertakings given in the Soviet-Iranian Agreement of 1921, immediately withdraw its troops from the boundaries of Iran.²

The Treaty of Alliance between the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and Iran, commonly known as the Tri-Partite Treaty, signed in Tehran on 29 January 1942, further assured Iran’s independence after the war. Article One states that all parties “respect the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Iran,” while Article Five pledges,



-  Lines of Soviet Advance
-  Southern limit of Soviet zone of control
-  Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan, 1945-47
-  Kurdish People's Republic, 1945-47

“the forces of the Allied Powers shall be withdrawn from Iranian territory not later than six months after all hostilities between the Allied Powers and Germany and her associates have been suspended.”³

The United States formally endorsed this commitment through the “Declaration of the Three Powers Regarding Iran,” signed in Tehran by Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt on 1 December 1943:

The Governments of the United States, the U.S.S.R., and the United Kingdom are at one with the Government of Iran in

their desire for the maintenance of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran.⁴

As the war began to draw to a close, it quickly became apparent that the Soviets did not intend to keep their end of the bargain. In late August of 1945—more than three months after Germany surrendered and a week before the Japanese armistice was signed—the Soviet-backed Azerbaijani Tudeh Party seized control of Tabriz. The Soviets immediately confined local Iranian military units to their barracks and blocked any additional Iranian forces from entering the region. Behind the Soviets' military shield, the Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan was proclaimed on 12 December 1945; three days later, the Kurdish People's Republic was established.⁵ (See map on p. 7.)

The Soviets, after ignoring an Iranian demand that they withdraw within six months of Germany's defeat, eventually agreed to withdraw forces *from certain portions of Iran* by 2 March 1946—six months after the signing of the armistice with the last of Germany's "associates," Japan—but *not from the Azerbaijan region*. In fact, even as Soviet troops withdrew from the northeastern portion of Iran, reinforcements streamed into Azerbaijan.

Following strong pressure from the United Nations and the United States—which included a direct "ultimatum" to the Soviet leadership from President Truman⁶—and after securing an agreement that gave the USSR a 51 percent share in joint oil explorations in northern Iran, the Soviets finally agreed to withdraw all of their forces. On 25 May 1946, one year after Germany's surrender and almost nine months after the signing of the armistice with Japan, Iran confirmed that all Soviet forces had been withdrawn.

Without Soviet protection, the Azerbaijan and Kurdish Republics were soon brought back under the Iranian central government's control. In October 1947, the Iranian Majlis declared the USSR-Iran oil agreement null and void. Thus ended the Soviet Union's last overt attempt to expand its influence into Iran by force of arms. The Soviets had lost what some were later to call the first battle of the Cold War.

This attempted expansion is well documented and widely known. It is in the living memory of most of the leaders currently ruling in Moscow and Tehran. Less well known is that this incursion marked no less than the sixth time in the last three centuries, and the second time in the brief history of the USSR, that the Kremlin had sent its forces into Iran—underscoring a time-honored Russian quest to expand its influence and borders southward.⁷

Does this desire to expand southward persist today? Is Iran still a “strategic jewel” for the Kremlin’s crown? Or have Soviet objectives toward Iran changed? These are the major questions this study addresses. To answer them requires some understanding of historical Russian and Soviet interests and actions regarding Iran and the rest of Southwest Asia.

1. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

From the time the Mongol Yoke was loosened from Moscow’s neck in the sixteenth century to the Bolshevik Revolution 400 years later, the Russian Empire grew from a 15,000 square mile Duchy to the largest nation on earth, encompassing over 8.5 million square miles (roughly 15 percent of the planet’s total land surface). During this period, and especially since the beginning of the nineteenth century, large segments of what was once the Persian Empire have fallen under Moscow’s control—sometimes temporarily, other times permanently.

A comprehensive history of Russian and Soviet expansion is, of course, far beyond our scope here.⁸ But a generalized sketch of Russia’s growth to its current borders, along with an analysis of past Russian and Soviet penetrations into the territory of modern-day Iran, is most instructive. The emphasis here will be on Moscow’s motives and on the identification of those factors that may have prompted both the entry into and the subsequent withdrawal from Iran.

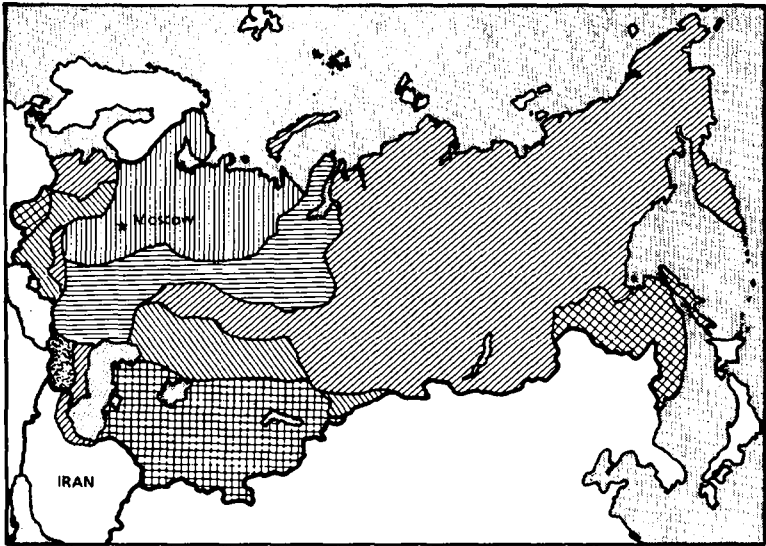
Russian Expansion Before 1800

The first significant expansion of the Duchy of Muscovy occurred during the reign of Ivan IV (the Terrible), who became Grand Duke of Moscow in 1533 and was crowned “Tsar of all the Russias” in 1547. Under Ivan IV (1533-1584), Russia expanded both to the east and to the south to satisfy a desire for more territory. The reason for the direction of Ivan’s expansion was simple: given the power of the Swedes, Germans, and Poles to the west, he simply choose the paths of least resistance. Ivan’s southern expansion followed the Volga River. His objectives were to gain control of the fertile grain-producing areas in the Volga basin and to open up secure trade routes linking Moscow to Persian, Caucasus, and Central Asian markets. By 1560, Muscovite forces had reached the northern approaches to the Caspian Sea. By 1598, under Ivan’s son Theodore, the Volga basin had been largely pacified and colonized; the Empire had virtually doubled in size. (See the map on p. 11.)

The next—and by far the most dramatic and far-reaching—period of significant expansion occurred between 1682 and 1725 under Peter I (the Great). Peter’s main thrust was to the east and southeast, in search of mineral resources and easy routes to China and India. Faced with little or no resistance, the Russian Empire under Peter I spread rapidly through Siberia and Kamchatka to the Arctic and North Pacific coasts, and southeast to the greater part of what is today the Sino-Soviet border.⁹

After experiencing only limited success in his efforts to expand to the north and west against Swedish and Turkish resistance, Peter turned southward. In a brief but highly successful campaign in 1722-1723, near the end of his reign, Peter expanded Russian control to the western and southern shores of the Caspian Sea. This marked the first significant Russian penetration of both the Persian Empire and the territory of modern-day Iran. (See map on p. 11.)

The Russian occupation came at a time when the Persians were most vulnerable, having been attacked by Afghanistan the previous year. In fact, as Russian forces



Grand Duchy of Muscovy, 1533



Annexed by 1828



Russian expansion 1533-98



Annexed by 1893



Russian expansion under Peter the Great
(Southern tongue along western shore of Caspian Sea returned to Persian control)



Other 19th-century Russian expansion



Russian expansion under Catherine the Great

moved into Persia in 1722, Peter issued a proclamation declaring that he had “no designs of territorial aggrandizement, but merely wished to rescue the Shah from the tyranny of the Afghans.”¹⁰ A year later, following the Russian occupation of Baku and Rasht, the Persians agreed to cede the Caspian Sea littoral as far east as Astrabad to the Russians in return for Peter’s pledge to help expel the Afghans; no such help was provided.

When Peter died in 1725, he left behind his infamous will calling for the further expansion of his empire on all fronts:

My successors will make [Russia] a great sea destined to fertilize impoverished Europe, and if my descendants know how to direct the waters, her waves will break through any opposing banks. It is just for this reason I leave the following instructions, and I recommend them to the attention and constant observation of my descendants. . . . IX. To approach as near as possible to Constantinople and India. Whoever governs there will be the true sovereign of the world. Consequently excite continual wars, not only in Turkey, but in Persia. . . . And in the decadence of Persia, penetrate as far as the Persian Gulf.¹¹

Peter’s immediate successors elected instead to consolidate his gains. Faced with political uncertainty at home (the throne was to change hands three times in the decade following Peter’s death) and realizing that Russia’s overextended forces could not effectively control the newly-acquired Persian territory—given an ongoing war with Poland and the fear (which proved accurate) that a resumption of hostilities with the Turks was imminent—the Russians decided to withdraw. In 1735, through the Treaty of Rasht, the Persians regained control over virtually all of their former territory. In return, the Russians secured their southern border and received a pledge of Persian aid (or at least non-involvement) in Russia’s impending war with Turkey.

This period of Russian retrenchment ended abruptly when Catherine II came to power in 1762. She quickly earned the mantle of “Catherine the Great” through her attempts to direct

the waters of the great Russian sea outward along the paths charted by Peter's will (which first surfaced during her reign). Catherine's rule (1762-1796) was distinguished primarily by her expansion west into Poland and southwest toward the Black Sea. However, Catherine II was also responsible for a major expansion along the southern periphery into the Caucasus and Central Asia. (See map on p. 11.) This thrust southward was part of her not-to-be-realized "Oriental Project," a plan that

called for Russian occupation of the Caucasus to obtain positions from which to attack Persia to the east, to establish a direct link with India and Turkey, and to provide an avenue to attack Constantinople through Turkey.¹²

Catherine's son and successor, Paul, shelved this plan upon his accession in 1796, announcing that he "could not take any active operations, since Russia had been at war 'without a break' since 1756 and was needing a rest."¹³ As a result, he chose not to prosecute Russia's second war against Persia, initiated by his mother the year before her death.

Nineteenth-Century Russian Expansion

Sustained Russian expansion into Persia and Central Asia resumed in earnest in the early 1800s. The move south began under Alexander I (1801-1825) when Georgia, fearing a Persian invasion, sought Russian protection and was subsequently annexed by Alexander. Part of Russia's willingness to protect Georgia was ideological, a reflection of Russia's "natural desire" as the self-professed "third Rome" to protect oppressed Christians from Muslim domination.¹⁴ But, as several Oxford historians have noted, "racial and religious sympathies were backed up by, and usually served to cover, a much more compelling motive—the need for an outlet in this direction. . . . [since] between the Black Sea and the Caspian lay the only practical land route to the East."¹⁵

Alexander's annexation of Georgia eventually resulted in the third Russo-Persian War (1804-1813), which ended with Persia's defeat. The 1813 Treaty of Gulistan acknowledged

Russian sovereignty over “all the territory between the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea” and conceded to Russia the “exclusive right” to operate ships of war on the Caspian Sea.¹⁶

Alexander’s successor, Nicholas I, continued the expansion to the south and west through the Caucasus, prompting the Persian Shah, Fath Ali, to initiate the fourth Russo-Persian War (1826-1828), which resulted once again in a Persian defeat. During this war, Russian forces once again penetrated the territory of modern-day Iran, this time as far south as Tabriz. It was the fall of Tabriz that compelled Tehran to sue for peace. With the 1828 Treaty of Turkmanchai, the Russians gained control over what is today the Armenian and Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republics, and, with minor exceptions, the Russian-Persian border west of the Caspian Sea was fixed where it remains today. (See map on p. 11.) Thus Armenia and Azerbaijan were Persian rather than Russian provinces considerably less than two centuries ago.¹⁷ The quid pro quo for the return of Tabriz was payment of a substantial indemnity to Russia and granting of extraterritorial privileges to Russia’s citizens in Persia.¹⁸

Nicholas I then turned his attention to the southeast and began his move into the Turkoman and Uzbek portions of Turkestan, in Central Asia east of the Caspian Sea. This Russian expansionism was explained (and justified) in typically chauvinistic terms by Russian Prince Gorchakov:

The position of Russia in Central Asia is that of all civilized States which are brought into contact with half-savage nomad populations. . . . In such cases it always happens that the more civilized state is forced in the interest of the security of its frontiers. . . to exercise a certain ascendancy over those whom their turbulent and unsettled character make most undesirable neighbors. . . . To put a stop to [raids and acts of pillage], the tribes on the frontier have to be reduced to a state of more or less perfect submissions.¹⁹

Friedrich Engels was much less charitable in describing what were growing European concerns about Russian imperialistic

motives during the nineteenth century. He saw Russia as a nation "dreaming about world supremacy" and capable of great deception: "There was no land grab, no outrage, no oppression," Engels observed, not "carried out under the pretext of enlightenment, of liberalism, of the liberation of nations." He warned, however, that Russia's basic purpose remained constant—namely, "the attainment of its own single, never-changing, never-lost-sight-of objective: the domination of the world by Russia."²⁰

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Russians continued to prove Engels right. In the Far East, Russian troops pushed eastward through the Amur and Ussuri Provinces to Sakhalin Island and Vladivostok on the Sea of Japan. To the south, they marched through the ancient domains of Persia, toward Afghanistan, thus subjugating their "most undesirable neighbors" along two fronts. Through a series of treaties, agreements, and conventions forced upon the Persians between 1869 and 1893, the Russians delineated their modern-day border from the Caspian Sea eastward to Afghanistan. (See map on p. 11.) In short, Russian dominion over the Turkestan region was settled less than 100 years ago (half a century after the US doctrine of Manifest Destiny had resulted in California's admission into the Union).

Twentieth-Century Russian and Soviet Penetrations of Iran

The twentieth century has thus far seen four penetrations of Iran by the Kremlin's forces, twice during the twilight years of the Russian Empire and twice since Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's assumption of power. The seeds of the first penetration, sown in the late nineteenth century, reflected Nicholas II's desires to bring all of Persia within Russia's sphere of influence. The countervailing force posed by the British Empire represented the major stumbling block. England had long since established itself in India and considered itself to be the preeminent power in the Persian Gulf and Gulf coastal region. Although not eager to directly confront the Russians in Southwest Asia, the British, well aware of Russian aspirations toward Iran (and ultimately India), were prepared to protect their own interests from Russian expansionism.

In order to reduce the likelihood of direct confrontation with the Russians, the British in the late 1800s proposed a buffer zone in Iran and Afghanistan between the de facto Russian and British spheres of influence—a proposal that the Tsar's advisors successfully argued against:

The north of Persia is in Russian hands anyway, and is completely inaccessible to foreigners; by officially acknowledging England's right to act unilaterally in the south . . . we thereby . . . voluntarily block any further movement by us beyond the limits of Persia's northern provinces.²¹

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Russians were intent on expanding their influence throughout Persia. Their principal aim, according to Russia's Foreign Minister, Count V. N. Lansdorf, was "gradually to subject Persia to our domestic influence," the central task at hand being "to make Persia politically obedient and useful, i.e., a sufficiently powerful instrument in our hand."²²

Although circumstances (and Foreign Ministers) had changed by 1907, Russian desires remained the same. The new Russian Foreign Minister, A. P. Izvolsky, in commenting on British proposals to create Russian and British spheres of influence in Iran said,

Until now that idea has not received much understanding from Russian public opinion. In leading circles the conviction prevailed that Persia must fall entirely under Russian influence and that we must aim for a free exit to the Persian Gulf, building a railroad across Persia and establishing a fortified point on the Gulf. Events of the last years have, however, made clear the infeasibility of such a plan.²³

The events that Izvolsky was referring to included Russia's defeat by Japan in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), domestic instability as manifested by the unsuccessful 1905 revolution, and fear (shared by Great Britain) of the rising power of imperial Germany. The Russians therefore finally agreed, under the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, to

partition Iran into British and Russian spheres of influence, with a neutral zone recognized in central Iran where both “undertook reciprocally not to seek any kind of concessions.”²⁴ (See map on p. 18.)

Although the 1907 Convention placed limits on Russia’s ability to expand its control over all of Iran, it also (by removing the British counterweight) gave them *carte blanche* to increase their dominion over northern Iran. The Convention also contributed to domestic turmoil within Iran, creating a situation favorable for Russian intervention. The Russians were quick to capitalize on their opportunity. In order to consolidate their control over northern Iran, Russian forces occupied Tabriz in 1908 and ultimately marched as far south as Qazvin in the west and Mashhad in the east. With Tehran and most of the major centers of power falling within their sphere, the Russians enjoyed a great deal of influence over the central government.

Russian influence was especially great before 1909, since Iran’s leader, Muhammad Ali Shah, closely aligned himself with his powerful neighbor to the north and looked to the Russians—and to the Russian-trained and -led Persian Cossacks, who served as his Palace Guards—for support against various revolutionary factions.²⁵ Even after the Shah was forced to abdicate his throne and flee to Russia in search of asylum, Russian forces stayed in Iran and did not hesitate to flex their military muscle to demonstrate displeasure with, and to effectively intimidate, subsequent Iranian governments. Not until the outbreak of World War I were Russian forces, more desperately needed to face internal and external challenges elsewhere, withdrawn from Iran.

The next (and most benign) Russian penetration of Iranian territory came during World War I, following the Turkish invasion of the Transcaucasus and Iranian Azerbaijan. After forcing the Turks out of Russia and securing the Russo-Turkish border, the Russians in 1915 once again marched into Iranian territory, as far south as Bakhtaran and Arak. Events within Russia made this occupation short-lived, however. By 1917, Tsarist control over the Russian Empire was crumbling from within. Russian forces were in the process of being withdrawn at the time Lenin came to power.

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONVENTION OF 1907



As the communists sought to consolidate their control over their internal rivals, they not only temporarily abandoned any hope of maintaining control over Iran but felt compelled to cede large portions of the Russian Empire to the Turks and Germans under the 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.²⁶ Following the defeat of Germany, however, Lenin annulled the Treaty and slowly began regaining control over the Transcaucasus and Central Asian regions, while Turkey and Britain tried to persuade those regions to break away from Mother Russia. By the end of 1919, the Bolsheviks had reestablished control in the south and once again secured the border with Iran.

During this embryonic 1918-1919 period, the Bolsheviks extended numerous olive branches to Tehran. Soviet Russia's first emissary to Iran brought with him, in January of 1918, this message from Lenin:

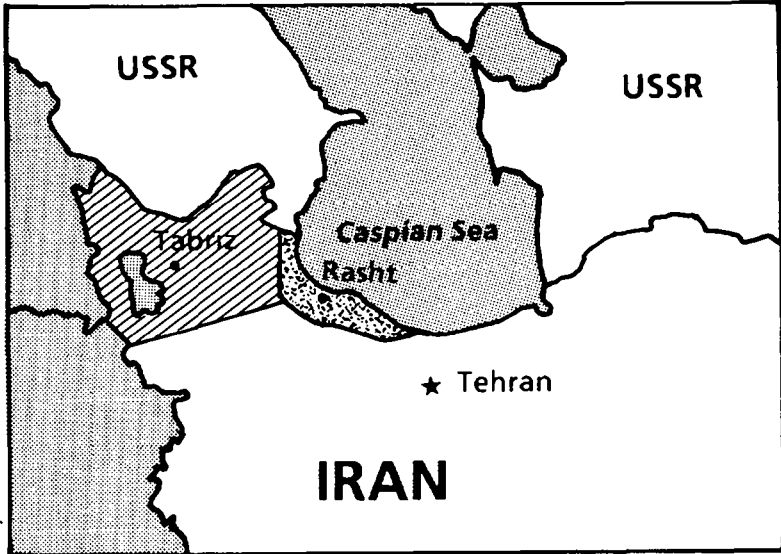
The Workers and Peasants Government is prepared to repair the injustice done by the former Government of the Russian Tzar by repudiating all Tzarist privileges and agreements that are contrary to the sovereignty of Persia.²⁷

Later that month an official note from Trotsky aimed at "dispensing any doubt in regard to the Soviet government's attitude to the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907." Trotsky acknowledged that the 1907 Convention was "directed against the freedom and independence of the Persian People" and was therefore "annulled once and for all."²⁸ Both Lenin and Trotsky repeatedly assured Tehran that the Bolsheviks had no designs on Iran and, unlike the tsarist regime they had overthrown, respected and would honor Iranian sovereignty.

Despite these Soviet promises and gestures, in May 1920 Soviet forces penetrated into Iranian territory, ostensibly in pursuit of the remnants of the White Russian Army. Fear of the British provided another justification for the invasion. As the commander of the Red Fleet, F. F. Raskolnikov, observed at the time, Soviet Russia "could not be sure that the British would not make a new attack on Baku from Enzeli" (a British outpost in Iranian territory on the Caspian Sea coast). The invasion was therefore aimed, in part, at "depriving the British [of] their mainstay on the Caspian Sea."²⁹

It soon became apparent that Moscow's aspirations exceeded merely neutralizing the White Russian and British threats. By the end of the year, Soviet forces had gained control over Iranian Azerbaijan and almost the entire Caspian Sea coast. (See map on p. 20.) Although the nature of the regime in the Kremlin had changed, the desire to dominate Iran, as expressed by one of Lenin's colleagues, Bolshevik writer K. M. Troyanovsky, remained constant:

The importance of Persia for the creation of the Oriental International is considerable. . . . A propitious terrain for the



Occupied by
Soviet troops,
1920-21



Socialist Republic
of Gilan

outbreak of the revolution has long been prepared. The imperialists of England, Russia, France and Germany have labored there. All that is needed is an impulse from the outside. . . . This impulse, this initiative, this resoluteness, can come from our Russian revolutionaries through the intermediaries of the Russian Moslems.

Persia is the Suez Canal of the revolution. If we shift the political center of gravity of the revolutionary movement to Persia, the Suez Canal loses its strategic value and importance. . . . For the success of the oriental revolution Persia is the first nation that must be conquered by the Soviets. This precious key to the uprising of the Orient must be in the hands of Bolshevism, cost what it may. . . . Persia must be ours; Persia must belong to the Revolution.³⁰

To this end, the Soviets (even before the invasion) had been providing support to an Iranian revolutionary leader, Kuchik Khan, whose movement was dedicated to the overthrow of the central government and to radical social change. Although more a Muslim nationalist than a true Marxist believer, Khan realized that an alliance with Lenin's forces provided the best means of success for his movement. Within days of the Soviet invasion, therefore, Khan sent a telegram to "Comrade Lenin" in which he proclaimed the formation of the "Persian Socialist Soviet Republic"—more commonly referred to as the Gilan Socialist Republic, since Khan at the time maintained considerable control over Gilan Province.³¹ From then until the time of their eventual pullout, Soviet forces were to fight side by side with Khan's followers.

By 1921, the pragmatic Lenin came to grips with reality. Weakened by seven years of international and civil war, faced with serious economic challenges at home, and concerned over further confrontation with the British in Iran, the Bolsheviks elected to seek accommodation with Tehran and trade their newly acquired territory for secure borders and diplomatic recognition. In addition, the Gilan leadership by this time had become seriously factionalized, and many of Lenin's advisors were of the opinion that Iran was simply "not ready for Marxism."³²

The centerpiece of the new Soviet-Iranian relationship was the 1921 Treaty of Friendship between Persia and the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, signed in Moscow on 26 February 1921.³³ In Article I, the Soviets (in keeping with Lenin's 1918 pledge) renounced all past Russian claims to Iranian territory and declared that all past agreements between Persia and tsarist Russia that "impaired the rights of the people of Persia" were null and void. Also annulled, in Article II, were all agreements between tsarist Russia and third powers that "were injurious" to Persia—an obvious reference to the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention.

Although the Treaty of Friendship pledged mutual respect for one another's sovereignty and focused on the abandonment of tsarist territorial (and economic) claims against Persia,

it also included two clauses that seemed to limit Persian sovereignty while giving Moscow extraterritorial rights. Article V prohibited the “formation or residence” in either country of any group, organization, or individual persons “whose intention may be to fight against Persia or Russia.” It also prohibited either side from permitting any potential adversaries “to import into, or transit through, its territory anything that may be used against the other.” The infamous Article VI added teeth to Article V, at least as far as Moscow was concerned, by reserving for the Soviet government “the right to send its army into Persia in order to take the necessary military steps in its own defense.”³⁴ Nothing was said about similar Iranian rights to violate Soviet sovereignty.

The Soviets cited these clauses and a continued presence of British forces in Iran in refusing to pull their forces out of Iran after the 1921 Treaty was signed. This stance (and, for that matter, the Treaty itself) added to the international and domestic pressure on Britain that led to the withdrawal, three months later, of the last British forces from Iran. Even then Soviet forces did not withdraw, but instead supported Kuchik Khan’s abortive march on Tehran in June of 1921.

At this point, with the British gone and the Iranians loudly protesting the Soviet violation of their newly-concluded treaty, the call for withdrawal of Moscow’s forces became, in the words of historian George Lenczowski, “the ultimate test of the sincerity of the Soviet-Iranian Treaty” and, by extension, of the Bolshevik government itself. Lenczowski explained Lenin’s options as follows:

If the treaty was conceived mainly as a propaganda instrument for the Bolsheviks—and we know that this was so, because of the wide distribution of the text all over the Orient by Soviet agents—then it was wiser not to provoke an open breach with Iran. . . . Russia had to choose between two methods: either the cultivation of good relations with the central government and the gradual infiltration of Iran with Communist propaganda

through the Soviet Embassy in Tehran or highhanded direct action aiming at the sovietization and detachment of several Iranian provinces in connivance with discontented elements of Iran. By the autumn of 1921 Moscow apparently came to the conclusion that the first method would better suit its purposes.³⁵

In September of 1921, six months after the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, the Red Army finally withdrew from Iran. Left behind were Kuchik Khan's Gilan Socialist Republic, which was to fall one month later at the hands of Iran's new energetic army commander-in-chief, Reza Khan,³⁶ and the Iranian Communist Party, which had been established during a July 1920 Congress of Iranian Communists at Enzeli, two months after the Soviet occupation had begun. Comprised primarily of communists of Persian nationality who had been brought in by the Soviets from Baku and Turkestan, the Communist Party proved more enduring than the Gilan Republic.

The most recent Soviet military invasion of Iran took place in 1941. Plotting began in November 1940, when the Soviets secretly negotiated with Germany, Italy, and Japan to divide the Third World according to each nation's territorial aspirations. One of the conditions of the draft Four Power Pact endorsed by Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov was the proviso, "The area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognized as the centre of the aspirations of the Soviet Union."³⁷ The Pact was never finalized and, seven months later, Hitler's Operation Barbarossa brought an abrupt end to Nazi-Soviet cooperation.

Nonetheless, two months after the German attack on the USSR, Soviet troops—in coordination with their new British allies—were marching toward Tehran. Their allies changed but their aspirations endured. Although the Soviets had identified Iran as the center of their expansionist aspirations, their invasion was primarily for security

purposes—namely, to eradicate German influence and to open up a vital supply corridor to the West. Nonetheless, the end of the war brought with it the rebirth of their aspirations for control over at least the northern portion of Iran, as witnessed by their refusal to withdraw their forces from northwestern Iran despite their written pledge to depart within six months after the termination of hostilities. It took intense Western pressure, which reportedly included a direct ultimatum from President Truman, to convince the Soviets to leave.

Given their devastating losses in World War II and their need to consolidate their control over Eastern Europe, the Soviets were in no position to challenge the West and attempt to retain control over Iran. For the sixth time since Peter the Great, the Kremlin reluctantly withdrew its forces from Iranian territory. With the Soviets gone, the socialist republics they helped create were quickly brought back under Tehran's control.

Lessons from History

This thumbnail sketch of Russian and Soviet expansionism has identified many of the motivating factors that contributed to a small, isolated Duchy's transformation into the world's largest nation. Quests for more fertile soil, for mineral resources, and for secure trade routes (including direct access to open seas and world markets) all played parts in Russia's expansion. So did the Kremlin's need to secure an ever-expanding frontier from "half-savage" neighbors; this need, justified in terms of both security and, at one time, religion, was reinforced by the absence of natural boundaries. Greed, opportunism, and a sense of manifest destiny (as outlined in Peter the Great's will) also played a part. In short, the motives were both offensive and defensive. The path of least resistance was the direction most frequently travelled.

Iranian vulnerability, caused by outside invasions or domestic turmoil, frequently set the stage for Russian

expansion into the Persian Empire. Significantly, during two of the four penetrations in the twentieth century, Kremlin agreements with Great Britain, the countervailing force in the theater at the time, preceded the invasions. In a third instance, the British threat provided part of the incentive and rationale to invade.

Only one penetration—the effort to counter the Turkish invasion during World War I—was largely benign, although it's anyone's guess how that drama would have eventually played itself out had the Bolshevik Revolution not intervened. The Bolsheviks added their own ideological reasons to justify their support of Iranian separatist movements during both of their invasions, although Troyanovsky's description of Iran as "the Suez Canal of the revolution" underscored the Bolsheviks' awareness of the geopolitical and strategic value of Iran.

The Kremlin's decision to give up captured Iranian territory was normally reached grudgingly, in recognition of the fact that its forces were overextended and needed more urgently elsewhere. Wars or revolutions played a part in most decisions. And, of course, significant portions of captured territory, in the Caucasus and Central Asia, were not returned.

In addition, a heavy price was normally extracted in return for the agreement to depart. In Lenin's case, the withdrawal was accompanied by a treaty that provided the Soviet Union with the right to reintroduce troops "in order to take the necessary military steps in its own defense." This privilege, invoked two decades later to justify the last Soviet invasion, remains on the books today, Iranian protests notwithstanding.

In 1946 the Soviets (despite promises to the contrary) appeared intent on remaining in northwestern Iran after the end of World War II. It took strong protests from the West, especially from the United States—reportedly including a secret warning from Truman to Stalin that he would deploy the US Navy into the Persian Gulf and commit American troops to the defense of Iran—to compel the Soviets to back

down.³⁸ As was the case during most of the earlier penetrations, the Soviets lacked the military wherewithal to defend their claim once contested or threatened (in the region or elsewhere). Their capabilities could not support their desires. The United States had successfully called their bluff.

II. SOVIET MILITARY POSTURE

The Soviet Union's military posture opposite Southwest Asia has changed dramatically since the Soviets were last compelled to withdraw their occupation forces from Iran in 1946. The changes have included the introduction of a command and control element that aids in the planning and training for military operations and eases the transition from peace to war should hostilities break out. In addition, there has been a significant upgrade in both the quantity and quality of Soviet forces deployed in the vicinity of the Iranian border. Also of concern, Soviet presence and influence south, east, and west of Iran have steadily expanded. The most dramatic of these changes and improvements have occurred in the last decade, since the fall of the Shah, the Khomeini Revolution, and the invasion of Afghanistan.

Improved Command and Control

In terms of command and control, the most significant development has been the establishment, by 1984 at the latest, of a peacetime High Command of Forces for the Southern Theater of Military Operations, which encompasses military forces in the Caucasus and Turkestan regions (and, until their withdrawal, Soviet forces in Afghanistan). Its area of responsibility lies "in the general direction of the Persian Gulf." To understand the importance of this development, some background information is necessary.

Within the USSR, Soviet armed forces, with the exception of the Strategic Rocket Forces and selected air defense elements, have traditionally been organized and controlled

during peacetime by military districts.³⁹ During wartime, military district forces are organized into independent armies or fronts, which operate within geographic theaters of military operations (or TVDs, from the Russian *teatr voennykh deistvii*), a TVD being

a well defined territory and adjacent sea and air space, within the limits of which a well defined grouping of forces undertakes a strategic mission in time of war. A TVD . . . includes one or several strategic or operational axes.⁴⁰

Globally, the Soviets have identified ten continental TVDs and four oceanic TVDs.⁴¹ Historically, command and control of forces operating within the TVDs has been accomplished in one of two ways: directly, between the General Staff in Moscow and each of the armies, fronts, and fleets operating within the TVD; or indirectly, through a subordinate TVD High Command of Forces (HCF), which in turn controls its TVD's armies, fronts, and fleets.

During World War II the Soviets established HCFs to control their forces in four Western USSR TVDs between July of 1941 and June of 1942, with little success. However, an HCF established in 1945 in the Far Eastern TVD successfully controlled three fronts and the Soviet Pacific Ocean Fleet during the closing months of the war. The Far Eastern HCF was deactivated at war's end, TVD High Commands normally not being active during peacetime.⁴²

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Marshal Ogarkov (Chief of the Soviet General Staff, 1977-1984) began writing on the central importance of TVD operations, explaining,

It is not the front operation, but the larger form of military operations—the strategic operation in the theater of military operations—which should be regarded as the basic operation in a possible future war.⁴³

Concurrently, a Soviet *Military Historical Journal* article claimed the 1941-1942 Theater High Commands failed,

in part, because they had not been created and exercised before the war. The article's two main conclusions, as summarized in the US Army's *Soviet General Doctrine for War* study, were as follows:

- the experience of the war showed that it became practically impossible for a Supreme High Command to exercise control of military operations of Armed Forces major groupings without an intermediate command.
- these high commands and overall system of strategic leadership must be set up in peacetime.⁴⁴

In light of these findings, peacetime High Commands have now been established for four key TVDs: the Far Eastern TVD (opposite China and Japan), the Western and South-western TVDs (two of the three TVDs opposite NATO), and the Southern TVD (opposite Southwest Asia).⁴⁵ As the US Army's study notes,

the key event in the evolution of the TVD concept has been the peacetime establishment of High Commands of Forces (HCF) in the most important TVDs. This establishment occurred in peacetime to ensure more efficient command and control from the onset of a future war. The HCF permits greater flexibility in responding to situational changes within each TVD.⁴⁶

The Southern TVD (STVD) includes the ground, air, and non-strategic nuclear forces residing in the Transcaucasus, Caucasus, and Turkestan Military Districts and the naval units assigned to the Caspian Sea Flotilla. (See map on p. 29.) Its headquarters is located at Baku, a former Persian center of commerce situated on the Caspian Sea's west coast. According to the commander-in-chief of the US Central Command (USCINCENT)—whose job it is to analyze and counter the threat posed by STVD forces—the STVD's primary mission is "to plan and exercise in peacetime for the conduct of offensive operations in war."⁴⁷ Although the STVD's area of responsibility also includes the western region of Turkey and Pakistan, "Iran is assessed to be the primary military



objective, given its strategic location, vast resources, and potential political and military vulnerability.”⁴⁸

The Soviet decision to create a High Command of Forces for the Southern TVD at the same time as they established the HCFs opposite NATO attests to the growing importance of Southwest Asia. So does the realization that the STVD’s first commander-in-chief (CINC), General of the Army Yuri Maksimov (CINC during 1984-1985), went on to be deputy minister of defense and CINC, Strategic Rocket Forces (the first among equals of the five Soviet military services).⁴⁹

The second STVD CINC, General of the Army Mikhail Zaytsev—the highly-regarded former chief of the prestigious Group of Soviet Forces, Germany—was credited with being the driving force behind the increased aggressiveness and

innovative tactics that characterized Soviet operations in Afghanistan in the 1985-1987 time period.⁵⁰ It would appear, however, that at least one of the lessons of World War II was learned again in Afghanistan—namely, that to be effective, a High Command of Forces must be created and exercised before the initiation of hostilities. Zaytsev retired in early 1989, during a period of widespread leadership changes that touched virtually all the TVDs and military districts.⁵¹ General of the Army Nikolay Popov, who had succeeded General Maksimov as commander of the Turkestan Military District in 1984, moved up to become the third STVD CINC.

Details relating to the training and contingency preparations of STVD forces are sparse. It must be assumed, however, given the nature of their overall mission, that STVD planners are preparing, testing, and exercising military contingency plans covering a wide range of options against any and all countries that fall within their area of responsibility. Although the exact types of operations are unknown, the following are believed to be representative of the types of operations that TVD forces plan and train to conduct:⁵²

- Destruction of major groupings and concentrations of enemy forces.
- Immediate destruction of enemy nuclear delivery systems, warheads, and high-precision non-nuclear weapons.⁵³
- Seizure and occupation of key political and economic centers.
- Destruction or disruption of enemy command, control, and communications capabilities.
- Denial of facilities and forces that the enemy could use to threaten Soviet forces.

Concurrent with the establishment of the peacetime High Command of Forces have been improvements in the TVD's command, control, and communications (C³) capabilities. Improvements have included construction of hardened, bunkered command posts and communications centers, creation of an extensive peacetime communications network, and establishment of numerous mobile signal and communication support

systems. As a result, the Soviets will be able, in wartime, to field a robust, hardened, redundant, thus highly survivable C³ system. These C³ improvements also increase the readiness of Soviet forces "by moving the peacetime command structure closer to the wartime mode."⁵⁴

The peacetime existence of a High Command of Forces in the Southern TVD does not automatically indicate that the Soviets intend to conduct military operations against Iran or any other Southwest Asian nation. But it does mean that contingency war plans and the mechanism necessary for effective command and control of an invasion are in place, are being tested and steadily improved, and will thus be ready if and when needed.

Force Improvements

The military forces assigned to the Southern TVD have been steadily expanded and modernized in the past decade, with the war in Afghanistan accounting for some, but by no means all, of the upgrades. Because the majority of the forces that deployed to Afghanistan came from neighboring military districts and have reportedly returned for the most part to bases in or immediately adjacent to the STVD, the STVD will continue to enjoy the benefits—in terms of combat experience, realistic training, and equipment upgrades—of the war.

Ground forces available to the STVD commander swelled from 25 combat divisions in 1978 to 32 in 1988.⁵⁵ Although only 20-25 percent are considered to be full-strength, combat-ready units (with the rest in varying states of readiness), all STVD divisions could be brought up to a full state of readiness in four to six weeks after a notification order was given.⁵⁶

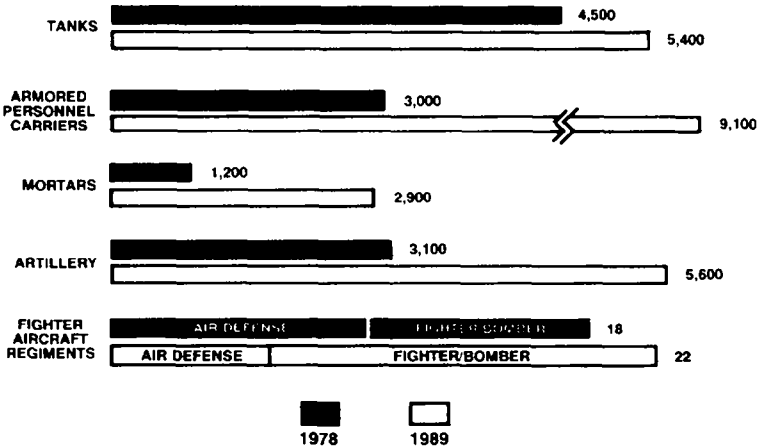
Between 1978 and 1988, the number of armored personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles assigned to STVD units more than tripled, while the number of tanks increased by 20 percent. Other firepower enhancements included a more than twofold increase in the number of mortars deployed throughout the theater, along with an 80 percent increase in artillery pieces. As a result, by 1989 more than 5,400 tanks,

9,100 armored personnel carriers, 2,900 mortars, and 5,600 artillery pieces (as shown on p. 33.) were deployed with the STVD's 280,000 soldiers.⁵⁷ In June of 1989, the Soviets announced that the Far Eastern TVD's Central Asian Military District had been "abolished" and that its "successor" was the Turkestan Military District, thus giving the Southern TVD's High Command at Baku access to as many as nine additional (understrength) divisions.⁵⁸

In addition to numerical increases, there has been a slow but steady effort to upgrade the quality of equipment available to the STVD's USSR-based troops (soldiers in Afghanistan normally received the most modern and effective weapons). Former truck-mounted battalions have been upgraded with new BMP and BTR-70 armored vehicles. There has also been a steady infusion of more advanced, longer-range, self-propelled artillery pieces, such as the 152mm field gun (which also provides an enhanced means of delivering tactical nuclear weapons). Other upgrades have included the introduction of more modern surface-to-air missile systems, such as the SA-8 Gecko and the SA-13 Gopher, which have added to the protective shield surrounding the STVD's forces. In addition, ground force mobility has been further enhanced by the introduction of the Mi-26 Halo helicopter into the STVD. The Halo, the world's largest helicopter, can carry a load comparable to what a US C-130 transport plane can carry (and over two-and-one-half times as many troops as the largest US helicopter can carry). Almost half of the Soviets' total inventory of these heavy-lift helicopters are based in the STVD.⁵⁹

Soviet air forces assigned to the STVD have also been both expanded and modernized in the past decade. The most significant change, however, has been in the change of emphasis regarding the employment of these air assets. In 1978, there were 18 fighter regiments in the STVD; half were air defense regiments, the other half were fighter-bomber regiments oriented toward battlefield support and interdiction operations. By 1988 the number of attack-oriented regiments had doubled (from 9 to 18 regiments) while the number of air defense regiments had been cut by more than half (from 9 to 4 regiments). Therefore, while the total number of air force

INCREASES IN MILITARY HARDWARE,
SOVIET SOUTHERN TVD



fighter regiments has increased by only 20 percent (from 18 to 22 total regiments), there has been a much greater increase in the offensive capability of the STVD's fighter force. (See figure 1.) In sum, 80 percent of the STVD's approximately 1,000 fighter aircraft are attack rather than air defense oriented.⁶⁰

Force upgrades have introduced virtually all the primary state-of-the-art Soviet fighter aircraft into the STVD. These new deployments have included a steady influx of Su-24 Fencers—the best deep-interdiction aircraft in the Soviets' tactical air inventory, with range and payload capabilities comparable to the US F-111. STVD air force regiments are also equipped with the Su-27 Flanker (their premier air superiority interceptor) and the MiG-29 Fulcrum (their most capable

counterair fighter). Both have a true look-down/shoot-down radar, enabling them to engage low-flying aircraft and cruise missiles. The Flankers' primary mission is to protect deep-strike aircraft such as the Fencer, while the Fulcrum operates against enemy strike aircraft closer to the battlefield. Close air support over the battlefield is provided by the Su-25 Frogfoot, which entered the operational inventory via Afghanistan and remains in the STVD inventory.⁶¹

The STVD's modest naval force consists of 5 principal surface combatants (frigates or corvettes), 15 amphibious ships, 17 other small combatants, and 5 auxiliaries. These forces are more than sufficient to ensure Soviet preeminence in the Caspian Sea and to provide a secure power projection and logistical support route to Iranian shores. Soviet Indian Ocean naval forces, though available to support STVD operations, are not believed to be subordinate to the HCF at Baku during peacetime.⁶²

All of this is not to say that Soviet forces in the STVD—or anywhere else in the USSR, for that matter—are “ten feet tall.”⁶³ I readily acknowledge that STVD forces (ground more so than air) still have a long way to go before they can be considered on a par—in terms of readiness, training, and equipment—with their counterparts deployed in the western USSR and Eastern Europe. But the potential opponents along the STVD border are likewise less well equipped. The main point is that the southern region, long considered a military backwater, has in the 1980s received priority treatment, especially since the establishment of the High Command of Forces at Baku. In addition, withdrawal of Soviet forces and equipment from Eastern Europe will permit further upgrades within the STVD—which lies outside NATO's and China's areas of primary concern.

Expanded Soviet Presence and Influence

The Soviets also continue to expand both their military presence and their real and potential influence south, east, and west of Iran. Their military presence is supported by their access to military facilities in South Yemen and Ethiopia and by their

willingness to sell arms to virtually all interested consumers in the region—sales normally accompanied by military and civilian advisors and technicians.

Soviet access to Yemeni military installations dates back more than two decades, to when the Soviets were quick to fill the void created by the British evacuation of Aden. Soviet naval units began visiting Aden in 1968 and began using anchorages around Socotra Island that same year. In 1969, Soviet advisors arrived for the first time in Aden. Both their ships and their advisors have maintained a constant presence in the PDRY ever since.⁶⁴

Beginning in the late 1970s, Soviet ships were joined by Il-38 May anti-submarine warfare/reconnaissance aircraft, which are now continuously based in the PDRY. From there they conduct surveillance missions throughout the Gulf of Aden, the Indian Ocean, and the North Arabian Sea. Since the late 1970s, Cuban military advisors have joined their Soviet counterparts in providing training to the PDRY armed forces (which are equipped almost exclusively with Soviet military hardware). The Soviets have also positioned a radar direction-finding and intelligence collection post in the PDRY to increase their ability to monitor developments throughout the region.⁶⁵

In the late 1970s, the Soviets began sending arms and advisors to Ethiopia and soon became directly involved, along with the Cubans, in assisting Ethiopia in its war with Somalia over the disputed Ogaden region. The quid pro quo was Soviet access to naval and air facilities in Ethiopia, including the establishment of a Soviet minor naval repair facility and support base at Dehalik Island in the Red Sea.⁶⁶

Access to military facilities in both Ethiopia and the PDRY has permitted the Soviets to maintain a constant naval presence throughout the 1980s in the Indian Ocean region—to include the North Arabian Sea and, since 1986, the Persian Gulf. This presence has ranged from at least 10 to as many as 25 ships, including between 4 and 8 surface combatants and, at times, 1 or 2 submarines.⁶⁷

In 1989 there were between 3,000 and 4,000 Soviet and Cuban military and civilian advisors in the PDRY and another 5,000 or more Soviet and Cuban advisors in Ethiopia. They

SOVIET DIPLOMATIC INROADS

	<i>Diplomatic Relations</i>	<i>Treaties of Friendship</i>
AFGHANISTAN	1921	1978
IRAN	1921	1921
NORTH YEMEN	1928	1984
ETHIOPIA	1943	1978
PAKISTAN	1948	
EGYPT	1954	
SUDAN	1956	
IRAQ	1958	1972
SOMALIA	1960	
KENYA	1963	
KUWAIT	1963	
JORDAN	1963	
SOUTH YEMEN	1969	1979
DJIBOUTI	1978	
OMAN	1985	
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	1985	
QATAR	1988	

were joined in Ethiopia by some 2,000 Cuban combat troops, the remnants of the 20,000-man force that deployed to Ethiopia during the Ogaden War. Recent history has shown that these Soviet and Cuban advisors do more than merely advise. During the 1986 coup in the PDRY, Soviet and Cuban in-country advisors provided direct support to the hard-line, radical element that eventually ousted the more moderate (but still communist and pro-Soviet) central government. Soviet air force advisors flew combat missions in support of the hard-liners and airlifted from Ethiopia Cuban combat troops that subsequently spearheaded the ground operations that forced the loyalist government troops out of the country.⁶⁸

Although the Soviet Union has historically avoided committing its own troops to combat in countries not immediately

adjacent to its borders, the PDRY case provides a clear and recent (Gorbachev-era) exception to this general rule. It also leads to the supposition that Soviet (and Cuban) on-scene advisors, employing readily available host-nation military equipment, can add another dimension to the Soviets' ability to threaten the region's sea lanes and strategic choke points.

Soviet advisors are also present, in smaller numbers, in Afghanistan, Iraq, India, Jordan, Kuwait, Syria, and the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen), as the Soviets continue to provide arms to all these countries. Of particular significance, Iraq and India have ranked as the number one and two recipients of Soviet arms among the nations of the Third World during the past decade. As General George Crist, former commander-in-chief of the US Central Command, is fond of noting, these two nations lie on the western and eastern flanks of Southwest Asia. Does dependence on Soviet arms make either or both of these nations more likely to actively support Soviet military operations against Iran (or Pakistan)? Perhaps not. But the Soviets, being geographically contiguous to Iran, need little outside basing or support. What they would desire is assurance that basing and other means of support would not be provided to opponents of their adventurism. I would contend that Iraq's and India's heavy dependence on Soviet arms is more likely than not to reinforce their disposition toward a "hands-off" neutrality in the event of Soviet-initiated hostilities in Southwest Asia.⁶⁹

The Soviets maintain close ties to many countries on Iran's periphery. (See the table on p. 36.) They have Treaties of Friendship with two of Iran's immediate neighbors (Iraq and Afghanistan) and with three of the four states that sit astride the strategic Bab El Mandeb accessway leading from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea (Ethiopia, the PDRY, and North Yemen have treaties with the Soviets; tiny Djibouti does not). These treaties provide the Soviets with entree, access, and, in the cases of both Afghanistan and Iran in the past, an excuse to intervene militarily in the internal affairs of their friends.⁷⁰

The Soviets have also increased both the degree and level of sophistication of their diplomatic activity in and around Iran in recent years. Since Mr. Gorbachev's assumption of power,

the Soviets have established formal ties with Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. Only Saudi Arabia and Bahrain among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states do not recognize the Soviet Union, and many analysts (myself included) predict that both will establish diplomatic relations with Moscow in the near future.⁷¹

The Soviets also tried their hand at shuttle diplomacy during the last year of the Iran-Iraq War, with senior foreign ministry officials such as First Deputy Foreign Minister Vorontsov conducting diplomatic missions to Iran and Iraq (along with visits to other Arab capitals), in an attempt to act as an "honest broker" between the two belligerents. If nothing else, these efforts are helping to slowly overcome years of suspicion while also contributing to the positive diplomatic image being developed and fostered during the Gorbachev era. The days of heavy-handed Soviet diplomatic efforts inadvertently working for, rather than against, Western interests are over.

The Soviet pullout from Afghanistan is sure to open still more doors throughout the Muslim world. Of particular consequence, it should contribute to Soviet attempts to improve ties with the Iranian Islamic Republic. Thus it should assist the Soviets in increasing their influence in Iran while helping to remove the Soviet Union from the "Great Satan" category.

The March 1989 visit of Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze with Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran and President (then-Majlis Speaker) Rafsanjani's June 1989 visit to Moscow (and Baku) show how far the Soviets have come in reestablishing normal relations with Iran—especially compared with Iran's continued adversarial relationship with the United States and its up-and-down relations with Western Europe.

* * * * *

In short, the Soviets' military presence and real and potential influence around Iran's periphery appear to be at an all-time high, and the prospects for further improvements in relations (and influence), not only with Iran's neighbors but with Iran itself, appear good. Militarily, the Soviet Union is a

stronger position vis-a-vis Southwest Asia than at any time in recent history. The military command and control structure necessary to smooth the transition from peace to war—and to then direct the war effort—is in place and being exercised. Military forces within the Southern Theater of Military Operations have been expanded and upgraded with the latest Soviet hardware. In addition, the Soviets have established footholds around Iran and continue to expand their presence and influence throughout the region.

In the final analysis, when one attempts to understand or quantify the threat that one nation poses to another, the product of two key factors comes into play. One factor is military capability; the other is political intent. This chapter has focused primarily on military capability because, without military capability, intent may represent nothing more than wishful thinking.

In 1946, Stalin's intent was to maintain his grasp on northern Iran. When this intent was challenged, he apparently assessed his regional (or global) military capability as insufficient to see his desires through to fruition in the face of Western and Iranian opposition. Today, the Soviets do not appear immediately intent on employing military force to extend their influence over Iran. However, intentions and circumstances (and opportunities) can change overnight. The major difference between 1946 and today—indeed the major difference between the STVD a scant decade ago and today—is the significant improvement, in both real and relative terms, of the Soviets' military capability opposite Southwest Asia.

If the Soviets were presented with an opportunity to expand their influence or control over a portion or all of Iran tomorrow, many factors would no doubt contribute to their decision whether or not to act. But, unlike 1946, a lack of military capability in the region would not be the prohibitive factor. Likewise, if a decision was made to employ military force in Southwest Asia, Soviet leaders would be much less susceptible to Western ultimatums than they were in the immediate postwar years. The risks involved in calling their bluff have also multiplied.

III. SOVIET STRATEGIC INTERESTS

Kremlin leaders have historically demonstrated both desire and willingness to expand their nation's borders southward into Iran. In recent years, they have improved their military capability to do so. But the question remains: Has a spot been reserved in the Kremlin's crown for a Persian jewel? To answer that question, we should consider how Moscow would benefit from having Iran firmly within the Soviet Union's sphere of influence or control.

One way to determine if Iran remains at the "centre of the aspirations" of the Soviet Union is to assess its importance in terms of Moscow's overall Third World foreign policy objectives. For the sake of discussion and analysis, I will categorize these objectives under one or more of the following three general headings:

- to preserve and enhance Soviet security
- to obtain geopolitical, economic, or strategic advantage
- to consolidate the position of world socialism

There are, of course, many other candidates.⁷² Some that immediately come to mind include the following:

- to expand Soviet presence and influence
- to acquire territory (for its own sake or as a buffer)
- to gain access to warm-water ports
- to reduce US and Western presence and influence
- to deny the West access to the region's resources
- to combat Chinese presence and influence
- to combat the spread of Islamic fundamentalism
- to encourage the spread of world communism
- to support "wars of national liberation"
- to enhance Soviet prestige

It is not my intention to dismiss or overlook these, or others. But, primarily for ease of discussion, they will be subsumed into one or more of the three overall categories.

To Preserve Soviet Security

Iran shares a 1,690-kilometer land and Caspian Sea border with the Soviet Union. This fact, when combined with traditional Russian paranoia, makes Iran an area of primary Soviet security interest. Soviet perceptions of the potential security threat involve the threat posed by Iran per se as well as by Tehran's current or potential alliances. The indigenous Iranian threat must be further divided into the more traditional military threat and a second, more recent phenomenon, the threat posed by the spread of Iran's revolutionary Islamic fervor.

Military Considerations In strictly military terms, one would be hard-pressed today (or even historically) to devise a serious Iranian threat to Soviet security. Not since the days of the Emperor Tamerlane, in the 14th century, have Persian forces marched north; even then, their march was in pursuit of enemies, not territory. In the past six centuries, the military threat has consistently originated from Moscow, not from Tehran.

The Iranian armed forces today include approximately 600,000 men (and boys). During the Iran-Iraq War, roughly half of Iran's soldiers were members of the "regular" armed forces; the rest belonged to the more fervent Revolutionary Guards. The future complexion of the armed forces is unclear. The once-predominant Revolutionary Guards were largely discredited late in the war, so some reduction in the Guards' role, and in the overall strength of the armed forces, appears likely.⁷³ At present, virtually all of Iran's ground forces remain concentrated along the border with Iraq, where, cease-fires or peace treaties notwithstanding, they appear destined to remain for the foreseeable future. Iran's air and naval forces are mere shadows of their former might.

Eight years of bloody fighting and an uncertain future left Iran's military forces war weary and in need of massive infusions of equipment, ammunition, and spare parts. These conditions remain today. In the months immediately preceding their August 1988 cease fire with Iraq, Iranian forces proved themselves incapable of holding even well-fortified defensive

positions. Their will to fight appeared to be ebbing—understandably, given that Iranian casualties over the course of the war are estimated at almost 800,000, equivalent to 2 percent of Iran's entire population killed, wounded, or missing.⁷⁴ Even at the height of their limited successes, during the 1987 Basrah campaign or the 1986 Al Fao offensive, Iranian forces demonstrated serious logistical shortcomings (despite short and relatively secure lines of communications) that inhibited their ability to fully prosecute their offensives. True, the Soviets (and the West) must acknowledge Iran's tenacity and willingness to defend itself—especially evident in the early years of the war, following impressive Iraqi gains and the West's generally effective arms embargo. Nonetheless, the prospects of an Iranian military threat directed against the Soviet Union today appear too slim to merit serious concern.

Consider, on the other hand, what the threat might have been. In the early 1970s, the Nixon Doctrine envisioned Iran as one of two American-backed "pillars" of regional security (Saudi Arabia being the other one). The United States appeared ready and willing to sell the Shah all the arms he could buy, excepting nuclear weapons.⁷⁵ The Iranian armed forces, already the largest and most powerful in the Gulf region, were destined for still further expansion and modernization. For example, the United States provided Iran with the F-14, one of America's premier fighter aircraft, along with the improved version of the Hawk surface-to-air missile system. Just before the Islamic revolution in Iran, the Shah was discussing the purchase of at least 160, possibly as many as 300, F-16 fighter-bombers, 7 E3A Airborne Warning and Control (AWAC) aircraft, and 4 *Spruance*-class destroyers, all three representing the state of the art in their respective categories.⁷⁶

The Soviets were vocal in their concern about these actual and contemplated arms deals, complaining frequently that there was "no justification for such a large-scale buildup of Iran's armaments" and warning that these arms deals "went far beyond the scope of legitimate defense needs and created a dangerous situation in the region."⁷⁷ Much to Moscow's relief, the Iranian Revolution brought all such deals to an abrupt halt. Had the Shah's wish list been filled before he

abdicated, the ability of Iran's armed forces to threaten, or defend against an attack from, the Soviet Union would have been significantly enhanced. Instead, both the actual and the potential military threat posed by Iran have greatly diminished since the Iranian Revolution.

Ideological Challenges Preserving Soviet state security also requires "prevention of ideologies alien to Soviet-style Marxism-Leninism from gaining positions from which they could disrupt Soviet society."⁷⁸ Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's radical brand of "religious universalism" (calling for clerical preeminence over secular affairs) provided particular cause for concern because the "export of the Iranian Revolution" quickly emerged as one of Iran's major foreign policy goals following Khomeini's assumption of power. His public statements quickly established that Khomeini felt "a mission to establish his brand of theocracy throughout Islam."⁷⁹ Other leading clerics were also quick to stress their belief in the universal applicability of the Iranian Revolution. In a 1979 broadcast, Ayatollah Shariyat-madari stated, "the Iranian Muslim people's triumphant struggle constitutes a turning point in the history of world struggles and *the best model to follow* by the oppressed Muslim peoples of the world" [emphasis added].⁸⁰

At its height, this inflammatory rhetoric helped spark the Iran-Iraq War.⁸¹ In recent years, however, the quest to "export the revolution" has been deemphasized for a variety of reasons.⁸² Nonetheless, Ayatollah Khomeini's legacy lives on and his most ardent apostles continue to maintain that their brand of religious universalism represents the "best model" for a true Islamic society. In his will, Khomeini called on all Iranian embassies to help spread the "bright face of Islam" so that "Islam will conquer the whole world and its proud flag will be hoisted everywhere."⁸³ In addition, shortly before his death, Khomeini sent a letter to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev urging him to embrace the "world-encompassing values of Islam" as "a means for the well-being and salvation of all nations" and a way to help "undo the knots of the fundamental problems of humanity."⁸⁴

Does this Islamic resurgence seriously threaten the Soviet Union? The jury remains out on this question. According to scholars like Alexandre Bennigsen (who for years monitored developments in Soviet Central Asia), by the mid-1980s the Soviets had become increasingly concerned with the potential problem posed by the spread of Islam:

There is no doubt that the Soviets recognize the need to counter strongly the renewed interest in religion, religious culture, and religious traditions among the Muslim population in the USSR. Islam is viewed as disruptive to Soviet social engineering at home, and as an opportunity for foreign interference in Soviet affairs. Judging from the vast amount of Soviet media space, educational programs, and manhours allotted to anti-Islamic activities, the Soviet leadership is taking this matter seriously.⁸⁵

Bennigsen acknowledged that some Western observers believe the Iranian Revolution will have “virtually no impact” on Soviet Muslims because of the “advanced state of Soviet Central Asia’s ‘modernization,’ secularization, and ‘social mobilization’.” However, he found it “inconceivable that Soviet Muslims can remain unaffected.” He argued instead that “information and ideas, particularly fundamentalist ones from Iran and Afghanistan, will continue to penetrate the borders of the USSR.”⁸⁶

A simple review of demographics suggests that the potential clearly exists for future problems within the Soviet Muslim population. With 50-60 million Muslim inhabitants, the Soviet Union today contains the fifth largest Muslim population in the world.⁸⁷ In fact, there are more Muslims in the USSR than there are in Iran. Soviet Muslims—although still a decided minority—are procreating at a rate two to three times greater than the Soviet national average. Moreover, Soviet Muslim birth rates are increasing while those of the politically dominant Slavic populations are declining. By the year 2000 there will be two or fewer ethnic Russians for every Soviet Muslim, versus the greater than 3:1 ratio that existed at the time of the 1979 Soviet census.⁸⁸ If Iran again chooses to instigate trou-

ble, a target audience might easily be found inside the Soviet Muslim world.

The Soviets recognize the potential problems posed by a spread of religious fervor into their southern Muslim regions and have been quick to respond to the potential threat. In recent years, the amount of attention paid to the "Islamic problem" has increased significantly, particularly within the Soviet Central Asian news media.⁸⁹ The following comments by the First Secretary of the Tajikistan Communist Party Central Committee, K. M. Makhkamov, are typical of Soviet reporting on this topic:

One area of anti-Soviet propaganda is sophisticated attempts to fuse the propaganda of nationalism with religion. . . . As a result of ideological sabotage against the republic's population and unscrupulous playing with people's national and religious feelings, as well as because of weak ideological-upbringing work, certain citizens succumb to this hostile propaganda.

Recently, owing to a certain underestimation of and slackening in scientific-atheistic work among the population, the level of religiousness in the republic has grown appreciably. . . . The most reactionary representatives of the clergy are trying to breathe new life into nationalistic vestiges. . . .

We are especially disturbed by the fascination with religion exhibited by some young people. . . . All this is a direct consequence of deficiencies in ideological upbringing.⁹⁰

Several qualifications are appropriate at this point. First, despite Soviet fears, there is no clear evidence that Soviet Muslims were willing to rise up against the Kremlin's authority *solely in response to Khomeini's call*. It appears unlikely, therefore, that they would be inclined to respond today to the urging of lesser Iranian figures.⁹¹ Fewer than 4 million (or well under 10 percent) of the USSR's Muslim population are members of the Shia sect. Virtually all the rest are members of the Sunni sect.⁹² Sunni Muslims appear less susceptible to "Khomeinism," that is, to Iran's particular brand of radical Islamic rhetoric. For that matter, even in countries such as Iraq and Bahrain, where Shiites constitute a majority of the

population, forces of nationalism and ethnicity—combined with government repression—have helped deflate the threat.⁹³

Second, many Soviet Muslims are Muslim in name only. Few are “firm believers.” The majority profess to be either atheists or non-believers. Although Makhkamov’s comments revealed the Communist Party’s concerns about “the fascination with religion exhibited by some young people,” it appears the percentage of atheists and non-believers is greatest among the under-40 population—and especially among the under-20—who most directly feel the effect of generations of Soviet education on scientific-atheistic principles.⁹⁴

Third, as alluded to earlier, some analysts argue that the “advanced state” of Soviet Central Asia’s modernization, secularization, and social mobilization efforts has resulted in the Soviet Muslim community being much better off than its poorer cousins to the south, thus much less susceptible to Islamic admonitions.

Nonetheless, the threat posed by “Khomeinism”—which did not die with the Ayatollah—cannot be totally discounted by Moscow. The “anti-imperialist” nature of the Iranian Revolution, although praised by the Kremlin when directed against the United States, represents a double-edged sword. Khomeini made it clear that his followers must pay attention not only to the dangers posed by the US “Great Satan,” but also to the dangers posed by “socialist imperialism,” or the USSR. Although Khomeini most often emphasized the evils of the United States, he never recanted his famous 1964 maxim, “America is worse than Britain. Britain is worse than America. The Soviet Union is worse than both of them. Each is worse and more unclean than the other.”⁹⁵ This theme has been reinforced repeatedly. In Khomeini’s March 1980 Persian New Year address, he admonished his followers to be “fully aware that the danger represented by the Communist powers is no less than that of America.”⁹⁶ It was echoed repeatedly in his will, which identified nations adhering to communism as “the most dictatorial and powermongering states on the globe” and singled out the Russian people as “living under an oppression much greater than that imposed by the world’s other dictators.”⁹⁷

In sum, there appears to be no clear and present danger to the Soviet Union from its Muslim neighbor to the south—at least no danger so threatening and so clearly linked to Tehran as to warrant military action against the Islamic regime. At the same time, though, Moscow can't help but see both the real challenge and the potential escalatory nature of the Islamic revivalist threat. To the extent that the leaders in Moscow lose any sleep at all over the threat posed by their southern neighbor, it is clearly "Khomeinism," not Iran's military might or potential, that underlies their nightmares.

Outside Alliances There is another dimension to the security threat that the Soviets cannot afford to overlook. Even if Iran does not represent a serious threat per se, its territory can still serve as a staging base for others who may be more capable of challenging the Soviet Union. As Professor Shahram Chubin of the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva points out,

The Soviet Union saw Iran's pro-Western alignment as a threat and an insult, implying as it did the West's ability to use Iranian territory against the USSR to deny the Soviets their 'legitimate' security concerns. . . . Iran's arms build-up in the 1970's was seen as dangerous because it could be used by the US (even against Iran's wishes, the Soviets alleged).⁹⁸

The leaders in the Kremlin no doubt recall that a short decade ago Iran was still a member of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). Although CENTO was admittedly dying a natural death long before Khomeini officially killed it, the possibility of Western forces opening up an additional front against the USSR's "soft underbelly" in the event of a global war was one that prudent Soviet planners before 1979 had to take seriously.

From a security alliance standpoint, as Moscow surveys the Iranian scene today it must feel cautiously optimistic. In the past decade Iran has transformed itself from a nation that willingly served as one of the "pillars" of US policy to a fiercely independent, "neither East nor West" republic

that looks upon its previous US friend and benefactor as the "Great Satan."

The Soviets are smart enough to know that national moods are rarely constant and that the absolute nadir in US-Iranian relations has, in all probability, already been reached and passed. Even though they would like to see US-Iranian relations remain at a low level, a reduced swing of the pendulum is realistically the best the Soviets can hope to influence or achieve. They also realize that—at least in terms of security relationships—the rules of the so-called "zero-sum game" do not automatically apply.⁹⁹ Although the Soviets certainly see Iran's break with the United States as a positive development—one that increases both the Soviets' sense of security and the overall geopolitical and strategic balance—it did not drive Iran into the Soviet camp.

Nonetheless, in relative terms, the Soviets must view their overall security as having been enhanced by the dissolution of CENTO and the disintegration of the US-Iranian security relationship in general. It is difficult to seriously envision even the most "pragmatic" Iranian leadership guiding the nation back into the Great Satan's bed. Nor are most Americans eager to have Iran climb back in, given the degree of hatred and bitterness that evolved out of the 1979 takeover of the US Embassy, the subsequent 444-day hostage crisis, and the more recent reported links between Iran and the terrorists holding Americans captive in Lebanon.

The periodic clashes between US and Iranian forces in the Persian Gulf that grew out of America's increased presence and expanded ship protection regime in 1987 and 1988 added fuel to both sides' fires. By contrast, the Soviets' low-key response to instances when Soviet merchant ships were attacked, boarded, or struck by mines avoided diplomatic crises and bad blood.

Finally, even an eventual return to more normal US-Iranian relations—especially in the context of a shift from "neither East nor West" to "both East and West"—could work to Moscow's advantage, since the Soviets are in much better position than the United States, both geographically and politically, to take advantage of such a shift.¹⁰⁰

Although from Moscow's vantage point the danger posed by an existing or potential US-Iranian security alliance has been reduced, a potential new security problem looms on the horizon. Iran's "neither East nor West" philosophy opens the door for Moscow's other historic nemesis, the People's Republic of China; and China appears ready and eager to enter.¹⁰¹ Gorbachev's recent overtures (and concessions) notwithstanding, the need to combat increased Chinese presence and influence around the world enjoys a high priority in Moscow, in terms of both enhancing Soviet security and obtaining geopolitical or strategic advantage.¹⁰² The Soviets would see any large influx of Chinese advisors and technicians (particularly military ones) or the establishment of a PRC-Iranian security relationship as a direct threat to their security, despite the fact that an Iranian military equipped with Chinese weaponry would be far less capable (or threatening) than one armed by the West.

I am not predicting that Iran will one day turn into a Chinese-Soviet battleground. But it is important to point out that while Americans have had a tendency to look at the global balance-of-power equation more in bipolar terms—with China sometimes seen as a "card" that the United States can (or somehow should be able to) play—the Soviets have a more multipolar view that recognizes the United States as the primary challenge but respects and fears China in its own right.

Instability One more aspect of the security threat worth noting is the more generic threat posed by conditions of instability on a country's borders. Soviet literature on the Persian Gulf since the late 1970s has emphasized concerns about conditions along the Soviet southern tier. In fact, a 1985 official booklet on Soviet foreign policy stressed that, since Soviet territory lies in the immediate vicinity of the Gulf, it was in Moscow's interest that "a stable, peaceful situation prevail in the region and military tensions there not increase." This was identified as Moscow's only "selfish interest" in the region.¹⁰³ However, a review of Soviet activity in most neighboring countries (other than their own client or satellite states) reveals that the Soviets, at least until recently, have been inclined to

promote rather than prevent instability. Moscow's historical support to leftist elements in Iran underscores this contention. Soviet security concerns about instability in Iran, in my view, only become genuinely alarming when they center on the fear of revolutionary fervor spreading northward or, more importantly, if instability invites Western intervention.

The latter is clearly the case when one analyzes Soviet concerns about Iranian stability immediately before and after the fall of the Shah. As early as November 1978, three months before Khomeini returned to Iran, Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev issued this warning to the United States:

Any interference, let alone military intervention in the affairs of Iran—a state which has a common frontier with the Soviet Union—would be regarded by the USSR as a matter affecting its security interests.¹⁰⁴

Moscow continued to assert that it would “not tolerate any outside interference in Iran's internal affairs” in early January of 1980, three weeks after its own “interference” in Afghanistan—and just before President Carter delivered a similar warning to the Soviets in his 1980 State of the Union Address.¹⁰⁵ It was the prospect of American intervention, not instability *per se* that prompted Moscow's concerns.

On the other hand, conditions of instability can provide Moscow with an excuse to intervene in the face of an imagined or fabricated threat. This is the real danger posed by Iranian instability—the threat *from* rather than to the USSR. The possibility that the Soviet Union might use the alleged threat of Western intervention to justify its own intervention in Iran was not lost on Tehran, especially after the Soviet occupation of neighboring Afghanistan. To guard against such an event, the Iranian Ambassador in Moscow informed Soviet Foreign Ministry officials,

In the likely event of an attack on Iran by America, we can defend ourselves alone, and we will not allow a single foreign soldier to enter the country on whatever pretext and by virtue of whatever friendship treaty.¹⁰⁶

It would appear, therefore, that the greatest threat posed by instability in Iran is not the danger that the Soviets will feel compelled to intervene to preserve their own security; but, rather, that instability will provide them with a convenient excuse to act, under the pretext of security, in order to gain access to this strategically important area.

The Overall Security Equation When the Soviets look southward today, I believe they see less of an external threat than they did during either the Shah's or Khomeini's reign. The Iranian military, to the extent that it ever posed a security challenge to the Soviet Union, is considerably less threatening today. More significantly, Iran remains far-removed from its former position as the centerpiece of America's Middle East security strategy. In addition, the flames fanned by Iran's revolutionary Islamic rhetoric have thus far failed to spread.

On the other hand, Iran has proved itself less than totally receptive to Moscow's gestures of friendship. The Soviet Muslim community continues to grow and Gorbachev's policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, to the extent that they permit open expression of pent-up frustrations and concerns, ironically could fuel rather than dampen smoldering Islamic revivalist fire. Finally, future political instability could create a situation in which the United States, at least in the Soviets' eyes, would be tempted to intervene and forcibly reestablish a presence in Iran. This real or imagined threat could serve to prompt (or justify) a preemptive move into Iran by the Soviets.

When all the above factors are considered, it would appear, from the Soviet perspective, that Soviet security has been enhanced in the past decade. But the Iranian Revolution is not over yet, and the struggle for influence remains to be finished. As a result, much will depend on how successful Moscow can be at expanding its own influence and limiting US-Western and Chinese influence in post-Khomeini Iran. Here is where the interrelated nature of Soviet objectives comes into play, because Moscow's attempts to gain geopolitical, economic, and strategic advantage serve not only as ends in their own right, but also as means toward enhancing Soviet security.

To Gain Geopolitical, Economic, or Strategic Advantage

Some readers might argue that any Soviet attempt to gain geopolitical, strategic, or economic advantage must by definition be aimed at or result in enhanced Soviet security. Although I would agree that, after the fact, it makes little difference to the victim (be it Iran, Afghanistan, Estonia, or Poland) whether a Soviet invasion was motivated by legitimate self-defense concerns or by something less noble, the motivation does make a difference before the fact in determining probability.

For example, the likelihood today of the Soviet Union attacking China to obtain territory, resources, or strategic access appears small. The probable risks and costs far outweigh the possible gains. However, if China were to become openly belligerent and begin massing troops along the Soviet border, thus leading the Soviets to believe that the Chinese were contemplating an offensive, the likelihood of a Soviet preemptive attack would increase significantly. The need to preserve Soviet security would provide the necessary catalyst for action.

Likewise, the Soviets could be expected to exert considerably more effort to prevent the establishment of security ties between Iran and either the United States or China than they would to prevent either or both of these competitors from developing economic ties with Iran, even though the Soviets would no doubt prefer that neither security nor economic relationships existed. Their level of concern, and therefore their willingness to take risks to prevent an American or Chinese military presence—which the Soviets would view as a direct threat to their security—would be greater than their concern over an expansion of American or Chinese economic or even political influence.

One sure way to prevent either from occurring, of course, is for the Soviets to firmly insert themselves into the picture first. I hasten to add that I am not, at this point, sounding an alarm to warn of an imminent (or even an eventual) Soviet attack. I am merely outlining why a Soviet-aligned Iran would serve Moscow's interests. Given this observation—and fully aware that in the final analysis the risks involved might still

negate the potential gains—let us continue to focus on why Iran is a prize worth obtaining.

Geopolitical Advantages One need only glance at a map to see why Iran is important to the Soviet Union. From a security standpoint, it represents an invaluable buffer between the southern USSR and the force projection capabilities of potential adversaries operating in the Indian Ocean. From an expansionist standpoint, it provides a convenient target for further growth. As Zbigniew Brzezinski argues, it is sometimes difficult to separate the two:

The absence of any clearly definable national boundary made territorial expansion the obvious way of assuring security, with such territorial expansion then breeding new conflicts, new threats, and thus a further expansionary drive. A relentless historical cycle was thus set in motion: insecurity generated expansionism; expansionism bred insecurity; insecurity, in turn, would fuel further expansionism.¹⁰⁷

Taken to one extreme, this theory would have the Soviets attempting to conquer the entire world in a never-ending quest to secure their ever-expanding empire. Some argue that this is, in fact, what the Soviet threat is all about. Although I do not subscribe to so zealous a school of thought, I can understand how—with NATO and a disrupted Eastern Europe to their west and Japan and China to their east and southeast—those in the Kremlin not satisfied with the extent of today's borders must see southwest Asia as the path of least resistance for future growth.

Iran also provides a strategic link between the Soviet Union and the Indian Ocean. The quest for warm-water ports has long been recognized as a primary Kremlin goal. Six decades ago, the renowned British geographer D. H. Cole observed,

The last 300 years have witnessed the steady advance of Russia into the less strongly organized Asiatic lands to her east and

south. . . . It was partly due to the natural desire for a growth of territory and wealth. . . . But apart from these obvious factors, there was behind this constantly advancing Russian tide a carefully pursued policy. . . . The search for a "warm water port" uncontrolled by neighboring naval powers has therefore for a century been a pronounced factor in Russian foreign policy. . . . It explains the stretching out towards the south and the menace to Persia and Afghanistan.¹⁰⁸

The importance of a direct link to the Indian Ocean was demonstrated during World War II. The US Army's definitive study on the Persian Corridor (the land route between the Persian Gulf and the southern USSR secured by the 1941 Soviet-British invasion of Iran) documents that roughly 25 percent of all the lend-lease supplies and equipment that flowed from Western Hemisphere ports to Soviet destinations was funnelled through the Persian Corridor.¹⁰⁹

When other types of assistance are added, over five million tons of goods entered the Soviet Union between November 1941 and May 1945 via the Corridor. In addition, Iranian airspace was used to ferry Western aircraft to the Soviets, and over a half-million tons of Iranian petroleum products were delivered to the Soviets during the war.¹¹⁰ It is not surprising, therefore, that a more recent study addressing the Persian Corridor concluded that it represented "a lesson in logistical efficiency and in the paramount importance of the 'sea lane of communication' (SLOC) through the Indian Ocean *unlikely to be forgotten in Moscow*" (emphasis added).¹¹¹

The Persian Corridor could take on even greater importance during a future war, given the susceptibility of Soviet Far Eastern ports to US or Japanese interdiction and the vulnerability of the fragile east-west trans-Siberian rail link. In fact, a case can be made that, in a global war, a Persian Corridor could represent Moscow's only defensible avenue to its Third World allies, or between the eastern and western USSR.¹¹²

Access to Iranian ports and airfields would play an important power-projection role in both peacetime and war.

As Professor Imtiaz Bokhari of Pakistan's Institute of Strategic Studies has observed,

A naval base on Iran's or Pakistan's coast linked to the Soviet Union by road or by rail or both, in conjunction with their bases in [Aden] and Ethiopia, can contribute substantially to the Soviet naval buildup in the Indian Ocean in the years ahead. Presently, the Soviet ships there are 8,000 kilometers from their nearest home port.¹¹³

The Soviets today enjoy seemingly unrestricted access to ports, airfields, and anchorages in both the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY, also referred to as South Yemen or Aden) and Ethiopia. They also have a minor ship repair facility, including an 8,500-ton floating drydock, at Ethiopia's Dehalik Island in the Red Sea. The Soviet Indian Ocean Naval Squadron (SOVINDRON) is comprised of naval and naval air forces from the Black Sea and Pacific Ocean Fleets. The nearest major support facility is a week away, at Vietnam's Cam Ranh Bay.¹¹⁴

SOVINDRON has only a limited capability to sustain a presence (and thus project Soviet power) outside the immediate vicinity of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Its ability to operate in and around the Persian Gulf is also restricted. During peacetime, logistical support is slow, expensive, and burdensome. In war, it would probably be impossible. Port facilities in Iran, logistically linked to the southern USSR, would greatly enhance Moscow's ability to support and sustain a naval presence in the PDRY, Ethiopia, and elsewhere in the Indian Ocean. The effect would be most dramatic, however, in terms of support to Soviet Persian Gulf and North Arabian Sea naval operations.

In recent years, the Soviets have increased their presence and level of operations in the Persian Gulf vicinity, even as Soviet naval out-of-area operations worldwide have declined. Iranian actions played a major role in bringing about this increase. Even though Soviet merchant ships frequently operated throughout the region, no Soviet naval combatant had

ventured into the Persian Gulf itself since the late 1970s. Not until after a Soviet merchant ship was boarded and temporarily detained by the Iranians in 1986 did the Soviet Navy once again enter the Gulf, to provide escort services for Soviet merchant shipping. These escort operations were subsequently expanded to provide protection for Soviet tankers under charter to Kuwait as well.¹¹⁵

To support these operations, the Soviets had to establish a mobile logistics base afloat in the Gulf of Oman. This base, which consisted of a command ship and several support ships, served as a rendezvous point for Soviet naval units and the ships they were escorting. Because of their lack of access to Gulf port facilities, the Soviets had to manage their operations and refuel and replenish their ships from this afloat location and from several anchorages inside the Gulf. Access to Iranian port facilities would change all this in the event of future operations in the area.

There is another dimension of the access question not dreamed of by the tsars—namely, air access. The Soviets currently base several I1-38 May anti-submarine warfare and surveillance aircraft in South Yemen. From their base at Aden Airfield, these patrol aircraft monitor US and other Western naval activity in the Indian Ocean and North Arabian Sea. Their presence at Aden today is made possible by, and is dependent upon, permission to overfly Iran.¹¹⁶

About once every two months, these aircraft rotate between Aden and the USSR, following a route that takes them over eastern Iran. Each time, the Soviets file a flight plan requesting overflight permission for a pair of I1-18 Coot cargo planes (the I1-18 being the transport version of the I1-38). Such permission had routinely been granted by the Shah. It appears that Ayatollah Khomeini, shortly after coming to power, balked at granting overflight permission. However, a deal was apparently soon arranged, and overflights continue to be permitted.¹¹⁷

The most viable alternative for Soviet aircraft desiring to deploy to or operate over the Indian Ocean would be the route over both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Given Mujahidin attitudes toward the USSR, the first leg is not without its risks.

The latter portion of the flight is complicated by a Pakistani requirement that transiting aircraft stop at Karachi, where these "civilian" transports would be subject to inspection.

In short, the Soviets are reminded bimonthly just how limited their ability to maintain an air presence over the Indian Ocean is, and how convenient it would be if they were somehow to enjoy unrestricted access not just to Iranian ports and facilities but to Iranian airspace as well.

We in the West tend to focus on the more negative or sinister (to us) motives behind the Soviets' naval and air presence in the Indian Ocean region: their desire to project Soviet power both for prestige and for purposes of intimidation, their drive to counter US and Western presence and influence, their intent to threaten the free world's vital oil lifeline, their need to continually bolster Third World client states, their desire to ensure continued access to oversea facilities. I do not intend to argue against any of these putative motives. They all appear valid to me. But there is another very important reason for the Soviets' presence—namely, to protect their own vital sea lanes between the eastern and western USSR. In this context, it is significant to note that the Soviets' 1985 foreign policy booklet—while disclaiming any interest in Persian Gulf oil or Indian Ocean bases—asserted that there was "no denying" that the military-political situation in this region was of "great importance" to the USSR because "there passed the only sea route open all year round, that linked the ports of the European and Far Eastern USSR."¹¹⁸

Regardless of motivating factors, uncontested access to Iran's ports and airfields—when combined with ground logistical supply routes and overflight rights—would clearly serve Moscow's needs and permit the Soviets to more effectively and safely maintain a naval and air presence astride the vital Indian Ocean sea lanes. The security and geopolitical advantages are obvious. The Soviets declare that these sea lanes are "very important to the economy of the USSR" as well.¹¹⁹

Economic Advantages Iran is a country rich in exploitable resources. Just as control of Iran's territory would provide the Soviets with considerable geopolitical advantages, so would

control of Iran's natural resources provide economic benefits for Moscow. Foremost among these resources are Iran's vast deposits of oil and natural gas. Estimated total world petroleum reserves—i.e., known oil reserves that can be recovered economically with current technology at today's prices—stand at roughly one trillion barrels. Fully nine percent of that total is in Iran. In fact, there is more readily-accessible oil waiting to be tapped in Iran than in the Soviet Union and United States combined.¹²⁰

Oil is Iran's principal commodity and primary source of income. In the prewar years, Iran produced up to 6 million barrels of crude oil per day and exported over 5 million barrels daily. During the Iran-Iraq War, production dropped to as low as 1.3 million barrels per day (1981) and consistently remained below 2.3 million. Even after years of limited production and extensive war damages however, during 1989 Iran surged to just under 3 million barrels per day, a 30 percent production increase over 1988. Barring a resumption of hostilities with Iraq, planned reconstruction efforts should result in Iran sustaining a 4 million barrel daily production rate through the 1990s.¹²¹

By contrast, the Soviets are estimated to already be producing at maximum capacity. It is also worth noting that although the Soviets produce around 12 million barrels a day of oil, roughly 75 percent of that is for domestic consumption—a figure that should grow if *perestroika* is successful in spurring the Soviet economy. In addition, the cost associated with producing a barrel of oil in the Middle East (roughly \$4-6) is one-third to one-half of production cost in the USSR (or United States). Iranian oil thus provides its owner a greater hedge against price fluctuations or inflation and a substantially greater profit margin.¹²²

During the 1970s, there was considerable speculation that the Soviet Union would become a net importer of oil by the late 1980s. US intelligence estimates warned that access to additional oil supplies was destined to become a Soviet national security concern, with Middle East (specifically Iranian) oil the most accessible and thus the most likely target. Fortunately (for both Moscow and Tehran) these predictions have proven

to be false. Most forecasters now predict that the Soviets will remain self-sufficient and most likely continue to be a modest exporter of oil for many years to come.¹²³ As a result, Iranian oil remains in the "nice to have" (economic advantage) versus the "need to have" (security concern) category. Nonetheless, the commodity that the Soviets appear to desire most today is hard currency, and the income derived from another 2-4 million barrels per day of oil exports would satisfy a lot of Moscow's needs.

Iran also possesses almost 13 percent of the world's known natural gas reserves, second only to the Soviet Union (about 4 percent of the world's total is in the United States). Given the Soviets' vast reserves (almost 38 percent of the world's supply) Iran's natural gas inventory would also fall in the "nice to have" revenue-increasing category. It would also appear reasonable to assume that the combined Soviet-Iranian 50-percent share of the world market would provide increased leverage and other economic benefits.¹²⁴

Also in the "nice to have" category would be Iran's modest coal, iron ore, and copper deposits and its more limited lead, zinc, chromite, uranium, and precious metal reserves. Iran is also an exporter of carpets, fruits, nuts, and hides and is an illegal producer of opium poppy for the international drug trade. Iran's petrochemical, textile, cement, food processing, metal fabricating, and commercial fishing industries would also contribute nicely to the Soviets' well-being, as would its oil refining capability (down from 1.1 million barrels a day before the war to half a million, but still significant).¹²⁵

We should remember, too, that one of the primary motives behind the early tsars' quest for warm-water ports was to support Russian commerce. Although security, geopolitical, and strategic concerns may now be predominant, there remain at least modest benefits to Soviet commerce as well. Recall, for example, that Iraq and India are the Soviets' two largest Third World recipients of Soviet military assistance. At present, arms shipments to these and other regional clients must travel thousands of miles to reach their destinations. The savings possible by opening a new Persian Corridor could be considerable since, all told, roughly 60 percent of all

Soviet Third World arms deliveries go to either the Middle East or South Asia.¹²⁶

Strategic Advantages The other half of the balance-of-power equation is the strategic denial aspect. Simply stated, Soviet control of Iranian territory and resources would provide an immediate strategic advantage merely by keeping Iran's assets out of the hands of the United States, Western Europe, Japan, and other potential rivals. There are more far-reaching consequences as well, in terms of what could potentially be denied. The establishment of a secure Soviet foothold on the Persian Gulf would permit the Soviets to more effectively exert their influence—by mere presence, intimidation, or the threatened or actual use of force—not just over Iran or the contiguous waters of the Persian Gulf and North Arabian Sea but throughout the oil-rich Middle East region.

Some regional experts argue that a Soviet-oriented Iran would be counterproductive for Moscow; they speculate that such a situation would send the moderate Gulf Arabs rushing into the arms of the West for security. However, there is an equally convincing argument that, under such circumstances, the reverse might be true. As Laurie Mylorie from Harvard's Center for Middle East Studies argues,

If the Soviets acquired (or seemed to have acquired) significant influence in post-Khomeini Iran . . . the conservative states might consider maintaining cordial relations with the Soviets as the best way to insure their security. . . . It is not inconceivable that one or two of them might develop some form of defense relationship with the Soviets (as Kuwait in a very limited way has begun to do).¹²⁷

If the Gulf states were to seek varying degrees of accommodation with the Soviets, Moscow would enjoy greater leverage in dealing with them on strategic issues. Even if they remained distant from Moscow or drifted closer to the West, they would remain susceptible to the Soviet threat.

In time of war, Soviet Iran-based naval and air forces could threaten the flow of Gulf oil to the rest of the industrialized

world, both by interdicting the Strait of Hormuz and other critical sea lanes and by attacking Gulf production and export facilities, including the extensive pipeline network that is currently being expanded to reduce the Gulf states' reliance on free passage through the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. The immediate and long-term effects of denied access to this precious resource would be considerable, since oil currently satisfies almost half of the world's total energy requirements, and the United States and other Western nations have once again increased their reliance on Gulf oil.

Roughly two-thirds of the world's proven oil resources are located within the Gulf states, with almost half this amount in Saudi Arabia alone. Saudi resources are so vast, in fact, that even if no more oil is ever discovered there, they could continue producing at their current rate through the next century. In recent years, free world nations have relied on 12-13 million barrels of Gulf oil a day, every day, to fuel their industries and economies. This quantity equates to over one-fourth of all the oil consumed in Western Europe and one-half to two-thirds of the oil used by other key US allies such as Japan and Turkey.¹²⁸

Although US reliance is currently low, consumption of Gulf oil has risen from less than 3 percent in 1985 to roughly 11 percent of overall US consumption in 1989. This trend is expected to continue, as US oil consumption steadily increases while US production declines. As a result, US imports continue to climb, accounting for 47 percent of total US consumption in 1989.¹²⁹ As the Independent Petroleum Association of America points out, the United States now consumes about one-third of all the oil used in the non-communist world and is responsible for one-fourth of total imports of crude oil and petroleum products.¹³⁰ Virtually all oil forecasts predict that, for the first time in American history, US imports will soon exceed domestic production. Given the Gulf's vast resources, a US Department of Energy study concludes, "rising imports imply growing reliance on OPEC oil, especially from the Persian Gulf."¹³¹

The Gulf's share of total world production, although below the 40-45 percent share of the market it enjoyed in the

1970s, still stands at a respectable 25 percent of all the oil being consumed in the world today. As world demand for oil continues to grow and reserves in the United States, Europe, and the Soviet Union dwindle or become economically infeasible to recover, Gulf oil appears certain to once again increase in importance. Conservative estimates predict that Gulf oil will assume a 30-45 percent share of the world market by the mid-1990s.

Adding to the Gulf's importance and to the West's potential vulnerability is the fact that 71 percent of the world's surplus oil production capacity (over 7 million barrels a day of the 10 million barrels of daily oil production capacity that is currently unused) is located in the Gulf states, with half of this—36 percent of the world's total—in Saudi Arabia alone. To those who argue that the West could look elsewhere for oil, therefore, the question to be asked is, Where?¹³²

Given current and projected free world reliance on Persian Gulf oil, the strategic value inherent in the ability to deny this asset to the West (especially during periods of increased tension or conflict) is clear. Even in peacetime, the ability (real or perceived) to threaten access to this resource provides psychological advantages that would equate to increased leverage and bargaining power, while complicating the defensive equations of potential foes. Direct access to the Gulf's resources would also provide strategic benefits (beyond denial) to the Soviets as well, remembering the fact that they are producing at near maximum capacity.

In short, control of Iranian oil resources and the ability to project power over the remainder of the Gulf's oil fields would be useful to the Soviets both in its own right and, more importantly, in terms of what this control could permit them to deny to the West. The real strategic gain (thus the real threat) is a Soviet ability to deny the West over two-thirds of the world's proven oil reserves and more than 70 percent of its surplus production capacity.

Natural gas is another strategically important energy source, satisfying just under one-fifth of the world's total energy needs. It is also the fuel most readily substitutable for oil. The fact that the Soviets already control 38 percent of

the world's natural gas reserves is troublesome enough. If they were to add the Middle East's 31 percent (13 percent in Iran alone) they would then control two-thirds of this precious resource as well.¹³³

Finally, possession of naval and air bases astride the North Arabian Sea provides the Soviets with a means of protecting their own sea lanes between the eastern and western USSR. Of greater importance to the West, however, is the Soviets' ability to threaten free world commerce through these same SLOCs. From staging bases at Bandar Abbas and Chah Bahar, Soviet long-range naval aviation strike aircraft (like the supersonic Backfire bomber) could cover the greater portion of the Indian Ocean, to include the US facility at Diego Garcia where 17 prepositioned shiploads of wartime and contingency supplies and equipment are situated. These bases could also serve as resupply points or perhaps even safe havens for Soviet forces and advisors currently operating out of Ethiopia and the PDRY, while also serving as conduits for Soviet support to these strategically located allies.

To Consolidate World Socialism

The need to preserve one's security and the desire to obtain geopolitical, economic, or strategic advantage are hardly unique to the Soviet Union. These factors can be found at the foundation of the foreign policies of virtually all the world's nations. However, a third factor not prominent in most states comes into play when dealing with the Soviet Union: Moscow's traditional position at the center of the world's international communist movement. This position brings with it a commitment to the advancement of world socialism, a commitment specifically spelled out in Article 28 of the Soviet Constitution:

The foreign policy of the USSR is aimed at ensuring international conditions favourable for building communism in the USSR, safeguarding the state interests of the Soviet Union, *consolidating the positions of world socialism, supporting the struggle of peoples for national liberation and social progress, preventing wars of aggression, achieving universal and*

complete disarmament, and consistently implementing the principles of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems [emphasis added].¹³⁴

There has been considerable speculation that President Gorbachev's "new thinking" will change—some would say has already changed—this Soviet commitment. True, Gorbachev has stressed the need for the "de-ideologization of interstate relations" and has stated that "force and the threat of force can no longer be, and should not be instruments of foreign power."¹³⁵ But this outlook represents a change in means, not in ultimate policy objectives. As Gorbachev himself noted in his landmark December 1988 address at the United Nations, "we are not giving up our convictions, philosophy, or traditions." He acknowledged that "an honest struggle of ideology" would continue:

The formation of a peaceful period will take place in conditions of the existence and rivalry of various socioeconomic and political systems. However, the meaning of our international efforts, and one of the key tenets of new thinking, is precisely to impart to this rivalry the quality of sensible competition in conditions of respect for freedom of choice and a balance of interests.¹³⁶

This is in no way intended to underestimate the significance of Gorbachev's "new thinking" on the conduct of Soviet foreign policy. If seen to fruition, it represents a major step toward safely managing the international competition and reducing the chance that some regional conflict will escalate out of control. But, like the policies of "peaceful coexistence" and "detente" before it, "new thinking" does not mean an end to competition—ideological or otherwise—between East and West. Nor has it signaled an end to the Soviets' commitment to promoting "world socialism," although the term itself will continue to be redefined by Mr. Gorbachev in an attempt to make it more acceptable and appealing.

Nonetheless, as the Soviets look toward Iran today, there is little in the way of world socialism for them to try to

consolidate. Moscow initially saw the Iranian Revolution as “a gain for progressive forces,” given its “anti-imperialist” nature. Kremlin leaders clearly hoped that pro-Soviet elements within the anti-Shah movement would have a voice in charting Iran’s future ideological and foreign policy direction. For a brief period after the Iranian Revolution, there appeared to be some hope for Moscow. The Soviet-supported Iranian communist Tudeh Party (which had been outlawed in Iran since 1949) was permitted to operate openly after aligning itself with the Islamic revolutionary movement and, at Moscow’s direction, publicly supporting Khomeini.¹³⁷ While all other rival political parties were banned shortly after Khomeini came to power, the Tudeh alone was not persecuted by the central government.¹³⁸ This leniency permitted the party to grow from a group of several hundred in 1978 to an organization that, by the beginning of 1983, consisted of 2,000 hard-core activists and over 10,000 sympathizers.

The honeymoon between Khomeini and the Tudeh Party ended in early 1983 when Iran accused the Tudeh of “anti-revolutionary activities,” to include spying for the Soviet Union, infiltrating the bureaucracy and military, collaborating with Kurdish rebels, and plotting to seize power. The arrest of the Tudeh Party’s leader, Nureddin Kianuri, and over 1,000 other party members followed, along with widespread purges throughout the bureaucracy and military. By the end of 1983, virtually all hard-core Tudeh Party members had been arrested, executed, or driven out of the country. As a result, the Tudeh Party was forced back underground and is not considered today to be a major contender for political power.

There are several other groups involved in ongoing “wars of national liberation” against the Iranian government that could seek Soviet support. These include the perennially rebellious Kurds and various leftist and radical Islamic groups. However, as long as the central government in Tehran remains relatively united, the prospect of some dissident group overthrowing the central government appears slim. But Moscow’s fortunes could change over time, especially in the event of political anarchy or civil war between rival government factions. It is not inconceivable that the Tudeh Party or the

People's Mojahedin or some yet-to-be invented organization might claim to be in control of the central government or (more likely) some smaller piece of territory and then request Soviet assistance to protect its newly-established "legitimate" regime. Likewise, another Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan or another Kurdish People's Republic could declare itself independent from Tehran and then seek recognition and support from its historical Soviet benefactors.

Scenarios of this nature could provide the Soviet Union with the opportunity (or excuse) to intervene and bring at least portions of Iran into its empire. Whether or not the Soviets would seize this opportunity is subject to debate, with the conclusion depending in large degree on interpretation of the risks-versus-gains calculus, the nature of the Soviet regime, and the degree to which ideology motivates the Kremlin's leadership.

Some Soviet specialists have argued, "in essence, the Kremlin leaders believe that they must lead an unrelenting struggle until their system of socialism emerges victorious."¹³⁹ From their perspective, all Soviet actions, from detente to *perestroika* and *glasnost*, are viewed as mere tactics through which the Soviets hope to expand their influence, "until such time as all nations are Soviet-style socialist states governed under the principles of Leninist doctrine or at least weak client states dominated by the military and economic power of the Soviet Union."¹⁴⁰ In short, ideology drives policy. This argument, which is becoming increasingly difficult to make, has never been convincing to me.

I am more inclined to agree with Sovietologists, such as Professor Alvin Rubinstein, who—while equally wary of Soviet long-term motives and intentions—argue, "reality is more complex than doctrine." Although Rubinstein believes that Soviet leaders traditionally have wanted to convince their people of the "enduring validity of the general principles of Marxist-Leninist doctrine," he points out that even before "deideologization" the Kremlin's "policy responses and initiatives [were] usually inspired by multiple considerations of which ideology may be a fairly minor determinant."¹⁴¹

I would argue, for example, that a Tzar Josef would have been just as willing to deal with Hitler before World War II

and annex Eastern Europe after the war as Comrade Stalin was, and that a Tzar Leonid would have issued the Russian equivalent of the Soviet Brezhnev Doctrine to justify his taking military action to keep the empire intact. In like manner, Comrade Gorbachev continues to swear allegiance to Marxism-Leninism while at the same time discussing the possibility of a non-communist Eastern Europe retaining its close security relationship with Moscow.

History provides many examples of the Soviets overlooking their ideological mandate. For example, the Soviets did not let Article 28 stand in the way of their decision to abandon the Eritrean People's Liberation Army's war of national liberation, which they had supported for many years, when the opportunity came to develop closer ties with the Ethiopian government (once the pro-Marxist President Mengistu came to power). They also found it possible to turn their backs on the Azerbaijani and Kurdish Republics that they had helped spawn in northern Iran in 1946. And they continued to make overtures to Iran and take Tehran's side on many international issues even after the Tudeh Party was outlawed and brutally decimated in 1983.

This is not to say that ideological considerations have never influenced Soviet decisionmaking. Most Soviet specialists, including Professor Rubinstein, acknowledge that ideology was indeed a factor in prompting the Soviets to launch their ill-fated invasion into Afghanistan in December of 1979:

Rejection of such arguments as might have been mustered against the military intervention must have fallen prey to, among other considerations, the need to defend "socialism," to preserve the "revolution." Neither Brezhnev nor any of his colleagues were going to be the first one to permit a pro-Soviet, communist regime on the USSR's periphery to be toppled by counter-revolutionary forces.¹⁴²

However, Gorbachev's willingness to pull Soviet forces out, thus risking an end to his nation's attempt to "consolidate the position of world socialism," at least as far as Afghanistan is concerned, provides further proof that

ideological considerations alone do not drive Soviet foreign policy. It also shows that Marxism-Leninism, as applied by the leadership in the Kremlin, is remarkably flexible and subject to broad interpretation. This flexibility provides an out—even to hardliners who maintain that ideology does (or should) drive policy—since even Lenin espoused the principle, “one step forward, two steps back, to justify un-Leninist behavior when the situation dictated such action.”¹⁴³

I would submit, therefore, that in scenarios such as the ones painted earlier, the Soviets will not automatically do the right thing (ideologically speaking) and intervene—even if the powers-that-be in the Kremlin remain fully committed to Marxism-Leninism and Article 28 stands the test of time and *glasnost*. Ideological motivations *alone* are not likely to provide just cause for the Soviets to intercede in Iran or anywhere else. As has historically been the case, whoever is in charge in the Kremlin will carefully weigh all the factors before acting. If the risks-versus-gains analysis appears to be in Moscow’s favor, then ideology might once again provide the justification for what otherwise would be an act of imperialist aggression. However, ideology will be increasingly unlikely to be a prime determinant of hostile action. At most, ideology might serve as the tie-breaker in favor of intervention if the leadership was closely-divided or the non-interventionist proponents’ power base was not secure.

Risks versus Gains

If the Soviets desire to expand, Iran represents one of the most lucrative and potentially vulnerable targets. According to Professor Rubinstein, Iran’s geographic proximity, when combined with historical precedent, also makes it one of the most likely targets:

Historically, territorial expansion was directed toward countries situated along Russia’s rimland. A continental empire, Russia never ventured overseas or beyond contiguous countries in search of territory and neither has the Soviet Union. From this perspective, we might speculate that only the countries along its southern tier are likely victims.¹⁴⁴

As the situation presents itself today, should the Soviets decide to invade Iran, it appears doubtful that legitimate concerns over Soviet security would be a major motivating factor. Iran poses less of a threat to the Soviet Union today than it did a little over a decade ago, when the Shah's armed forces were undergoing unprecedented modernization and expansion and Iran was so closely aligned with the United States that it was seen by Washington as one of its security "pillars" in the Middle East. Its heavily depleted and war-weary armed forces and its lack of either regional or global alliances must make Iran appear less threatening—and conversely more vulnerable—to the Soviets.

Nonetheless, some potential security concerns remain, including Islamic revivalism, fear of possible Chinese presence, and concern that political anarchy or some other form of severe civil strife would invite Western—specifically US—intervention.

In the past, subversion, support to resistance and separatist movements, and outright invasion and occupation have been Moscow's preferred methods of dealing with potential problems in neighboring lands. Whether the same will prove to be true in the future will depend in large part on the Soviets' own analysis of the risks versus gains involved in such actions.

On the gain side of the ledger, a Soviet-dominated Iran would provide the Kremlin with secure air and land routes to the Indian Ocean, control of Iran's considerable natural resources, and access to air and naval power-projection and support bases along critical sea lanes. It would also enhance Moscow's ability to deny Middle East resources and Indian Ocean sea lanes and strategic chokepoints to the West.

On the other side of the ledger, there are many risks associated with trying to absorb Iran into the Soviet sphere of influence or control—especially if the Iranians are unwilling to enter. The use of military force, in particular, would raise many questions: Would the Iranians put up as stiff a resistance as did the Afghan Mujahidin? Would the Soviet military, once burned in Afghanistan, embark on another Southwest Asian adventure? Would the United States, Western Europe, or China come to Tehran's aid? Moscow would need to carefully calculate the economic and political, as well as the

military, costs and decide whether the potential gain was worth those costs.

It is, of course, impossible to predict with certainty how the Soviets would answer the questions raised above. No doubt the answers would vary given the situations and individuals involved. As long as Gorbachev is in control and *perestroika* needs a "peaceful period" and Western financial credits to survive, the likelihood of any attempt by the Soviets to forcibly extend their influence into Iran is low. But who knows what the future will bring, or what steps Moscow can and might take to reduce the risks or, more likely, increase the prospects of peacefully expanding its influence over Iran? One thing is clear, however. The potential gains are—and likely will remain—substantial.

IV. IMPLICATIONS

I have argued that Iran represents a highly lucrative, potentially vulnerable jewel that Moscow's tzars and commissars periodically have attempted to add to the Kremlin's crown. I have also opined that, with the creation of the Southern TVD, the Soviets have the command and control structure and necessary forces in place should they elect once again to employ the military option to seize this jewel. When, if, and in what form the next attempt will come remains a matter of conjecture; preventing it is first and foremost Iran's problem to solve. However, the potential consequences of a Soviet-dominated Iran are too great for the West to ignore.

The Soviet Threat

There should be little doubt as to the Soviet Union's military capability to occupy Iran, *if* (and this is a very big *if*) the decisionmakers in Moscow decide to dedicate the necessary forces, take the risks, and pay the price (military, economic, and political) inherent in such an adventure. Even without outside

reinforcement, current STVD force levels are “sufficient to mount an invasion of Iran,” and such an attack “remains militarily feasible,” according to USCINCCENT.¹⁴⁵ American planners should not let the fact that four Soviet divisions were unable to completely subdue the Afghan Mujahedin lead them to the (incorrect) conclusion that five to ten times as many divisions, if dedicated to the task, could not subjugate Iran.

Is such an attack likely today? USCINCCENT says, No.¹⁴⁶ I strongly agree. There is nothing to indicate that the current leadership in Moscow intends to exert military pressure on Southwest Asia, or anywhere else. But Soviet leadership intentions (not to mention the leaders themselves) could change overnight. What is essential to remember is that the Soviets’ military capability to expand southward has improved markedly over the past decade and that Iran represents the path of least resistance and great potential gain. Remember, too, that the threat to Iran predates the establishment of the Soviet state. Geographic proximity—with its real and imagined security implications—provides cause for concern. Communist ideology just provides additional incentive or justification to act. Even if the Kremlin were to change its form of government, the same history and geography—and potential threat—would remain.

Soviet Objectives and Intentions In the near term the USSR has little reason to invade Iran and considerable reason not to. Given his nation’s self-professed economic crisis and the desperate need for political and economic reform, a military confrontation in southwest Asia is the last thing Gorbachev wants or needs. Without any immediate threat to Soviet security, the prospects of the Soviets either initiating or allowing themselves to be drawn into a regional military conflict appear slim.

But there is a considerable difference between near-term intentions and long-term objectives. Given Iran’s geographic proximity, it is clearly in Moscow’s long-term security interest to ensure that, at the very worst, the central government in Tehran remains neutral and on generally amicable terms with

the Kremlin. There are also important economic and geopolitical advantages to be gained by the Soviets, and strategic consequences to be endured by the West, should portions or all of Iran fall within the Soviet sphere of influence. The Soviets may not be willing to risk going to war to achieve these advantages. But it would be foolish to assume a benign long-term Soviet interest.¹⁴⁷ Nor should we assume that military action is the only—or even the most likely or preferred—means of extending Soviet hegemony southward. Since the Khrushchev era, those countries that have entered the Soviet camp have done so willingly, after falling to communism from within (South Vietnam being the partial exception to the rule). Once Soviet-supported Marxists have gained control, they have moved their nations into the Soviet sphere of influence, without the Soviets firing a shot. The fact that some nations today are moving out of the Soviet camp does not negate the possibility that others will one day move—or be moved—in.

The Afghan Model Neighboring Afghanistan is an illustrative case in point. Let's not forget that the Soviets did not invade Afghanistan to bring it into their sphere of influence; the April 1978 Marxist coup had already accomplished that task. The Soviet invasion was aimed at keeping what had already been acquired through other means. It was focused as much at controlling internecine warfare between rival Marxist factions in Kabul as it was at defending against the rebel threat in the countryside.¹⁴⁸

The 1978 Marxist coup deposed a neutral government, led by President Mohammed Daoud, that was already heavily dependent upon—and deferential to—the Soviet Union. In fact, Daoud's deference to Moscow sowed the seeds of his downfall. Soviet pressure contributed to Daoud's decision to tolerate the presence of the Afghan communist party (the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, or PDPA) while all other political parties were being suppressed. It was the PDPA, whose rival factions had reunited a year earlier at Soviet insistence, that engineered the April 1978 Marxist takeover, reportedly after being told by the Soviet Embassy in Kabul that Moscow would support the proposed coup.¹⁴⁹

It was the 1978 coup and not the 1979 invasion that extended Soviet hegemony over Afghanistan. According to Dr. J. Bruce Amstutz (US Deputy Chief of Mission in Kabul during the coup and Charge d'Affairs at the time of the invasion) Soviet objectives in the years preceding the coup—particularly soon after Daoud overthrew the Afghan monarchy in 1973—were as follows:

- to ensure that Afghanistan did not become an unfriendly border state with close American ties;
- to draw Afghanistan into a dependent relationship vulnerable and responsive to Soviet pressure;
- to gain economic advantages from aid projects and trade; and
- to nourish the small pro-Soviet Afghan Communist Party. . . consonant with the long-standing Soviet aim of spreading pro-Soviet international communism.¹⁵⁰

Soviet objectives in Iran today, in my view, closely parallel these objectives—objectives which, when successfully pursued in Afghanistan, set the stage for the 1978 Marxist takeover.

Most Likely Scenario Although the future Soviet threat toward Iran could take any (or more than one) form and an outright invasion cannot be ruled out, I believe the pre-1979 Afghan model provides the general blueprint that the Soviets are most likely to follow, presuming their motives are or again become less than honorable. Their near-term objectives would be to keep the West out and promote economic and political ties that increase Soviet access and influence in Tehran. They would attempt to draw Iran into a “dependent relationship vulnerable and responsive to Soviet pressure.”¹⁵¹

The Soviets could also be expected to “nourish” pro-Soviet elements—Marxist and otherwise—within the central leadership and provide support to anti-Western movements in Tehran and throughout the country. They would do this regardless of their relationship with the central government. However, the better that relationship is, the easier the task becomes, since improved access and in-country mobility increase their opportunities to seek out or develop potential sympathizers.

The immediate Soviet goal is to make the current Tehran government more amenable to Soviet interests and concerns—hardly a sinister motive. One logical consequence, however, if they are successful in expanding their influence and creating a dependency relationship, could be the establishment of a central government in Tehran that was at least “Finlandized” (like Daoud’s Afghanistan) if not firmly and fully aligned with Moscow.

At this point, the parallel with Afghanistan ends and an added dimension of vulnerability unique to Iran comes into play. Even if the Iranians are successful in preventing the overt expansion of Soviet influence in Tehran, they must still be concerned with Soviet-supported (or -instigated) separatist movements in northwest Iran. Given its geographic proximity to Soviet territory and history of pro-Soviet and secessionist activity, the Azerbaijan region appears the most vulnerable and susceptible to Soviet inroads.¹⁵²

Four times during the twentieth century the Kremlin’s forces have marched into northwest Iran. On two occasions, the Azerbaijan region has tried to secede from Iran and align itself with its socialist brothers to the north. Could the Soviets capitalize on a period of peace and increased access to lay the seeds for yet another Azerbaijani secession? Or could leftist separatists working independent of Moscow (or with only limited support) attempt to break away from the central government and then turn to Moscow for help? These are eventualities that Tehran must guard against.

Ayatollah Khomeini was sufficiently concerned about this threat to include this admonition in his will:

We are well aware that the plundering great powers always have people at their disposal in societies, who may appear in different guises from the nationalist to the pseudo-intellectuals and the pseudo-clergy; the last strata is the most dangerous one if they find the right opportunity. This is because they can, for 40 years, live patiently among the nations, by propagating pseudo-piety, pan-Iranism, nationalism, and other ploys. They will wait for the time to carry out their mission. During the short time since the victory of the revolution, our dear nation

has witnessed many examples of this, such as the Mojahedin-e Khalq and Fada'i-e Khalq, members of Tudeh party, and other similar names. Everyone must be vigilant and nullify such conspiracies.¹⁵³

Notwithstanding Khomeini's warning, it is doubtful whether Gorbachev—at least in the near term, given his pressing, higher-priority domestic challenges—would actively promote further separatist activity in Iran. In fact, the odds are high (but not certain) that he would even refuse to come to the aid of a potentially successful leftist group declaring independence from Tehran today. But this does not mean that Gorbachev (or his successors) cannot see the benefit of laying the groundwork for such activity to occur 10, 20, or even 40 years hence.

I believe the next attempt by the Kremlin to add the Persian jewel to its crown is most likely to be a gradual rather than a sudden one, employing political and economic rather than strictly military means. It is most likely to culminate in an internal declaration, perhaps in Tehran but probably in Azerbaijani Tabriz or some other outlying district, of a new independent republic, one built upon Soviet clandestine support and one that immediately turns to Moscow for recognition and protection. At this point the real danger—and real significance—of the Southern TVD buildup and command and control improvements come into play. The Soviets were not prepared in 1945-1946 to defend (and thus retain) the Azerbaijan and Kurdish Socialist Republics. As late as 1979, they still were not prepared to effectively employ military force to protect what they had obtained in Afghanistan. Today the necessary forces are on hand, and we must assume (given the STVD's mission) that plans are on the shelf, to militarily respond to Iranian contingencies or opportunities.

The Soviets would not necessarily even have to employ STVD forces. They could merely announce that they recognize the newly founded "independent" Republic and warn Tehran and the West that any attempt to forcibly oust the new regime would result in a Soviet military response. In 1945, with the situation largely reversed, the United States bluffed and the

Soviets balked. If the Soviets and the West were to go eyeball to eyeball over northwest Iran today (or sometime in the future), it is less clear which side would blink first.

Is such a scenario inevitable? I think not. A large number of variables come into play, not the least of which are Tehran's political stability and the manner in which Iran conducts its relations with the USSR. One thing, however, is clear. The warnings provided to President Daoud in the mid-1970s—that the Soviet economic aid program was “laying a logistical infrastructure for a possible invasion” and that the presence of Soviet advisors and technicians in Afghanistan and the training of Afghan military personnel in the USSR “facilitated subversion”—warnings which Daoud ignored until it was too late, apply to Iran today.¹⁵⁴

The burden rests on Iran to avoid dependency on Moscow and to prevent conditions of internal instability and social unrest that pro-Soviet sympathizers can feed upon. If they fail to do so, “new thinking” would have merely made it easier for Moscow to pursue old objectives. Iran's leaders no doubt are aware of the dangers involved in developing too close a relationship with Moscow. But, then again, so was President Daoud. Daoud gambled that he could manage the relationship. He gambled wrong.

Effect of Recent Developments

In the midst of Gorbachev's “peace offensive,” and with the Soviet Empire seemingly crumbling around the edges, it is sometimes difficult to focus on long-term threats. This is particularly true when current developments appear to reduce the likelihood of conflict. The developments I will deal with next all promote regional peace and stability *in the short term*. However, each contains the potential, if not properly managed, for long-term consequences contrary to Iranian and Western interests.

Withdrawal from Afghanistan The decision to withdraw Soviet military forces from Afghanistan was a dramatic signal that it was no longer "business as usual" in the Soviet Union. Many factors contributed to this decision. It appears evident, however, that when Gorbachev assessed the gains versus the costs and risks involved, he concluded that the problems associated with staying in Afghanistan were greater than those associated with pulling out. As the 1989 edition of *Soviet Military Power* observed, "Gorbachev recognized that the continued presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan was an obstacle to progress on higher-priority diplomatic and strategic initiatives in East-West relations."¹⁵⁵

This assessment has proven correct as far as Soviet-Iranian relations are concerned. Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani specifically cited the Soviet pullout from Afghanistan as part of the "completely new situation" that made his June 1989 trip to the USSR possible. He noted upon his departure for Moscow that he had actually received the invitation two years earlier but had delayed the visit because "the Afghan situation remained unresolved."¹⁵⁶ In fact, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan removed one of the largest impediments (and convenient excuses) that stood in the way of improved Soviet relations with not only Iran but the whole Islamic world.

The withdrawal from Afghanistan was only part of the "completely new situation" that cleared the way for Tehran to improve relations with Moscow. Other factors specifically highlighted by Rafsanjani included "the Soviet decision to discontinue support for Ba'athist Iraq" and the "official recognition of the right of Soviet citizens to practice the faith of their choice."¹⁵⁷ These real or imagined events are all outgrowths of Mr. Gorbachev's domestic reform movement.

Perestroika, Glasnost, and "New Thinking" Essentially, *Perestroika* (restructuring) is a domestic program aimed at

salvaging the Soviet Union's seriously deteriorating economy.¹⁵⁸ I see *glasnost* (openness) and "new thinking" primarily as means toward the same end. But all three, together and separately, have far-reaching international implications. Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze has been remarkably candid in exclaiming that domestic reform is dependent on a period of peace:

The main thing is that our country not incur additional expenses in conjunction with the need to maintain its defense capability and protect its legitimate foreign-policy interests. This means that we must seek ways to limit and reduce military rivalry, eliminate confrontational features in relations with other states, and suppress conflict and crisis situations.¹⁵⁹

Meanwhile, as part of the *glasnost* effort, the Soviets have encouraged a greater degree of freedom of expression and demonstrated increased tolerance toward religious practices and beliefs. Although this freedom is by no means absolute, Gorbachev has stated that religious activities can be pursued "in normal social conditions fully in keeping with constitutional principles." He has also promised a new law on freedom of conscience to "regulate the entire range of problems connected with the position and activities of religious organizations under modern conditions."¹⁶⁰

Soviet internal reforms—especially the atmosphere of greater religious tolerance—and the new "olive branch" approach to foreign policy—manifested in the withdrawal from Afghanistan and Soviet support for a peaceful solution to the Iran-Iraq war—have made dealing with the Soviets more respectable and, at least on the surface, less threatening.

As far as Iran is concerned, the most dramatic example of the effect of *glasnost* and new thinking (and an excellent example of growing Soviet diplomatic finesse) centers on Ayatollah Khomeini's January 1989 letter to President Gorbachev, suggesting that Gorbachev turn to Islam to solve his nation's fundamental problems.

The letter itself was both complimentary and condescending. It praised Gorbachev's "courage to revise an ideology"

that "imprisoned the revolutionary children of the world within an iron curtain." It branded Marxism a "materialistic ideology" that "does not answer any of the real needs of man," while at the same time acknowledging that Gorbachev may not have "positively turned [his] back on certain aspects of Marxism." "Your difficulty," Khomeini lectured Gorbachev, "is your lack of true faith in God." Nonetheless, Khomeini acknowledged, "with the relative freedom of religious ceremonies in some Soviet republics you have shown that you no longer think of religion as the opiate of the masses."¹⁶¹

The content of the letter was greeted with a certain amount of amusement in the West. However, the letter was graciously received by Gorbachev and immediately praised by Shevardnadze as signaling a "turning point" in Soviet-Iranian relations.¹⁶² Iranian leaders soon echoed the turning point comment and, by the time of Rafsanjani's visit to Moscow in June, the Imam's message was being frequently cited as the "point of departure" for improved relations between Tehran and Moscow.¹⁶³ Regardless of Ayatollah Khomeini's original intent, his letter to Gorbachev now constitutes the Imam's official blessing for Tehran's attempts to improve relations with Moscow.

Another aspect of Gorbachev's reform movement that could pose some long-term challenges for Tehran is his handling of the "nationalities problem." In his report "On the Party's Nationalities Policy Under Present-Day Conditions," Gorbachev told the CPSU Central Committee Plenum that the logic of *perestroika* had lead him to conclude, "the need for comprehensive profound changes is long overdue in ethnic relations." Among his proposed "profound changes" were the granting of greater regional autonomy, self-determination, and self-management for the Soviet republics. Gorbachev specifically promised the ethnic Republics "broader rights" and "stronger sovereignty."¹⁶⁴

Whether these steps will assuage Soviet Armenians and Azerbaijanis (among others) remains to be seen. The question I would raise is, What is the potential effect of this policy for Iran? The 1980s opened with the fear of Islamic revivalism spreading north. This fear has not gone away but the problem

has proved manageable. Will the prevalent fear in the 1990s be the fear of ethnic autonomy movements spreading south? If Soviet Azerbaijanis gain greater autonomy from Moscow, will this spur similar demands among Iranian Azerbaijanis?

The more autonomy Soviet Azerbaijanis receive, the greater will be their attractiveness to their ethnic brothers in Iran. This raises an issue that surfaced at the highest levels in Moscow in 1982 when Politburo member Geidar Aliyev reportedly told Western visitors,

Whereas Soviet Azerbaijanis had developed their full potential, those in Iran had remained backward; it was his "personal" hope that the Azerbaijanis would be reunited in the future.¹⁶⁵

Although this statement does not necessarily reflect official Soviet thinking (Aliyev has since been "retired" along with most pre-Gorbachev Politburo members) it does indicate that such thinking did exist at the highest levels.

Such thinking exists at the grass roots level as well. The "Programme of the People's Front of Azerbaijan," which calls for "political, economic and cultural sovereignty for the Republic of Azerbaijan as a legal government within the USSR," includes the following within the statement of the Front's political tasks:

—The PFA considers it its duty to protect the rights of Azerbaijanis living outside the republic.

—The PFA supports the abolition of all political barriers to the development of cultural and economic ties with Southern Azerbaijan.

As regards ethnic relations, the Programme further states:

While recognizing the indisputable nature of the borders between the USSR and Iran the PFA supports the restoration of the ethnic unity of Azerbaijanis living on both sides of the border. The Azerbaijani people should be recognized as a united whole. Economic, cultural and social ties between our divided nation should be restored.¹⁶⁶

The more freedom is achieved in Soviet Azerbaijan, the more likely will become similar calls from "Southern Azerbaijan" for autonomy, self-determination, and perhaps even independence or reunification. Therefore, as Iran praises Gorbachev's "new thinking" and his enlightened handling of minority issues, it must ask itself how willing it would be to let this ethnic autonomy movement spread south into Iranian Azerbaijan—or how it will deal with this phenomenon if and when it comes, despite Iranian (or even Soviet) intentions or desires to curb its spread.

Soviet-Iranian Rapprochement Khomeini's letter and Rafsanjani's visit opened the door for improved relations between Moscow and Tehran, despite the repeated warnings in Khomeini's will about the long-term Soviet threat. It would have been foolish and potentially self-defeating for Iran not to have sought improved ties. One simply cannot afford to have antagonistic relations with a neighboring superpower. This is generally true even in the best of times.¹⁶⁷ It is especially true during a time of national transition and economic recovery.

The Soviets and Iranians have clearly and openly signaled their intent to expand all-around cooperation. Article 2 of the "Declaration on the Principles of Relations Between the USSR and Iran," signed during Rafsanjani's June 1989 visit, states,

The sides, bearing in mind that they are neighbors, will extend their all-around cooperation in various spheres, specifically in the economic, trade, technical, and industrial sphere, and will also seek new forms and spheres for such cooperation, including the peaceful use of atomic energy. The Soviet side agrees to cooperate with the Iranian side with regard to strengthening its defense capability.¹⁶⁸

The Declaration contains the traditional assurances about "mutual respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity" and "non-interference in each other's internal affairs."¹⁶⁹ With the marked exception of the undefined Soviet commitment to help Iran strengthen its defense capability, little on the surface should surprise or deeply concern the West.

What is of concern is the potential extent of dependency that may be inherent, particularly in the economic and security aspects of the evolving relationship, and the opportunity for increased Soviet access (and intrigue) that such an expanded relationship may portend.

Some Middle East specialists have pointed out that the level of economic cooperation announced between Iran and the USSR to date does not exceed the level of cooperation that existed during the Shah's reign.¹⁷⁰ Although this observation appears accurate thus far, it is also largely irrelevant. It is the extent of dependency and relative access, not the level of effort, that is critical in the final analysis. Tehran's willingness to expand its political and economic relationship with Moscow also raises a question of even greater long-term significance—namely, whether Iran plans to abandon the “neither East nor West” precept mandated by Ayatollah Khomeini. Should Tehran turn to Moscow to satisfy its defense modernization needs, this question will have been answered.

“Neither East nor West” As spelled out by Ayatollah Khomeini, “Neither East nor West” was considerably more than a statement of economic or political policy; it was central to his belief in the superiority of Islam over the models provided by “the criminal camp of the West or the dictatorial camp of the East.” Islam, he argued in his will, “provides a much better model” for the nations of the world to follow.¹⁷¹

Throughout his life and again in his will, Khomeini castigated those who could “see no value in their own culture and their own strengths,” arguing that “Satanic tricks” had led Iranians “not to rely upon our own thought and learning in anything and to blindly imitate the East or the West.”¹⁷² He called on the Iranian nation to “remain firmly and steadfastly committed to [a] straight, divine [Islamic] path, which is dependent on neither the godless East nor the tyrannical, blasphemous West.”¹⁷³ He warned not only against dependence, but also against affiliation with either superpower:

We should be watchful, vigilant, and alert so that politicians who are affiliated with the West and the East do not drag

you toward those international plunderers by using their Satanic persuasions. You should rise against these affiliations with resolute determination, endeavor, and initiative.¹⁷⁴

To emphasize this point he later added:

It is better for us to be destroyed by the criminal hands of the United States and the Soviet Union and meet our God with honor and pride than to live in a comfortable and aristocratic fashion under the emblem of [either superpower's] armies.¹⁷⁵

Khomeini's admonitions are too specific and too ingrained in the spirit of the revolution to ignore. Nonetheless, the reconstruction task facing Tehran's leadership today is too massive and capital-intensive for Iran to perform without significant outside assistance, and the Soviet Union appears to be one of the few nations ready and willing to provide at least a portion of this support. Iran's challenge is to remain loyal to Khomeini's precepts while at the same time obtaining the outside economic cooperation and assistance needed for eventual recovery.

Iranian President Rafsanjani has thus far proven to be extremely skillful in explaining how improved relations—and expanded economic cooperation—with Moscow is consistent with “neither East nor West.” For example, when challenged at a news conference to explain the apparent warming of relations with Moscow before his visit there, Rafsanjani explained,

The slogan “neither East nor West” is still as valuable as ever. It means that we will not establish any dependence on the East or the West. But, we do not have anything against having good relations with the East and the West. About the East: . . . We did not approve of the situation inside the USSR because of the Communist Party's policies . . . [but] Gorbachev's wise policies have effected a positive change. We now see that country as quite suitable for establishing friendly relations. In the West, this has not been the case.¹⁷⁶

Gorbachev's “wise policies,” when combined with his (and Rafsanjani's) skilled handling of Khomeini's renowned letter,

have provided the Iranian government with considerable latitude in dealing with Moscow. Nonetheless, boundaries still exist. Specifically, there can be no semblance of affiliation or dependence inherent or perceived in the relationship. Rafsanjani's awareness of the boundaries was evident during a news conference celebrating his return from the USSR:

[The Soviets] have definitely realized that the revolution is sincere when it says "neither East nor West" and is not prepared to depend on anyone or anything during its course. For the first time in the history of Iran, they had fully prepared themselves to encounter an Iran which is 100 percent independent and will not accept anything except what is in the interests of its ideology and people and of the country. This was the attitude with which they entered into dialogue with us, and whatever we had planned was approved and signed there.¹⁷⁷

Given Iran's massive economic and reconstruction needs, it would be foolhardy for the West to assume that Tehran would not attempt to find some means of accepting whatever assistance Moscow has to offer. However, while the Soviets are ready and willing, they are considerably less than fully able to meet even their own, much less Iran's, economic needs. If estimates that Iran's total reconstruction needs exceed \$100 billion are anywhere close to being accurate, then no one state or bloc can provide all the help that is needed.

As a result, Iran is expected (and should be encouraged) to continue to turn in all directions for assistance. More sources mean less relative reliance on Moscow, which in turn reduces Soviet leverage and helps restrict Soviet access and influence. Iran's flexible interpretation of "neither East nor West" makes support from all corners of the globe possible. The major impediments, at this writing, have been self-defeating Iranian actions—such as their handling of the Rushdie affair and their continued support to terrorists in Lebanon and elsewhere—which have resulted in self-generated barriers to improved

relations with the West, thus an increased probability of reliance on the USSR.¹⁷⁸

The Road Ahead

Soviet-Iranian relations have improved in recent years, thanks in large part to President Gorbachev's policies of *perestroika*, *glasnost*, and "new thinking" and President Rafsanjani's ability to justify expanded economic and political ties with Moscow within the context of Ayatollah Khomeini's "neither East nor West" precept. As a result, the likelihood of Soviet armed aggression against Iran in the near to mid term is low, despite the marked improvement in Soviet military capabilities opposite Iran.

The long-term picture is less clear and, in the final analysis, will depend on how skillfully Tehran and Moscow manage the relationship. Increased cooperation carries with it an expanded opportunity for Moscow to gain access and influence and, if so inclined, to sow the seeds for future intrigue. Increased dependence, prompted by Iran's inability to obtain support elsewhere, increases the temptation for the Soviets. The Azerbaijan region remains the most likely target of opportunity, given its history of pro-Soviet and secessionist activity and its ethnic affiliation with the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan, the latter predating and transcending socialist considerations.

The changes underway within the Soviet Union appear genuine and are based on Gorbachev's self-professed "urgent necessity" for economic and political reform. A certain degree of retrenchment and conciliation is to be expected, and Iran (and the West) would be foolish not to promote these trends and seek the immediate benefits they offer. But history documents previous examples of Russian and Soviet retrenchment, which brought not only improved relations with Iran but, in some instances, an actual return of conquered Iranian territory. Traditionally, these periods of consolidation have been followed by renewed attempts to expand the Kremlin's reach

southward. Even dramatic changes in government have not altered these aspirations in the past.

An old Russian proverb appears apropos at this point: "Dwell on the past and you will lose an eye. Forget the past and you will lose both eyes." One can only hope that the Iranians have a similar proverb.

v. TOWARD A US STRATEGY

Harmonious relations between Iran and the Soviet Union, in and of themselves, do not automatically threaten US or Western security interests—unless or until they are used by the Kremlin to expand its sphere of influence or control over Iran. Indeed, as we enter an era in which the rules of the Cold War may no longer apply, it is imperative that the United States and the Soviet Union both demonstrate a willingness to rise above the "zero sum" mentality that has characterized their relationship in the past. America's "beyond containment" stance and the Soviet Union's commitment to "new thinking" demand—in order to be tested—nothing less.

The task of ensuring that improved Soviet-Iranian relations do not ultimately result in Iran falling within Moscow's sphere of influence or control remains Iran's imperative. There are steps, however, that the United States can take to diminish the likelihood of—or at least to avoid contributing to—such a strategic gain for the Soviets. The real challenge for the United States will be to manage its relationship with Iran—and with the Soviet Union vis-a-vis Iran—in a manner that promotes its own legitimate security interests while taking into account Moscow's and Tehran's security concerns. In so doing, US planners need to remember an often-repeated maxim: In the Middle East, nothing makes things worse than American efforts to make things better.

The first step is to determine whether and where Soviet and US interests coincide or conflict in Iran, and how

Iran—as a sovereign state with a profound, history-induced suspicion toward both superpowers—is affected by and reacts to US and Soviet policies.

I have argued that the Soviet Union's traditional approach toward Iran has been driven by two basic objectives—the desire to preserve and protect its own security, and the desire to obtain geopolitical, economic, and strategic advantages—with ideological considerations serving more as a rationalization than as a driving force. I believe these objectives will continue to shape Soviet policies toward Iran, and that “new thinking” has increased the prospects for Soviet success.

I also believe that the United States has traditionally pursued similar objectives. The primary US security goal since the onset of the Cold War has been to contain Soviet power and influence. In the past, ensuring Iran's membership in a ring of alliances around the Soviet Union and building Iran into a regional “pillar” upholding Western interests were means toward this end. Such policies may have made sense during the era of containment but they also sowed the seeds of their own defeat. They directly threatened Soviet security interests, thus assuring that the Soviets would actively seek to undermine the relationship; and they overlooked internal Iranian concerns and aspirations as well as regional concerns over Iranian preeminence in the Gulf region.

A second major US security objective was, and remains, to assure US and Western access to Persian Gulf oil. Inherent in this goal is preventing the USSR (or any other potentially hostile nation or movement) from threatening or disrupting this access. The United States has demonstrated to the Soviet Union and Iran (and to other friends and potential foes alike) that it is strongly committed to protecting Western access to Arabian Peninsula oil. The creation of the US Central Command (and its predecessor, the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force), the “Earnest Will” Persian Gulf-Strait of Hormuz naval escort operations (for US and reflagged Kuwaiti oil tankers), and the continuous US naval presence in the Persian Gulf since 1949 all sent this message. Such actions, along with continued US security assistance programs and

recurring joint and combined military exercises and maneuvers, send a signal that attempts by potential adversaries to gain strategic advantage at America's expense could carry a high price.¹⁷⁹ This signal is an important one that the United States must continue to transmit.

What must be made clear, however, is that the United States has no designs on Iran *per se*, and is neither interested in nor intent on reestablishing a close security relationship or anti-Soviet alliance with Iran—as long as the Kremlin understands, and honors, US regional security concerns. This approach requires the United States and the Soviet Union jointly to respect Iranian sovereignty and territorial integrity in both the near and long term; it fully endorses the spirit and intent behind Ayatollah Khomeini's "neither East nor West" precept.

If the United States is seriously interested in moving "beyond containment" and the Soviets are truly committed to "new thinking," then it should be possible to reach agreement on a general overall framework for relations with Iran that does not threaten either side's basic security interests and at the same time respects Iran's sovereignty. Unlike prior Anglo-Russian agreements, the intent here is not to divide up Iran—either territorially or in terms of each nation's zone of primary influence or concern. Rather, it is to place Iran safely outside either nation's aspirations.

Iranian participation or concurrence in this arrangement is not mandatory and may not even be initially feasible, given the strained nature of US-Iranian relations and Iran's internal political instability. Eventual Iranian involvement is certainly appropriate, desirable, and potentially beneficial to all concerned. Iran's participation from the outset would help reduce the suspicion of "superpower collusion" and signal superpower willingness to deal with potential regional conflict areas not only peacefully but also in partnership with the nations involved or most directly affected. However, an Iranian refusal to enter three-way discussions should not block an initial US-Soviet dialogue. Nor should America or the Soviets permit an environment in which Iran can play the United States and the USSR against one another.

The mechanics of such an arrangement would have to be worked out by the parties themselves. I would outline the following goals, however, realizing that all may not be fully attainable. At a minimum, a Soviet-American (-Iranian?) understanding should do the following:

- recognize Iranian sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- recognize that all parties have a vested interest in strict Iranian non-alignment.
- preclude either the United States or the USSR from becoming a major arms supplier to Iran, establishing a large military advisory presence in Iran, or obtaining access to Iranian air or naval facilities for other than routine transits or visits.
- prohibit the creation, during peacetime, of any military or security alliance that joins the USSR and Iran, the United States and Iran, or the United States and the USSR against the interests of the third signatory.
- pledge non-interference in one another's internal affairs, along with strict prohibitions against any party becoming directly involved in another's internal security problems.

These understandings would specifically preclude outside military intervention (invited or not) to deal with indigenous problems. They are intended to keep the Soviets out of Iranian Azerbaijan and the Iranians out of Soviet Azerbaijan, and the United States out of both. Inherent in the agreement, and a precondition to its implementation, would be official revocation of Articles V and VI of the 1921 Soviet-Iranian Friendship Treaty, especially the Article VI provision that grants Moscow the unilateral right to send forces into Persian territory.

I would even go so far as to suggest an agreement that acknowledges US or Soviet Union willingness to come to the aid of Iran if it is invaded and occupied by the other, provided the request comes from the Iranian Majlis and the assisting forces were obligated to depart as soon as the invasion or occupation was over. Better yet, however, would be

a commitment by both superpowers not to use their veto powers against an Iranian request for United Nations assistance in the event of outside invasion.

This proposal should not be read as an endorsement of the current or any subsequent Iranian regime. Nor is it in any way intended to prohibit either the Soviet Union or the United States from applying military force (or any other type of pressure) on Tehran should that government be involved in actions that directly threaten either nation's citizens or interests. But acts of retribution must fit the crime and should not involve the seizing of territory or the overthrow of the central (or any regional) government.

There are a number of other actions the United States can undertake unilaterally to reduce the likelihood of Soviet-Iranian rapprochement working against American interests. Most are aimed at setting the stage for improved US-Iranian relations when the time finally arrives that such improvement is politically possible and desired by both sides. These include the following:

—depoliticizing as much as possible disagreements between Iran and the United States by letting the courts decide outstanding economic, financial, and other liability issues.

—toning down US rhetoric, especially criticism directed against Islamic revivalism, which also damages US relations with many friendly Islamic regimes and fuels anti-American feelings among not-so-friendly movements.

—maintaining an even-handed policy between Iran and Iraq, based on the realization that a situation in which these two regional powers effectively counterbalance one another is preferable to one in which either has a clear preponderance of power.¹⁸⁰

—encouraging efforts by the Organization of Islamic Conference, the United Nations, and others (to include the Soviet Union) to mediate a settlement to the Iran-Iraq War.

—pursuing confidence-building measures with Iran in the Persian Gulf that would reduce the prospects of inadvertent confrontations, using intermediaries such as Pakistan, Oman,

or the United Arab Emirates that maintain good relations with both the United States and Iran.¹⁸¹

—continuing to insist that Iran respect international laws and protocols if it desires acceptance as a legitimate member of the international community, and using international (vice unilateral) sanctions and initiatives to condemn or praise subsequent Iranian actions.

—encouraging Asian and European nations to become involved in Iranian reconstruction, to include a gradual and measured improvement in Iran's defensive capability, as an alternative to superpower involvement.¹⁸²

—broadcasting US concerns about an evolving Soviet-Iranian security relationship in "neither East nor West" terms rather than as public "warnings" that are not likely to deter either side from doing what it chooses to do.

To illustrate this last point, the United States could have applauded the 1989 Rafsanjani visit to Moscow as a positive step toward improved international relations while at the same time expressing concern that Iran not turn its back on Ayatollah Khomeini's admonition that Iran not establish dependence on or join into security relationships with either the East or the West. Instead, the United States fed the propaganda mills of both countries by "warning" Moscow not to sell arms to Iran and issuing the following US State Department criticism of the visit:

As the Soviet Union seeks to play a more responsible international role, we and others find it difficult to understand efforts to move close to a regime that continues to support international terrorism and hostage takings.¹⁸³

These US actions received wide coverage, and drew wide comment, in Tehran and Moscow. Reactions by Iran's daily newspapers included the following:

Resalat: The response of the Americans . . . is a token of blatant disregard of the general principles in relations between countries and governments.¹⁸⁴

Keyhan: The Americans who are total outsiders to the region, have always hated to see the establishment of amicable relations between Iran and the Soviet Union, and to this end have tried every trick up their sleeve.¹⁸⁵

Abrar: The U.S. reaction . . . indicates U.S. failure to realize Iran's status in the international scene.¹⁸⁶

Radio Moscow had this to say:

So it seems that Washington would have been more pleased to see mistrust and hostility prevail in Soviet-Iranian relations, and also confrontation, on which Washington could build its imperial political plans in the region.¹⁸⁷

US diplomacy cannot, and should not, be driven by oversea news reactions (or domestic news reactions, for that matter). Nonetheless, statements that play into the hands of one's detractors and work against one's own long-term interests should be avoided whenever possible, especially when another nation's basic precepts can be legitimately quoted to make the same point.

Finally, the United States must change the way it thinks about and plans to react to the Soviet threat in Southwest Asia. US war games dealing with this region traditionally start with a Soviet invasion of Iran and then proceed to test US capabilities to respond. This is a useful drill, which remains appropriate at the Unified Command level. But it is not enough.

At the national level—particularly at the National Defense University, where future military and civilian leaders are educated in national security strategy—additional scenarios need to be devised, based on the more likely future threat. How should America respond to the previously postulated scenario in which the Soviets do not invade Iran, but simply state that they will invade, if Iran or the United States interferes with a newly established “independent” pro-Soviet republic in northwest Iran? We must ask ourselves how the military instrument of national power can be used—in conjunction with political, diplomatic, economic, and other instruments—to

react to a Soviet threat to use force. In other words, we need peace games, as well as the more traditional war games, to test how we can use US military strength to back ourselves (and potential adversaries) away from the threatened brink of war.

In the final analysis, it all comes down to this: A fully independent, non-aligned, non-hostile, non-threatened (and non-threatening) Iran best serves US and Soviet interests, as well as Tehran's. The lead role in achieving this condition is Iran's to play, but the United States and the USSR can contribute by creating an environment that permits this to evolve. US-Soviet cooperation should be predicated upon the realization that an Iran in either superpower's camp creates an unstable security environment that the other will attempt to rectify. Therefore, we need to shift from a "zero sum" game, in which each side attempts to make gains at the other's expense, to a "zero total" mind-set, in which neither side attempts to use its relationship with Iran to the other's detriment. If we are to successfully accomplish this, we must no longer dwell on the past. . . but, we cannot be blind to it either.

Notes

1. For additional details on the 1941 Soviet invasion of Iran, I recommend the following:

—Faramarz S. Fatemi, *The U.S.S.R. in Iran* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1980), pp. 17-23.

—Marshall Lee Miller, "How the Soviets Invaded Iran," *Armed Forces Journal International*, February 1987, pp. 30, 32.

—T.H. Vail Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, from the *United States Army in World War II* series (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1952), pp. 10-11.

—Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975), pp. 30-39.

—Richard A. Stewart, "Soviet Military Intervention in Iran, 1920-1946," *Parameters*, Vol. XI, No. 4 (December 1981), pp. 27-29.

—Donald N. Wilber, *Iran Past and Present* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, ninth edition, 1981), pp. 131-133.

2. Fatemi, p. 22.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

4. Motter, p. 444.

5. For details on the creation of the Autonomous Region of Azerbaijan and the Kurdish People's Republic, see Aryeh Yodfat, *The Soviet Union and Revolutionary Iran* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 17-19; Fatemi, pp. 75-89; and Ramazani, pp. 110-114.

6. Ramazani, pp. 138-139.

7. There is a tendency to use *Soviet Union* and *Russia* interchangeably. However, I will refer to *Russia* only when describing that nation prior to 1918 and will use *the Soviet Union* or *USSR* when referring to that nation after the Bolshevik Revolution. *Moscow* and the *Kremlin* will be used to refer to the seat of government during both the Russian and Soviet periods of history. Although *Persia* and *Iran* have long been synonymous, *Persia* was most commonly used until 1927, when the Shah formally requested that *Iran* be recognized as his nation's correct name. Most source documents referring to Iran before 1927 talk of *Persia*, although either name would be correct.

8. Many such studies are available. This chapter draws from *A Brief History of Russian and Soviet Expansion toward the South*, produced by the Combat Capabilities Analysis Group, USCENTCOM, MacDill AFB, Florida, on 30 June 1985. This study (hereafter referred to as *A Brief History*) draws heavily from Basil Dmytryshyn, *A History of Russia* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977). Other basic source documents include the following:

—Yahya Armajani, *Iran* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972), Chapters 7-10, pp. 103-172.

—Raymond Beazley, Nevill Forbes, and G.A. Birkett, *Russia from the Varangins to the Bolsheviks* (London: Oxford University Press, 1918).

—Nasrollah Fatemi, *Diplomatic History of Persia, 1917-1923* (New York: Russell F. Moore Co., 1952).

—George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1949).

—Rouhollah Ramazani, *The Foreign Policy of Iran, 1500-1941* (Charlottesville, Va: University of Virginia Press, 1966).

—Morton Schwartz, *The Foreign Policy of the USSR: Domestic Factors* (Encino, Ca: Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., 1975), Chapter 3, pp. 71-95.

—Ivar Spector, *An Introduction to Russian History and Culture* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1949).

—Sir Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia, Vol. II* (London: MacMillan and Co., Third Edition, 1951), Chapters 69-90, pp. 231-563.

—Joseph Upton, *The History of Modern Iran: An Interpretation* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1960), Chapters 1-4, pp. 3-63.

Previously cited source documents include these:

—Faramarz Fatemi, *The U.S.S.R. in Iran*.

—Miller, "How the Soviets Invaded Iran."

—Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*.

—Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973*.

—Stewart, "Soviet Military Intervention in Iran, 1920-1946."

—Wilber, *Iran Past and Present*.

—Yodfat, *The Soviet Union and Revolutionary Iran*, Chapters 1-2, pp.1-24.

9. Less the Ussuri-Amur-Vladivostok region, which was not to fall under Russian control for another century and a half.

10. Sykes, p. 233.

11. From the Will of Peter the Great, as excerpted in *Ibid.*, pp. 244-245. Sykes notes that the will "may be apocryphal, but by Persians and by many Russians its genuineness is not doubted. Even if it is not the actual political testament of Peter, it is accepted as embodying the national aspirations of Russia" (p. 232).

12. *A Brief History*, p. 23.

13. Beazley, p. 351. Paul is described as a madman who hated his mother and vowed to destroy all her works, in retaliation for her trying to prevent his accession to the throne.

14. Schwartz, p. 75, points out that there was a "streak of Messianic universalism in Russian religious thought, in which Moscow as the 'Third Rome' was considered obliged to prepare the way for the salvation of all mankind by spreading the gospel of the Orthodox Church to distant lands." He noted, however, that few of the Tzars "were thus inspired."

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 362-363.

16. Ramazani, *Foreign Policy of Iran, 1500-1941*, p. 45.

17. Even though Iran ceded this territory in 1828, the Russians had to conduct several heated campaigns against Muslim revolutionaries before securing the region 31 years later.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47. Also see Sykes, pp. 311-321, and Upton, pp. 5-6. One small section south of the Araks River in what is modern-day Iran was also ceded to Russia, but this was later returned during an 1893 Convention. The indemnity paid by Iran was equivalent to three million pounds sterling. Extra-territorial privileges included prohibitions against Iranian officials entering the premises of Russians residing in Iran without prior authorization. Russians in Iran came under exclusive jurisdiction of Russian (vice Iranian) authorities. These provisions had far-reaching consequences since similar concessions were then demanded by other foreign countries.

19. Imtiaz Bokhari, "Soviet Military Challenge to the Gulf," *Military Review*, August 1985, pp. 55-56.

20. Schwartz, pp. 73-74, citing Friedrich Engels, "The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsarism," reprinted in Robert Goldwin, et al., eds., *Readings in Russian Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 74, 79.

21. Yodfat, p. 4, quoting Russian Foreign Minister Muravyov.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

24. Ramazani, *Foreign Policy of Iran, 1500-1941*, p. 92. Ramazani points out that the preamble contained the "customary sanctimonious reference" to protecting Iran's sovereignty, and then went on to divide up Iran.

25. In fact, from June of 1908 until Muhammad Ali Shah was ousted thirteen months later, the Russian commander of the Persian Cossacks, Colonel Liakhoff, served as the military governor of Tehran.

26. *Soviet Treaty Series, Volume I, 1917-1928*, Leonard Shapiro, ed. (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1950), pp. 4-12. Article VII (p. 5) reads as follows: "In view of the fact that Persia and Afghanistan are free and independent states, the Contracting Parties obligate themselves to respect the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of these states."

27. Nasrollah Fatemi, p. 138, citing a message carried by Karl Bravin, the only old regime diplomat who agreed to serve the new regime, upon his arrival in Tehran on 12 January 1918, as contained in the Iranian State Archive.

28. Ramazani, *Foreign Policy of Iran, 1500-1941*, p. 148, citing an official note provided to the Iranian government on 27 January 1918, through the Iranian charge' d'affaires at Petrograd, who conducted most of Iran's sensitive negotiations.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

30. Lenczowski, pp. 9-10.

31. N. Fatemi, p. 22. In his telegram, Khan requested Soviet assistance in liberating all Persian people "from the yoke of Persian and English oppressors," thus making it clear that his aspirations encompassed all of Iran and not just Gilan.

32. Amjami, p. 132. Also see Lenczowski, p. 60, and N. Fatemi, pp. 242-243, for further speculation as to why Lenin pulled out.

33. *Soviet Treaty Series*, pp. 92-94, contains the full text of the 1921 Treaty and is the source of the quotes that follow.

34. Of note, the Treaty was followed on 12 December 1921 by an exchange of official letters which acknowledged that Article VI applied only to the threat posed by White Russian partisan forces. However, there were no White Russians to be found anywhere in 1941 when the Soviets cited Article VI as justification for their most recent invasion of Iran. Also of note (and of equally little consequence), the Islamic Republic of Iran has periodically renounced both the Treaty in general and Article VI in particular. However, the Soviets maintain that the Treaty remains in effect unless and until both sides repudiate it; something Moscow has thus far refused to do.

35. Lenczowski, p. 60.

36. Kuchik Khan was captured in October 1921 and beheaded. Reza Khan went on to become Premier two years later and, in 1925, occupied the Peacock Throne as Shah Reza Pahlavi.

37. Raymond J. Sontag and James S. Beddie (eds.), *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941. Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign*

Office (Dept. of State, Wash, D.C., 1948), pp. 257-259. As Faramarz Fatemi points out (*The USSR in Iran*, pp. 16-17), the German Foreign Office *Archives* reveal that it was the Germans who first proposed that the "focal point" of Soviet aspirations be "centered south of the Soviet Union in the direction of the Indian Ocean," since they wanted most other areas for themselves. However, Fatemi asserts that the proviso identifying the "area south of Batam and Baku . . . as the centre of [Soviet] aspirations" was insisted upon by Molotov.

38. Herbert Druks, *Harry Truman and the Russians, 1945-1953* (New York: Speller, 1966), p. 125. Robert Rossow, who was US Consul in Tabriz during this period, contends that Stalin knew he couldn't keep control of northern Iran in the face of stiff Western resistance but made the initial effort in hopes that the United States and Britain would be too war-weary to contest his move. For more details, see Stewart, pp. 29-32. Of note, many historians consider the Soviet-US face-off in Iran in 1946 to represent the opening salvo in the Cold War.

39. There are 16 military districts in the USSR. Each reports through the General Staff in Moscow to the Soviet High Command. For details on their structure and organization, see Harriet Fast Scott and William Scott, *The Armed Forces of the USSR* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Third Edition, 1984), pp. 183-213.

40. Charles Dick, "Soviet Operational Concepts: Part II," *Military Review*, October 1985, p. 5, citing the Soviet *Dictionary of Basic Military Terms*.

41. The 14 TVDs are described in *Soviet Military Power 1986* (Wash, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1986), pp. 12-13 and in *Soviet Battlefield Development Plan (SBDP) Volume I: Soviet General Doctrine for War* (hereafter cited as *SBDP Vol I*), published by the United States Army Intelligence and Threat Analysis Center, United States Army Intelligence Agency, Washington DC, 1987, p. 2-11. Iran falls within the geographical area of responsibility assigned to the Southern TVD.

42. Details on the evolution of the TVD and High Command concepts are contained in *SBDP Vol I*, pp. 2-13 - 2-17. Of interest, a peacetime HCF was established for the Far East TVD between 1947-1953, when it was abolished concurrent with the reorganization of the Far East's military districts.

43. Scott and Scott, p. 186. Also see Michael Deane, Ilana Kass, and Andrew Porth, "The Soviet Command Structure in Transformation," *Strategic Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Spring 1984), pp. 62-63 for information on Ogarkov's blueprints for change.

44. *SBDP Vol I*, p. 2-16, citing I. Vyrodov, "On the Leadership of Military Operations of Strategic Troop Groupings in World War II," *Voyenno-istoricheskii zhurnal (Military Historical Journal)*, No. 4, April 1979.

45. The Far East High Command of Forces was established in 1978. The exact date for the other three is unknown. The Western, Southwestern and Southern TVD High Commands were all revealed in 1984 when their

commanders were identified as signatories in the obituary for Defense Minister Ustinov. For more information, see John Yurechko, "Command and Control for Coalition Warfare: The Soviet Approach," *Signal*, December 1985.

46. *SBDP Vol I*, p. ix. The TVDs are similar to US geographic Unified Commands. The US Command roughly comparable to the Southern TVD is the US Central Command (USCENTCOM), established in 1983 as an outgrowth of the US Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF). The proximity in timing between the Soviet and US commands is considered largely coincidental. The RDJTF was established primarily in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and then evolved into the already-established Unified Command structure. The STVD's creation was an evolutionary development growing out of command and control requirements and not in response to the US creation of a rival command opposite Southwest Asia.

47. General George Crist, USMC, Commander-in-Chief, US Central Command, "Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee," March 15, 1988; published by the United States Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base (AFB), Florida (hereafter referred to as *March 1988 Testimony*), p. 14.

48. *Ibid.*

49. For information on the organization of the Soviet armed forces and its top leaders, see the "Soviet Aerospace Almanac" edition of *Air Force Magazine*, March 1989, pp. 72, 77.

50. *March 1988 Testimony*, p. 18. Many analysts believe these more aggressive tactics were beginning to pay dividends before the Mujahedin obtained surface-to-air missiles like the Stinger, which forced the Soviets to readjust their tactics.

51. It is unclear whether Zaytsev's retirement was connected with the Soviet's failure to achieve a military victory in Afghanistan. My guess is that his retirement was part of Gorbachev's overall military house cleaning operation, that resulted in the retirement of many senior leaders to include the majority of the TVD and Military District chiefs.

52. Derived from a list of anticipated missions outlined for the TVDs opposite NATO in *SBDP Vol I*, p. 2-17.

53. There are currently no known such targets in Iran, but nuclear-capable US Navy units operating in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf would be likely targets.

54. *Soviet Military Power 1986*, p. 60. It should be noted that hardened, redundant communications systems are specifically designed to operate in a post-nuclear exchange environment.

55. 1988 figures are used because detailed data is available, at the unclassified level, on STVD force levels through this time frame. Preliminary 1989 data shows a possible reduction of two divisions. However, this is more than offset by the June 1989 announcement in *TASS* that the Central Asian Military District (until then a part of the Far Eastern Military District) had

been incorporated into the STVD's Turkestan Military District. Central Asian force levels are not included in the discussion of 1978-1988 growth.

56. *March 1988 Testimony*, p. 15 provides readiness data for 1988. Historical readiness figures are derived from *Soviet Military Power 1981*, p. 6. STVD readiness figures are expected to decline somewhat once the withdrawn Afghanistan divisions are fully resettled and the Central Asian divisions are estimated to be in low states of readiness. The four to six weeks estimate to reach full readiness still applies, however.

57. *March 1988 Testimony*, p. 15.

58. "Central Asian Military District Abolished," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report: Soviet Union* (hereafter cited as *FBIS-SOV*), Vol. 89-107, 6 June 1989, pp. 56-57. The exact number of divisions to be added to the STVD is unclear since the cited *TASS* announcement stated that "certain" units had been "reduced or disbanded" with the "remaining combined units and the territory" incorporated into the Turkestan Military District.

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17. For helicopter and air defense hardware specifications, see the "Soviet Aerospace Almanac," pp. 99, 102.

60. *March 1988 Testimony*, pp. 16-17.

61. *Ibid.* Aircraft capabilities are provided in *Soviet Military Power 1986*, pp. 76-79.

62. *Soviet Military Power 1988*, p. 119.

63. In my view, they have never been more than 5'10" (versus the 6' US soldier) and have no doubt lost a few inches in recent years due to growing morale, language, and ethnic problems in the Soviet military.

64. Stephen Page, *The Soviet Union and the Yemens: Influence in Asymmetrical Relationships* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1985), pp. 15-22. How the May 1990 unification of North and South Yemen will affect Soviet access is not yet clear.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-80. Also see *March 1988 Testimony*, p. 21.

66. For information on Soviet activity in Ethiopia, see Colin Legum, "USSR Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa," Andrzej Korbonski and Francis Fukuyama, eds., *The Soviet Union and the Third World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 240-244. Also see *March 1988 Testimony*, p. 21.

67. *Soviet Military Power 1988*, pp. 119, 133.

68. The numbers of Soviet and Cuban advisors and technicians in Ethiopia and the PDRY are taken from USCENCOM unclassified briefing slides used during March 1988 oral testimony, and are consistent with figures provided in *Soviet Military Power*. Information on the Soviet and Cuban involvement in the PDRY coup is contained in *Soviet Military Power 1987*, pp. 140-141.

69. *Statement of General George B. Crist, U.S. Marine Corps, Commander in Chief U.S. Central Command before the Defense Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee on the Status of the United States Central Command* (draft) on February 10, 1988 (hereafter referred to as

February 1988 Testimony), pp. 8-9, states that 40 percent of all Soviet third world arms deliveries went to countries in his area of responsibility and another 20 percent went to adjacent countries. *Soviet Military Power 1988*, p. 22, shows that two-thirds of all Soviet tank, light armor, artillery, aircraft, and surface-to-air missile deliveries to the third world between 1982-1987 went to Near East/South Asia countries, as did one-third of all Soviet ship deliveries.

70. The Soviets used their 1921 Friendship Treaty with Iran to justify their 1946 invasion and cited their 1978 Treaty with Afghanistan when Soviet troops invaded that country during Christmas of 1979.

71. Kuwait has maintained diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union since 1963. Oman and the United Arab Emirates recognized Moscow in 1985 and Qatar followed suit in 1988.

72. There are almost as many different lists of Soviet objectives as there are books and articles on the subject. All of these objectives are interrelated. They are addressed separately for the sake of analysis only, with the full realization that in practice they are overlapping and generally mutually supportive. My list draws most heavily from Daniel S. Papp, *Soviet Policies Toward the Developing World During the 1980's* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1986), pp. 27-47. Additional sources include the following:

—Shahram Chubin, "Soviet Policy Toward Iran," *Papers from the Soviet Union and the Middle East Conference*, pp. 35-37.

—Shahram Chubin, "The Soviet Union and Iran," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1983, pp. 921-924.

—Robert Collins, "Soviet Strategic Objectives in the 1980's," *Military Review*, Vol. LXII, No. 8 (August 1982), p. 9.

—Morris McCain, "Thinking South: Soviet Strategic Interests in Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan," *Soviet-American Relations with Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan*, ed. Hafeez Malik (New York: St Martin's Press, 1987), pp. 39-49.

—Alvin Rubinstein, "Soviet Motives and Objectives in the Middle East," *Papers from the Soviet Union and the Middle East Conference*, 6 February 1987, sponsored by the Defense Academic Research Support Program and the Middle East Institute (Wash, D.C.: Defense Intelligence College, 1987). pp. 3-16.

73. One major challenge facing Iran is the integration of these two separate military forces into one armed force. Failure to do so could set the stage for civil war between pragmatic and more radical political factions, each with its own independent army.

74. Details relating to the Iran-Iraq War are based on conversations with, and testimony by, General George Crist, USMC, Commander-in-Chief, US Central Command (November 1985-November 1988), including his *March 1988 Testimony* and his *Statement before the Defense Policy Panel of the House Armed Services Committee* on March 17, 1987, published by

USCENTCOM, MacDill AFB, Florida (hereafter referred to as his *March 1987 Testimony*), along with my own personal observations as a daily follower and reporter of the war.

75. Hafeez Malik, *Soviet-American Relations with Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1987), p. 16.

76. For details on how the Carter Administration attempted (largely unsuccessfully) to convince the Shah to limit his aspirations, see Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), pp. 317-324.

77. Alvin Rubinstein, *Soviet Policy toward Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), p. 90.

78. Papp, p. 261.

79. Joseph P. Lorenz, "Ending the Iran-Iraq War: The Pre-negotiation Phase," *Occasional Paper No. 1* from the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State, undated, p. 7.

80. Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup, *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State* (New York: St. Martin's Press), p. 115.

