

Iran Under Renewed and Enormous Threats

Iran's murderous dictator, the Shah, was repeatedly invited to Washington and London.

By [Shane Quinn](#)

Global Research, May 08, 2018

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [History](#)

A neutral bystander might question why Iran is not permitted to explore nuclear capabilities, especially as the country has long been under the shadow of possible attack. One need only examine the fate of past American victims like Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, none of whom possessed nuclear weapons as a deterrent against aggression.

Such is the lesson invoked by US foreign policy. This has been heeded by North Korean leaders who, looking on at one American intervention after another, fearfully armed themselves to the teeth. On the other side, the United States and Israel possess a vast array of nuclear weapons – while the superpower and its right-hand man, unlike Iran, have decades of bloodshed and destruction under their belt.

Yet it is Iran that remains according to New York Times the key “destabilizing force” in the world with the Islamic republic, in reality, representing a threat to US and Israeli power in the Middle East. US president Donald Trump insisted that Iran is stoking the “fires of sectarian conflict and terror” while being “responsible for so much instability”. No such accusations are directed at America’s major ally and oil dictator country Saudi Arabia who, among other crimes, fund a range of terrorist groups.

Yet the Saudis have long constituted a “stabilizing regional presence” (according to MSM) , despite being among the world’s worst human rights abusers, far more severe than Iran. The US itself has been the greatest driver of “sectarian conflict and terror” in the Middle East, with repeated interventions dating to the early 1990s Gulf War. A rational observer would again be tempted to query why Israel and its sponsor America are not being pressurized into reviewing their own nuclear arsenals.

Unlike Iran, Israel refuses to sign up to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), nor does it allow any inspections of its nuclear capabilities. Also with American assurance, Israel has thwarted calls for a nuclear weapons free zone in one of the world’s most volatile regions.

Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran has remained under significant outside pressure, in violation of the United Nations Charter. In recent days, this was publicly reiterated with Trump saying “If Iran threatens us in any way, they will pay a price like few countries have ever paid”.

The West have a long history of intervention in Iranian affairs – dating in living memory to the early 1950s, when the US and Britain overthrew the country’s conservative parliamentary government, led by prime minister Mohammad Mossadegh. He had been taking steps to nationalize Iran’s enormous oil reserves, placing it out of foreign reach, an unacceptable prospect. He was unceremoniously toppled in August 1953 and the pro-

Western Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, replaced him.

During his quarter century of dictatorship, the Shah would compile one of the worst human rights records on earth (as noted by Amnesty International). None of that mattered so long as America and the new junior partner, Britain, had control over Iran's oil supplies.

In August 1962, president John F. Kennedy bluntly [outlined](#) in a letter to the Shah that,

“The United States greatly appreciates the highly important strategic location of Iran”, while warning that the dictator should remain “vigilant against the pressures of international communism”.

Two years later Kennedy's successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, [insisted](#) that the Shah was “carrying out great programs aimed at the welfare of his people... His leadership has been a vital factor in keeping Iran free and in modernizing this ancient land”, while describing the tyrant as “a reformist twentieth century monarch”.

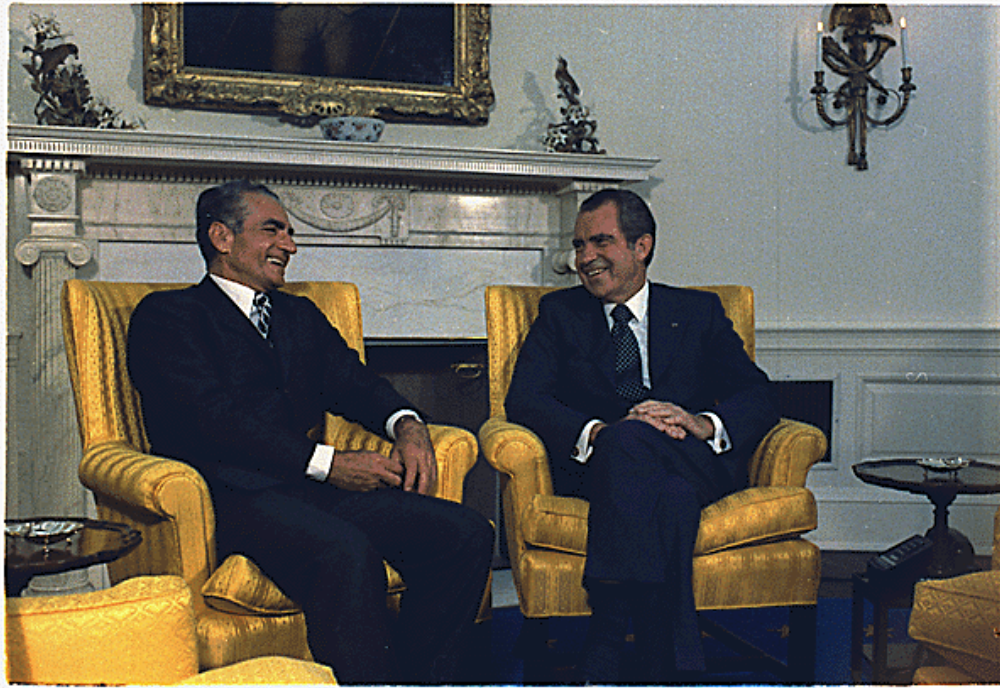
Despite the Shah's grisly record, he received numerous requests to visit the West. The Shah toured the White House while meeting, at different times, presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. Returning the favor with trips to the Iranian capital Tehran were Eisenhower, Johnson, Nixon and Carter – while the Shah was also summoned to America to attend the funerals of both Kennedy and Eisenhower (in 1963 and 1969 respectively).

