



Mass demonstrations of people protesting against the Shah and the Pahlavi government on the Day of Ashura on December 11, 1978, at College Bridge (now Hafez Bridge), Tehran, Iran.
● sajed.ir



Soldiers point guns at revolutionary demonstrators in Iran in the summer of 1978.
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Difference in military and armament independence

The Islamic Republic enjoys complete independence in military power and armaments. Mohammad Reza Shah purchased the necessary armaments from foreigners, mainly from the United States and European countries, which resulted in him not having full operational control at times. However, from the outset of the Islamic Republic, policymakers sought to establish the basis of military power and armaments domestically. Therefore, it can be said that military independence and non-reliance on external sources for armaments have played a major role in Iran's military and political independence. Additionally,

the Shah's dependence on America in military matters led to transparency in arms information. This means that America and European countries knew how much weaponry they sold to the Shah and were aware that, besides them, the Shah had no other weapons. But currently, because military information is within the country and there is no such transparency for foreign powers, they do not know the extent of Iran's military capability. In fact, the Islamic Republic has based part of its foreign policy on the doctrine of ambiguity, and this itself has created grounds for speculation, fear, and lack of confidence of foreign governments in any military action.

Difference in the demographic structure of Iranian society

During the Pahlavi era, the country's population was relatively low, which itself could be considered a threat to governance. However, in the current situation with the Islamic Republic in power, the population has gradually increased over time, leading to relative security. Naturally, the higher the population of a country, the more stable its economic and political structures will be. Because the complexity of mutual interests and their intertwining

neutralizes threatening forces and, on the other hand, society based on internal contradictions somewhat finds cohesion and power, which, in total, not only is not destructive but also constructive. However, during the Pahlavi era, mutual interests in society were not so intertwined; rather, the concentration of interests on one side and power monopoly on the other made these interests one-sided and non-constructive.

Difference in the nature of political opposition

During the Pahlavi era, there was a strong and persuasive opposition that could establish communication with all segments of society. A clear example of this was the clergy and the university body, which could promote revolutionary values in the society and involve significant segments of society in their activities throughout the country. However, currently, the Islamic Republic does not have a strong and persuasive opposition. Consequently,

a significant portion of the population cannot oppose the Islamic Republic even if they want to. This is because there is essentially no movement or personality that they can align with or use their statements. The lack of opposition itself is a clear reason for fears in parts of society about the future. Because the idea that there will be a worrying future after the Islamic Republic is present in the minds of a considerable portion of Iranians.

Difference in the level of experience and resilience

A wealth of experience and resilience contributes to the survival and endurance of the Islamic Republic; experience gained through various crises in different periods. This is while the previous government lacked significant experience in dealing with crises, which led to improper handling of popular protests and an inability to identify their causes. However, the numerous events that have occurred for the Islamic Republic over the decades, including political,

economic, and even cultural crises, have somehow made the Islamic Republic effective and resilient. Naturally, this wealth of experience is generated and reproduced through various ideological and research centers and is subject to debate, leading to the formulation of newer, more efficient models. This is in contrast to the Pahlavi era, where such events did not occur, and the rulers were distant from centers of thought and paid no attention to them.



A man washes "Yankee Go Home" and "Death to the Traitorous Shah" from a wall in the capital city of Tehran on August 21, 1953. The new Iranian Prime Minister Fazlollah Zahedi requested the cleanup after the overthrow of his predecessor, Mohammad Mossadeq.
● AP

Difference in the distribution of power between structural and non-structural sectors

Another significant difference between the Islamic Republic and the previous government is the diversity of power and the high level of its distribution among various structural and non-structural sectors. During the Pahlavi era, there was a concentration of power, and power was monopolized by the Shah and his associates. However, in the Islamic Republic, power is not institutionalized in one person; rather, it is distributed among a set of structures and institutions in various fields. When

power is concentrated in one or a few individuals, it can easily be eliminated or confronted, but when power is distributed among various sectors of society and some aspects of power are structural and non-personal, it cannot be easily confronted or eliminated. Additionally, in Iran today, power, in the sense of influence, is not limited solely to structured institutions; rather, power diversity in non-structural institutions, especially social institutions, is observable.

Difference in the model of alternative for the political system

Until now, there is no agreed-upon alternative model for the post-Islamic Republic governance among the elites, and even opposition movements have not been able to propose a specific alternative in this regard. Even the discussions presented in foreign media indicate the level of differences between different models such as constitutional monarchy, authoritarianism, republicanism, or democracy. This is in contrast to the period of 1978 and even the years before that when the revolutionaries, led by Imam Khomeini, knew what model of government they were seeking.

Imam Khomeini had presented the theory of Wilayat al-Faqih years before and advocated it in his explanatory speeches during the struggles leading to the victory of the revolution. Even after the establishment of the Islamic Republic, Imam clearly knew what model of Islamic government was to be presented to the people. Historically, evidence shows that ambiguity and confusion among the revolutionaries of 1978 were minimal. However, currently, the opposition has somewhat fragmented intellectually to the extent that they sometimes clash over their own proposals.

Difference in the level of representation of society by political factions

In the Islamic Republic, almost all political currents that have emerged represent a significant portion of the society's political tendencies. In other words, the political tastes of society, which are diverse and varied, have seen themselves represented in the government in various periods, and each of these tastes has had representatives in various governance matters. This is in contrast to the Pahlavi era, where essentially there was no such thing as republicanism and democracy, and the people did not consider the government as their representa-

tive. The rule of the Shah and the governance culture were such that there was no room for people's participation in governance and holding various political positions. The emergence of various representatives as representatives of different tastes of society in the Islamic Republic has led to some kind of partisan conflict and political guarantee for the Islamic Republic. In the Pahlavi era, due to the existence of a dictatorial and single-party system, people had to accept what the Shah decided, and there was no room for political diversity.

Difference in the source and nature of loyalty to the government

In the Islamic Republic, loyalty to the government is based on religious beliefs and values. Individuals who love or support the Islamic Republic have not aligned themselves with individuals but with values and ideals they consider spiritual and divine. It is clear that such loyalty is much stronger, to the extent that they are even willing to sacrifice their lives for it. This loyalty to the Is-

lamic Republic is not only resilient but also not easily undermined. However, loyalty to a monarchical system is based on personal values, and such loyalties are often based on personal interests. Naturally, as long as these interests are secured, such loyalties exist; otherwise, they will disappear, and even with the weakening of interests, such loyalty will be weakened.