81. Although the Revolution's inflammatory rhetoric was being broadcast throughout the Muslim world, Khomeini made no secret that the Shiite communities in Iraq and other Gulf states were the primary targets. The Iraqis took this challenge seriously. The clash of ideologies (between Iraq's "secular Pan-Arabism" and Iran's "religious universalism") was not the sole cause of their war. However, few disagree that the September 1980 Iraqi attack had as one of its primary objectives the Iraqi regime's desire to halt the spread of Iran's revolutionary beliefs. The Iraqis saw the application of military force as the best means of containing the spread of Iran's threatening form of Islam. And they were at least partially successful. For more information on the war, see Ahmed Abdel-Halim, "A Conflict in the Arabian Gulf: An Overview of the Iran-Iraq War," *International Essays 1* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1986), p. 16. For details on the roots and immediate causes of the war, see Lorenz, pp. 3-8.

82. Prior to the cease fire, the reduction in inflammatory rhetoric was attributed primarily to Iran's attempts to create an environment more conducive to ending the Iran-Iraq War. The emerging so-called pragmatic leadership in Tehran now appears to attach more importance to improving Iran's internal situation and its regional image than to exporting the revolution. These officials also realize that attempts to obtain postwar reconstruction assistance would be inhibited by a return to the inflammatory rhetoric of the early 1980s.

83. "Khamene'i Reads Khomeyni's Will, Part II" *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report: Near East & South Asia* (hereafter referred to as *FBIS-NES*), Vol. 89-108 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 7 June 1989), p. 63. *Khomeini's 29 page will was read aloud to the Assembly of Experts by then-President Khamemei over a three-day period and is contained in FBIS-NES-89-106 (pp. 41-47), FBIS-NES-89-108 (pp. 57-65) and FBIS-NES-89-109 (pp. 58-64).*

84. "'Text' of Khomeyni Letter to Mikhail Gorbachev," *FBIS-NES-89-005*, 9 Jan 1989, p. 59.

85. Alexandre Bennigsen, "Mullahs, Mujahidin and Soviet Muslims," *Problems of Communism*, No. XXXIII (Nov-Dec 1984), p. 44.

86. *Ibid.* On pp. 28-44, Bennigsen outlines the debate and then proceeds to give the "great impact" argument while the "virtually no impact" argument is credited to Marsha Brill Olcott, "Soviet Islam and World Revolution," *World Politics*, July 1982, pp. 487-505. For an excellent, well-balanced accounting of the challenges posed by the Soviet Muslim population at large, also see Marsha Brill Olcott, "Moscow's Troublesome Muslim Minority," *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 1986, pp. 73-82.

87. Behind Indonesia, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

88. For more complete details, see Murray Fishbach, "Trends in the Soviet Muslim Populations: Demographic Aspects," in Yaacov Ro'i, ed. *The USSR and the Muslim World* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), pp. 63-94.

89. Bennigsen, "Mullahs, Mujahidin and Soviet Muslims," p. 29.

90. "Rear Staunch Fighters for the Party's Cause," *Kommunist Tadzhikistana*, Sept 3, 1986, pp. 2-3, as translated in "Religious Influence on Rise in Tadzhikistan," *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol XXXVIII, No. 35 (October 1, 1986), pp. 1-5, 9.

91. Current ethnic/religious problems in the southern USSR are discussed later. Ironically, it has not been "Khomeinism" but rather Gorbachev's *glasnost* policies that have appeared to unleash the greatest unrest—turmoil that is primarily ethnic vice religious-oriented.

92. The Sunni sect is the primary Muslim sect, accounting for just under 90 percent of the world's 850 million Muslims. The Shia sect comprises roughly 10 percent. In Iran, the percentages are more than reversed (i.e., 93 percent of Iran's over 50 million Muslims are, like Khomeini, members of the Shia sect). Many equate the resurgence of "Islamic Fundamentalism" with Khomeini's Shia revolution. However, revivalist movements exist among the Sunni community as well (Egyptian President Sadat's assassins were Sunni). For more details on the overall movement see James A. Bill, "Resurgent Islam in the Persian Gulf," *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1984, pp. 108-127; and Robin Wright, "The Islamic Resurgence: A New Phase?" *Current History*, Feb 1988, pp. 53-56, 85-86. Of note, Bill asserts that Sunni groups share a strong dislike for and distrust of Khomeini. He quotes one leading Sunni theoretician as follows: "Although the Shi'is do share some of our social and political goals, they have distorted Islam beyond imagination. We cannot and will not communicate and cooperate with them" (p. 110).

93. Bill, p. 120 provides a breakdown of the Shia population in each of the Gulf states, as a percentage of total population.

94. Bennigsen and Broxup, *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State*, pp. 141-142.

95. Zalmay Khalilzad, "Soviet Dilemma's in Khomeini's Iran," *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (April 1984), p. 2, citing *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, Hamid Algar, trans (Berkeley, Ca: Mizan Press, 1981), p. 185).

96. *Ibid.*, citing p. 285. Excerpts from this speech are also in *Survival*, Vol. XXII, No. 4 (July/August 1980), pp. 177-178.

97. "Khamene'i Reads Last Part of Khomeyni's Will," *FBIS-NES-89-109*, 8 Jun 1989, p. 59. While Khomeini condemns both the "criminal camp of the West" and the "dictatorial camp of the East," more space is devoted to the evils of communism and the threat of Soviet subversion than to the threat from the West.

98. Chubin, "Soviet Policy Toward Iran," p. 37.

99. The "zero-sum" argument equates any US minus to an equivalent USSR gain. For discussion on how this does and does not apply, see Papp, p. 260.

100. Khomeini's frequent "neither East nor West" proclamations reflected his strong belief that Iran must not turn toward either superpower for reconstruction assistance. Current interpretations and applications of "neither East nor West" are addressed later.

101. China was one of the major suppliers of military hardware to Iran during the war despite its public acceptance of the arms embargo; witness the presence of Chinese SILKWORM coastal defense surface-to-surface missiles astride the Strait of Hormuz.

102. Papp, pp. 31-32. Although the Chinese may be strategically less awe-inspiring than the United States, they are also seen by the Soviets as more pervasive and persistent. They also share a 12,290 kilometer border, and a history that includes Genghis Khan's "Mongol yoke" around the Kremlin.

103. *Soviet Foreign Policy* (Moscow: Novosti Press, 1985), pp. 52-54, as cited by Shaziaie Pirzada, "The Soviet Union and the Gulf: Capabilities and Intentions," pp. 27-28.

104. Zalmay Khalilzad, "Islamic Iran: Soviet Dilemma," *Problems of Communism*, Vol XXXIII (Jan-Feb 1984), p. 3.

105. Rubinstein, *Soviet Policy Toward Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan*, p. 107.

106. Shireen Hunter, "The Soviet Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran," *Soviet-American Relations with Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan*, p. 257.

107. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Soviet Union: Her Aims, Problems and Challenges to the West," *Adelphi Papers, No. 189, The Conduct of East-West Relations in the 1980's, Part 1* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1984), pp. 3-4.

108. Capt. D. H. Cole, *Imperial Military Geography: General Characteristics of the Empire in Relation to Defence* (London: Sifton Praed & Co., Sixth Edition, 1930), pp. 299-300.

109. Motter, p. 481. His detailed breakdown shows that out of 17,499,861 long tons delivered to the Soviets from the West, 4,159,117 or 23.8 percent entered via the Persian Gulf.

110. *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 481. The Persian Corridor was the second most heavily used of the five Western supply routes to the Soviet Union. The other four were through the Soviet Arctic, the Soviet Far East (heaviest use), North Russia, and the Black Sea.

111. Milan Hauner, "Soviet Eurasian Empire and the Indo-Persian Corridor," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. XXXVI (Jan-Feb, 1987), p. 29.

112. *Ibid.*, p. 35. Also see Michael McGwire, "The Middle East and Soviet Military Strategy," *Middle East Report*, March-April, 1988, p. 14 for the importance of this corridor in the event of a protracted conflict between the USSR and the PRC. The importance of maintaining links to Third World allies may at least temporarily be reduced if the Soviets, as many predict (myself excluded), withdraw from their overseas bases.

113. Bokhari, "Soviet Military Challenge to the Gulf," p. 54.

114. *March 1988 Testimony*, p. 21. For details on Soviet buildup and capabilities at Cam Ranh Bay, see Ralph A. Cossa, "Soviet Eyes on Asia," *Air Force Magazine*, August 1985, pp. 57-58.

115. *March 1988 Testimony*, p. 20. The Soviet buildup was partially in response to the US Navy buildup, brought about by the US naval escort operations. However, Soviet naval force levels have remained up even as US levels have dropped, to the point that by early 1990, the Soviets had a greater naval presence in the region than did the United States.

116. *Ibid.*, p. 21. Also see Pirzada, "The Soviet Union and the Gulf: Capabilities and Intentions," pp. 29.

117. This conclusion is based on my own analysis of Soviet activity. US Navy ships operating in the North Arabian Sea routinely observe the once-a-week I1-38 reconnaissance flights and the bimonthly rotations. However, shortly after Khomeini came to power the rotations stopped for about six months and the I1-38 missions became less frequent (probably due to maintenance problems). This I attribute to some hesitation on Khomeini's part to permit the overflights. How the Soviets managed to overcome this presumed resistance is unknown.

118. *Soviet Foreign Policy* (Moscow: Novosti Press, 1985), pp. 52-54, as cited by Pirzada, "The Soviet Union and the Gulf: Capabilities and Intentions," pp. 27-28. As the Commandant of the Soviet Naval Academy in Leningrad pointed out to our visiting National Defense University delegation in May of 1989, the Soviets have one of the world's largest merchant marine fleets and thus need a large navy and overseas presence to defend this civilian fleet.

119. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

120. "Worldwide Oil and Gas at a Glance," *Oil and Gas Journal*, Vol. 87, No. 52 (December 25, 1989).

121. *Ibid.*, for current production and increase over 1988. For historical production data, see "World Crude Oil Production" table published in the US Department of Energy's *Monthly Energy Review* (Washington, DC: Energy Information Administration, Sept 1989), p. 114. Also see "Postwar Rebuilding will Restore Production Capacity in Iran, Iraq," *Oil and Gas Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 21, (May 22, 1989), p. 38.

122. *Energy Security: A Report to the President of the United States*, United States Department of Energy, Washington, D.C., March 1987, pp. 18, 52-53; and *The Middle East* (Washington D.C.: The Congressional Quarterly, Inc, 1986, sixth edition), pp. 99-100. *The Middle East* states that the estimated cost of producing a barrel of oil in the Middle East (before royalties or taxes) is about a dollar. The higher figure cited in my text is derived from *Energy Security*, which incorporates finding and lifting costs. The cost no doubt varies considerably with each well.

123. For details regarding the intelligence dispute over whether the Soviet Union was about to become an importer of oil, see Mark Katz, *Russia and Arabia: Soviet Foreign Policy toward the Arabian Peninsula* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), pp. 5-7. Also see Papp, p. 263. Bokhari, p. 53.

124. "Worldwide Oil and Gas at a Glance."

125. *The World Factbook 1988*, Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C., CPAS WF 88-001, May 1988, pp. 112-113. Also see Wilber, pp. 263-289 for details on the development of Iran's natural resources.

126. General Crist's draft *February 1988 Testimony* before the House Appropriations Committee, pp. 8-9.

127. Laurie Myroie, "Soviet Policy Toward the Gulf Arab States," *Papers from the Soviet Union and the Middle East Conference*, p. 29.

128. Statistical data is drawn from "Worldwide Oil and Gas at a Glance," and the *Witness Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, presented by General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, USA, Commander in Chief, USCENTCOM, on February 8, 1990 (hereafter referred to as *February 1990 Testimony*), pp. 8-9. For additional information on the importance of the Gulf, also see Ralph A. Cossa, "America's Interests in the Persian Gulf Are Growing, Not Decreasing," *Armed Forces Journal International*, June 1987, pp. 58, 62.

129. *February 1990 Testimony*, pp. 7-8.

130. "IPAA: US Oil Production Headed for Biggest Slide since the 1970s," *Oil and Gas Journal*, Vol. 87, No. 45 (November 6, 1989), p. 17.

131. *Energy Security*, p. 27.

132. *Energy Security*, p. 18. Of the remaining 29 percent of excess production capability, only 2 percent rests in the non-OPEC world. The other 27 percent is in non-Gulf OPEC countries, with one of the largest segments in Libya.

133. Statistical data from "Worldwide Gas and Oil at a Glance." *Energy Security*, p. 38, lists "World Energy Requirements by Fuel Type" as follows: Oil-46%, Coal-21%, Natural Gas-18%, Hydroelectric-8%, Nuclear-6%.

134. *Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* (Moscow: Novosti Press, 1978), pp. 31-32.

135. "M.S. Gorbachev's United Nations Address," *FBIS-SOV-88-236*, 8 Dec 1988, pp. 12-13. The speech, translated from the 8 Dec 1988 second edition of *Pravda*, encompasses pp. 11-19.

136. *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 19. Since then, Mr. Gorbachev has watched one Eastern European nation after another reject communism and has even laid the groundwork for an eventual multi-party system in the USSR. Through it all, however, he has remained committed to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and its leading role in Soviet society. I, for one, am willing to wait until Mr. Gorbachev pronounces the CPSU dead before writing its final obituary.

137. For an excellent review of the Tudeh Party, see the section on "Iran" by Joseph Dwyer in the *1984 Yearbook on International Communist Affairs*, Richard Staar, ed. (Stanford, Ca: Hoover Institution Press, 1984), pp. 24-27. For additional details, also see the following:

—Chubin, "The Soviet Union and Iran," pp. 930-931, 933.

—Hunter, pp. 261-262.

—Khalilzad, "Islamic Iran: Soviet Dilemma," pp. 8-9.

—Rubinstein, *Soviet Policy Toward Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan*, pp. 65-66, 101, 114-117.

138. The reasons for this are not clear. Some speculate that it derives from the Tudeh's backing of Khomeini from the time he went into exile through his triumphant return. Others see it as a goodwill gesture toward the Soviets aimed at keeping Moscow from becoming more involved in the Revolution or at gaining its support in the war with Iraq.

139. Roger E. Kanet and James Arnold Miller, "Nature of Soviet Global Strategy," in Ray S. Cline, James A. Miller & Roger E. Kanet, ed. *Western Europe in Soviet Global Strategy* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987), p. 7.

140. Ray S. Cline, "Introduction to Basic Soviet Geopolitics," *Western Europe in Soviet Global Strategy*, p. 1.

141. Rubinstein, "Soviet Motives and Objectives," p. 11.

142. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

143. Lenin's famous dictum has been cited as either "two steps forward, one step back" or "one step forward, two steps back," with the latter presumably involving one giant step and then two smaller ones in reverse. Its origin has been popularly attributed to Lenin's justification for seeking

accommodation with the Germans during World War I by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which gave up parts of pre-revolutionary Russia to Germany in exchange for recognition and peace. Lenin disavowed the treaty after the Germans were defeated. According to Professor Rubinstein, the dictum actually refers to Lenin's fight against the non-Bolsheviks and dates back to 1904.

144. Alvin Rubinstein, "Soviet Motives and Objectives," p. 14.

145. *Witness Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, presented by General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, USA, Commander in Chief, USCENTCOM, on April 20, 1989 (hereafter referred to as *April 1989 Testimony*), p. 26.

146. *Ibid.*

147. Even if it was benign now, a lack of vigilance could create conditions that could tempt Moscow to change its attitude.

148. For a review of events leading up to the Marxist coup and subsequent Soviet invasion of Afghanistan I recommend the following:

—J. Bruce Amstutz, *Afghanistan: The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation* (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1986), pp. 19-49.

—Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Perspective* (Stanford, Ca: Hoover Institution Press, Revised Edition, 1985) pp. 55-68.

—Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism* (Stanford, Ca: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), pp. 52-63.

—Rubinstein, *Soviet Policy Toward Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan*, pp. 151-156.

149. Amstutz, pp. 34-38. The catalyst for the coup was the belated attempt by President Daoud to crack down on the leftists, which culminated in government arrests of PDPA members after an illegal funeral demonstration on April 19, 1978. According to KGB defector Vladimir Kuzichkin, PDPA leaders managed to consult the Soviet Embassy in Kabul and "Moscow quickly confirmed that we would support their proposed coup against Daoud." ("Coups and Killings in Kabul: A KGB Defector Tells How Afghanistan Becomes Brezhnev's Vietnam," *Time*, 22 November 1982, p. 33.) Rubinstein also presents circumstantial evidence indicating the Soviets may have instigated, and perhaps even actively participated in the coup. (pp. 151-156).

150. Amstutz, pp. 28-29.

151. This tactic was key to Moscow's earlier success in Afghanistan. As Professor Rubinstein observed, "in retrospect, we see that Afghanistan's high degree of dependence bred a Soviet influence and an environment in which it was felt even when not exercised." (*Soviet Policy Toward Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan*, p. 154).

152. For more information on Soviet political penetrations into this region, see David B. Nissman, *The Soviet Union and Iranian Azerbaijan* (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1987), as well as previously-cited references.

153. "Khamene'i Reads Khomeyni's Will, Part II," p. 61.
154. Amstutz, pp. 29-30.
155. *Soviet Military Power 1989*, p. 22. As of this writing, the last card had yet to be played in Afghanistan. While Soviet forces left Afghanistan on schedule, Soviet support to the Marxist regime in Kabul has not ended. Afghanistan still serves as a buffer and I would predict that the ultimate government in Kabul, while probably not Marxist, will feel compelled to be neutral (vice pro-West) and non-threatening to Moscow.
156. "Majlis Speaker, Delegation Depart for USSR," *FBIS-NES-89-117*, 20 Jun 1989, p. 49.
157. "Daily Lauds Prospects for Iran-USSR Relations," *FBIS-NES-89-116*, 19 Jun 1989, p. 50, citing the Persian daily *Keyhan*. In reality, the Soviets continue to support Iraq and religious freedom, while greatly enhanced, remains less than absolute.
158. On the first page of his book on *Perestroika* (New York: Harper Row, 1987), Mikhail Gorbachev states that perestroika is "an urgent necessity" and cautions that "any delay in beginning perestroika could have led to an exacerbated internal situation in the near future, which, to put it bluntly, would have been fraught with serious social, economic, and political crises."
159. Allen Lynch, *Gorbachev's International Outlook: Intellectual Origins and Political Consequences* (New York: Institute for East-West Security Studies, 1989), p. 30, citing Shevardnadze's speech to the Soviet foreign-policy community, as reprinted in *Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del SSSR*, No. 2 (1987), pp. 30-34.
160. "'Text' of Gorbachev's Plenum Report on Nationalities," *FBIS-SOV-89-181*, 20 September 1989, p. 41.
161. "'Text' of Khomeyni Letter to Mikhail Gorbachev," pp. 57, 59.
162. "Shevardnadze Praises Letter," *FBIS-NES-89-005*, 9 January 1989, p. 59. One can only speculate how a comparable letter to President Bush or any other Western leader would have been received or reacted to.
163. "Hashemi-Rafsanjani Speaks," *FBIS-SOV-89-119*, 22 June 1989, p. 27, citing the *TASS* account of Rafsanjani's speech at a Kremlin dinner given in his honor by Gorbachev.
164. "Text of Gorbachev's Plenum Report on Nationalities," pp. 31, 36.
165. Chubin, "The Soviet Union and Iran," p. 933, citing interviews appearing in *The Times*, November 29, 1982 and *International Herald Tribune*, November 30, 1982.
166. "Programme of the People's Front of Azerbaijan," *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (August 1989), pp. 8-9.
167. The Shah attempted to maintain cordial relations with the Kremlin throughout his reign and sought expanded economic ties with Moscow even as the United States was underwriting his security and building his nation into one of the US "pillars" in the region.

168. "Declaration on Principles of Relations," *FBIS-SOV-89-119*, 22 June 1989, p. 24.

169. *Ibid.*

170. This point has been made by Carolyn Ekedahl, among others, during discussions on "Gorbachev's Middle East Policy" at the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies 1989 National Convention in Chicago, 25 November 1989.

171. "Khamene'i Reads Last Part of Khomeyni's Will," p. 60.

172. "Khamene'i Reads Khomeyni's Will, Part II," p. 58.

173. "Part I of 'Will and Testament,'" p. 44.

174. "Khamene'i Reads Khomeyni's Will, Part II," p. 58.

175. "Khamene'i Reads Last Part of Khomeyni's Will," p. 60.

176. "Hashemi-Rafsanjani Holds News Conference," *FBIS-NES-89-111*, 12 June 1989, p. 34.

177. "Rafsanjani Interviewed," *FBIS-NES-89-121*, 26 June 1989, p. 28. I have elected to dwell on Khomeini's and Rafsanjani's words not just because they provide insights into how Iran is managing its relationship with the USSR but because they could also help guide US and other Western efforts to improve relations—or at least help avoid counterproductive approaches to the problem.

178. Examination of the reasons behind Iran's self-defeating attitude toward the West goes beyond the nature of this study. It appears clear, however, that Tehran's attitude in large part is driven by an internal power struggle between "pragmatists" such as Rafsanjani and more radical elements. *Iran After Khomeini*, an International Security Council booklet outlining the findings of a 26-27 July 1989 Washington, D.C., seminar on post-Khomeini Iran, provides additional insights into this problem and is the source of the \$100 billion reconstruction cost estimate.

179. For information on US security assistance efforts and military exercises, see USCINCCENT's *February 1990 Testimony*. Additional data on US military strategies and operations is contained in this and other USCINCCENT Testimony Statements.

180. By war's end, Iraq had emerged as the preponderant power in the Gulf and is likely to remain so in the near term, given Iran's economic plight and political difficulties. I would argue, however, that Iran's larger population and resource base still gives it the advantage over the long run. An environment in which no single nation is predominant, in my view, best serves long-term stability in the region.

181. At a minimum, the United States should attempt to work out some "deconfliction" procedures similar to those negotiated with Iraq to prevent another Stark incident.

182. Countries like Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Spain, and Italy most immediately come to mind. I would not encourage greater PRC involvement, given historic Soviet concerns about Chinese encirclement and my

own concerns about growing Chinese influence, and arms deals, throughout the Middle East.

183. "U.S. Reaction to Iran-USSR Ties Viewed," *FBIS-NES-89-122*, 27 June 1989, p. 38, citing the Persian daily newspaper, *Resalat*.

184. *Ibid.*

185. "Daily Lauds Prospects for Iran-USSR Relations," *FBIS-NES-89-116*, 19 June 1989, p. 50, citing the Persian daily newspaper, *Keyhan*.

186. "U.S. Reaction Viewed," *FBIS-NES-89-121*, 26 June 1989, p. 34, citing the Persian daily newspaper, *Abrar*.

187. "U.S. 'Dissatisfied' With Soviet-Iranian Ties," *FBIS-SOV-89-122*, 27 June 1989, p. 20, citing Radio Moscow commentator Aleksandr Pogodin.

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