The Iranian despot further enjoyed invites to London, gracing the halls of Buckingham Palace where he met Queen Elizabeth II (still reigning today), also seeing Winston Churchill – Churchill was himself one of the instigators behind the 1953 coup. In March 1961, the Queen accepted the Shah's invitation with a “royal tour to Iran”, joined by husband Prince Philip.

In April 1978, the Shah also saw Britain's incoming prime minister Margaret Thatcher in Tehran. Later, following his ousting, Thatcher said she was “deeply unhappy” in being unable to offer the Shah refuge, whom she described as a “firm and helpful friend to the UK”.

Perhaps such meetings are not terribly surprising. For example the Indonesian dictator General Haji Suharto, who oversaw one of the biggest mass murders of the twentieth century (as the CIA reported), was also invited to Buckingham Palace in November 1979, where he greeted the Queen and Prince Philip. Previously, in March 1974, the British monarch had become acquainted with Suharto in Jakarta, Indonesia's capital.

In April 1985, prime minister Thatcher saw Suharto during a state visit to Indonesia, [saying that](#) she and the dictator “have a close identity of view on so many things”, and elsewhere describing him as “one of our very best and most valuable friends” (Thatcher's government was supporting the Suharto regime with weapons sales). Suharto also made repeated trips to the White House, being warmly hosted by a number of US presidents, from Nixon to Bill Clinton.



Mohammad Reza speaks with [Richard Nixon](#) in the [Oval Office](#) (Source: White House Photo Office)

Elsewhere, in mainstream dialogue, the Shah was known as “a protector of Middle East stability” by allowing American companies and banks to access Iran’s vast riches. In the background, the Shah’s notorious secret police SAVAK killed many thousands of people, maiming and torturing countless others. SAVAK’s formation in 1957 was made possible because of CIA assistance, along with backing from Mossad, Israel’s intelligence agency. In operation for 22 years, SAVAK is today known as “the most feared and hated institution” in Iranian history.

In early 1979, the Shah was at last overthrown by popular resistance – despite president Carter saying just months before that his was “a progressive administration”. Following the Shah’s expulsion, invitations from Washington and London to Iran’s new leader, Ruhollah Khomeini, were mysteriously not forthcoming. This despite the fact that Khomeini, in comparison to his predecessor, was something of a saintly figure. In fact, no Iranian leader since 1979 can match the blood spilled during the Shah’s rule.

One can assume that American and British elites are concerned solely with gaining control over major resources, while immune to the enormous human suffering that supporting dictatorships entails. Indeed, Iran has never been forgiven for liberating itself from Western-backed tyranny, since enduring a US-sponsored invasion, sanctions and endless threats.

In recent years, Tony Blair has gone so far as to blame Iran for the many problems in Iraq (and the entire region), following the murderous 2003 US/UK invasion. Blair, a key figure behind the illegal attack on Iraq, singled out “the continuing intervention of Iran”, while openly calling for “regime change in Tehran”.

Blair’s tone towards post-revolutionary Iran is standard fare across the West. Once Iran slipped from American influence it became “evil”, like North Korea and Iraq, as president George W. Bush outlined. Previously, in 1982, president Reagan took Saddam Hussein off the list of states sponsoring terrorism, so he could supply the Iraqi dictator with extensive military aid in his war against Iran (1980-88). The conflict’s longevity, which killed hundreds of thousands on either side, would not have been possible without US backing for Saddam.

From an imperial viewpoint, Iran is an even greater prize than its neighbor Iraq. In land area Iran is almost four times larger, with a population of 80 million compared to Iraq's 37 million. Iran possesses far greater strength and international clout, containing more oil reserves along with other resources such as iron ore and magnesium.

*

Shane Quinn obtained an honors journalism degree. He is interested in writing primarily on foreign affairs, having been inspired by authors like Noam Chomsky. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Shane Quinn](#), Global Research, 2018

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Shane Quinn](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca